

Volunteer Spotlight: Michael Angarsky of The Chef's Warehouse + Soul Ryeders

Sometimes, a single project can shape the structure of an organization for years to come. Just ask **Sandy Samberg**, founder of **Soul Ryeders**, a Rye, New York-based cancer support organization. This spring, eight years after it started as a small team of women participating in the annual Avon Walk for Breast Cancer, Soul Ryeders decided to change its name from Sole Ryeders to Soul Ryeders and expand its mission to help women from diagnosis through treatment, recovery and survivorship by providing practical resources and nurturing support services.

The Legal Need

As the organization's programming expanded, Soul Ryeders turned to Pro Bono Partnership for help incorporating this newly envisioned organization, including assistance in drafting a set of bylaws compliant with New York State's Revitalization Act. Soul Ryeders got more than a set of bylaws -it gained a volunteer committed to Soul Ryeders' mission and providing guidance on incorporating "best practices" to ensure that its Board of Directors exercised proper oversight and control of the organization.

Michael Angarsky, a second year legal analyst in the Legal Department at **The Chefs' Warehouse** in Ridgefield, Connecticut, responded to the request for assistance. As Michael explained, "as a young, in-house legal analyst, working with Soul Ryeders allowed me to enjoy direct client interaction and experience a collaborative process with the people I was developing the corporate documents for. Personally, Soul Ryeders' mission resonates with me due to my personal experience with Hodgkins Lymphoma, which I battled for six years prior to entering remission. The legal assistance I was able to provide Soul Ryeders directly benefits its ability to help fund the research necessary to cure cancer, while also helping patients, survivors, and their families."

The Immediate Impact

Since its inception in 2007, Soul Ryeders has expanded its mission and developed its own self-funded local programs, including The Wig Exchange, Mondays with Soul Ryeders (offering complimentary salon services for women undergoing cancer treatment), Strand Together hair donation events, and Stitch and Sip evenings where they create handmade accessories such as chemotherapy hats, drain pockets and fleece blankets to provide comfort and dignity during chemotherapy treatment. In the short term, Michael drafted a set of bylaws and a conflict of interest policy that enabled Soul Ryeders to register with the New York State Attorney General's Charities Bureau.

The Extended Impact

Over the course of numerous discussions and drafting sessions, Michael helped the initial board members identify the questions it should be asking itself about what structure the board would take, how roles and responsibilities would be allocated, how to effectively utilize committees, and how to implement best practices and policies to sustain Soul Ryeders' existing programming and expand where the organization identified a need. As a board member recently stated: "We cannot thank Mike enough for all the time, patience, and expertise he devoted to not only drafting our Revitalization compliant bylaws but also for helping us understand corporate governance best practices for our growing organization. Mike was extremely knowledgeable, and we were so impressed with his

thoroughness and promptness in not only answering our many, many questions, but also helping us understand their answers and implications for our organization's future. Soul Ryeders will forever be indebted to Mike and Pro Bono Partnership for providing us with a solid foundation and a clear road map for continued strong corporate governance. "

Volunteer Success

In addition to his stellar work on behalf of Soul Ryeders, Michael volunteered to assist two other nonprofits. Thanks to his efforts, The Adoption Hope Foundation was incorporated and obtained its tax exempt determination from the Internal Revenue Service. Michael is now working with The Adoption Hope Foundation in drafting its bylaws. He is also assisting Two Planks Theater Company with its incorporation, tax exempt determination and bylaws.