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## Nonprofit work got Hulce involved

Executive searches led her to play active role in variety of organizations



Sharon Hulce helps companies nationwide find top executives. She also does pro bono work for area nonprofits and her company just completed its 52nd nonprofit search. The Business News photo by Amanda Lauer

By Amanda Lauer

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Sharon Hulce puts as much effort into her volunteer work as she does her career.

The president and CEO of Employment Resource Group Inc. of Appleton, Hulce spends her days in the executive recruiting arena. "I've owned Employment Resource Group for nine years but this is my 20th year in executive research. We work with companies nationwide, but we have a large contingency of customers that are either headquartered or have a significant presence in the Midwest and a lot in the state of Wisconsin. Companies contact us to help them fill middle management to executive-level positions."

Employment Resource Group also does executive recruiting for nonprofit organizations around the area. "We just completed our 52nd not-for-profit search, and we do all of our not-for-profit companies pro bono," said Hulce. "The first search I ever volunteered to do was the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center. We knew that it would either make our business or really hurt us."

That search brought Susan Stockton to the area to take on the role of president of the PAC, a position she still holds, so it was a good start to Employment Resource Group's charitable outreach.

So far this year, Hulce has filled executive director positions at the Building for Kids Children's Museum in Appleton and Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Fox Valley Region. Next on the docket is the White Heron Chorale. "I have to do the not-for-profit stuff with my administrative team (Jenny Bonikowske, the director of office administration, and receptionist Melissa Genske) because the rest of our team works on commission. There's no

### People who make a difference

► Sharon Hulce, president and CEO of Employment Resource Group, Appleton

commission if there is no fee. But we do it exactly like we'd do for a big company — they get exactly the same level of service."

When Hulce does an executive search for a nonprofit, she becomes very passionate about the cause and inevitably ends up being invited to sit on their board. As a result, she currently holds nine board positions. She is on the board of directors for the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, Theda Clark Medical Center Foundation, YMCA of the Fox Cities, United Way Fox Cities, and the Building for Kids Children's Museum. She is on the board of trustees for Fox Valley Technical College, she is a senior advisory board member for Junior Achievement, she is on the advisory board for Wells Fargo Bank, and is a member of the City of Appleton Police & Fire Commission.

"I'm on a lot of boards that are time consuming, but quite honestly, they're some of my favorite boards," Hulce said. "I've learned so much about Fox Valley Technical College in just one year. I can't tell you how wildly impressed I am. That's the thing that's so amazing to me, how really fabulous the organizations and the people behind the organizations are, but you don't know it until you get inside and get really close."

To say that Hulce is busy would be an understatement. "I always say if you want something done, give it to a busy person," said Hulce. "I have an 11-year-old daughter, Katie, I own this

company, and I sit on nine boards. I'm a great list maker and a very organized person when it comes to all the moving parts, and I have really fabulous support people who absolutely without them I couldn't do it. They keep me incredibly organized and are always three steps ahead of where I need to be. Without them I'd be hard pressed (to do what I do)."

Hulce grew up on a dairy farm, and she credits her parents for inspiring her with their generosity. "My father farmed at a time when farming was very good. He didn't have a lot of time to give, but he did give of his resources. My mother and father were the most strategic business-minded people to this day that I've ever met. My father was incredibly innovative and did things long before anybody else did in that industry."

Katie seems to be following in her family's footsteps. "She probably has more of that spirit of volunteerism than I do," Hulce said. "She'll say, 'Mom, I'd like to give my allowance so we can take the money to Harbor House and buy them clothes.' She is the one that keeps me centered on what it's all about, why it is we do these things — to help other people who can't help themselves. She's going to be the one in our family who will be the most philanthropic, I have no doubt. She'll probably work for a not-for-profit one day."

Through the years, Hulce has witnessed firsthand how the volunteer work she's involved with makes a difference in people's lives. "I have seen a person's life change. I've had staff members come up and say, 'Thank you so much for finding this amazing person.' That's what keeps you going. You might not know it right away, but you know in the long run it makes a difference. And quite honestly, for me, that's what it's all about."

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