

# TANGO – KEYNOTE SPEECH BY ELLEN PARKER

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*Business Development*



On November 17th we were a sponsoring presenter at an event organized by TANGO ([www.tangoalliance.com](http://www.tangoalliance.com)) on best practices for nonprofits. The keynote speaker was Ellen Parker, Executive Director at Project Bread, an Insource client supported by all three of our practices. Ellen's speech addressed how collaborating and sharing resources is important and helpful to sustaining a nonprofit's mission. While this essential lesson is a key best practice for nonprofits, Ellen's speech contained some additional important messages for nonprofit and for-profit entities alike.

Ellen and Project Bread staff think outside the box and bring a “consider what isn't usual” approach to expanding the reach and effectiveness of their mission/business, all the while keeping the organization “client focused”. From this sort of mindset, Project Bread developed the “Chefs in Schools” initiative to connect low-income children with healthy, high-quality food. Chefs in Schools began in 2007 as a partnership between Project Bread, Mayor Thomas Menino, Boston Public Schools (BPS) and the Boston Public Health Commission. The program, an unusual approach to eradicating hunger, has developed and grown and boasts proven results. It continues to gain support and, in August, 2011, Arbella Insurance Group Charitable Foundation pledged \$1 Million over four years to support Project Bread's “Healthy School Food for Kids Initiative” which includes Chefs in Schools.

We were also particularly struck by Ellen's comment to the nonprofits in the audience that there is always an academic partner for your business. In Project Bread's case this includes partnering with the Harvard School of Public Health for nutritional science expertise as well as with the Friedman School of Nutrition at Tufts which created “toolkits” that help school nutrition directors make healthy purchasing decisions. While the “collaboration” or relationship would be different for a nonprofit versus a for-profit, this is an interesting concept for any organization looking to expand its human and intangible capital assets and where else better to execute this strategy than in Massachusetts, home to a wealth of academic institutions.

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