Kavana Tree Bressen ✶ Facilitation & Workshops
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The Green Team

a basic facilitation roleplay for a nonprofit

Our nonprofit formed in 2005 with a sustainability mission, in response to climate change concerns. Less than a year after we started, Al Gore's movie "An Inconvenient Truth" came out, which resulted in us receiving a big influx of members and support. We were able to grow to a small paid staff working out of an office in Eugene, who coordinate the further efforts of a large network of volunteers and allies. Our strongest base is here in Oregon, while we also have some activity in Washington and Idaho. Our funding comes from a mix of small donations from members, fundraising events (such as an annual auction), foundation grants, and a few major donors. Like many nonprofits, we run a lean operation and chronically struggle financially. With the recent economic downturn, donations are down a lot and that's thrown us into a challenging money situation—we are looking at the probability of laying off 3 out of 8 staff and cutting back on our programs even though the need for what we offer has never been greater.

While we have tried out various program activities during these past few years, the largest and most successful one (our signature program that we are most well known for) is that we go to people's houses and help them make improvements in energy conservation and other stuff related to sustainability. In addition to offering information on everything ranging from weather-sealing to installing solar hot water heaters, we offer personal coaching to individuals and families who want to improve their environmental footprint. We help them consider and take first steps on things like bicycling more and driving less, shifting their diet to eat less meat, planting a vegetable garden, and using a clothesline to dry their clothes. We have a good reputation for helping create lasting results, which we believe is due to our strong combination of technical expertise and social support to make changes.

The issue facing our board at this time is that Walmart is offering us a significant donation: $75,000 (our annual budget is $225,000). The staff is split on whether or not to accept it. Not wanting to alienate people by making an unpopular decision either way, the board has decided to hold today's meeting in open session in order to include input from a wider set of stakeholders.