



Sent by email on September 30, 2025

Dear Fellow leaders:

The Houston conference exceeded expectations, which admittedly were dampened by the hurricane that hit Houston a few weeks before (terrible pun, but true). Texas is the largest Baptist state in the nation, and the 3rd largest Catholic state by population. It is a state without a revival window opened for justice. We believe SNAP's presence in the Lone Star state has helped the Texas statute of limitations (SOL) effort. We had spectacular speakers including our own Teresa Lancaster and Baptist whistleblower Cindy Clemishire. We welcomed 45 first time conference attendees. At least one Texas lawmaker and staff attended a portion to educate themselves about our concerns.

We also received tremendous media coverage. A 30-minute segment on Fox beamed to 8 million people, and conference coverage in the Dallas Morning News. We are grateful to the Conference Working Group chaired by Eduardo De La Casas. We learned some lessons, and next year's conference, (there are two locations in contention) will be even better. We have \$10,000 already raised for conference scholarships.

The new Working Group model of sharing the load that we used to undertake the conference is being expanded to other areas of SNAP. We hope leaders will use that opportunity to help us govern the organization and one day become board members. Those opportunities are described below.

If you did not attend the leaders' meeting or the conference, I'll recap what I said at that gathering.

Growth Areas:

SNAP needs to be re-built. When I became interim executive director this past April, I discovered three out of our four major grants were in danger of defaulting. We must ensure that SNAP organizational procedures are adhered to by all, some procedures of which had fallen by the wayside. Our database, called "Nation Builder" is not adequate. We've discovered lax accounting and documentation processes.

Even our phone helpline stopped working because no one knew who was paying the bill and the unknown Good Samaritan cancelled the landlineplan. This would be funny if it was not true. I had to fly to Chicago to chase this issue down. It took me the better part of a week bouncing between Ma Bell, Verizon, and a private 800 number provider to fix this seemingly simple problem. But now 1 800 SNAP-HEALS is back in business. I have the phone in my pocket every day.

How We've Improved:

Despite these challenges, we've kept the lights on. We are developing the procedures that our by-laws require so that our staff and board do not repeat the mistakes of the past. We are back in the good graces of our grant makers. It has been a lot of work. Thank heavens for Julienne, our accountant and Chicago based office manager. She is a wonderful asset for SNAP.

We've undertaken internal financial and governance audits to determine what has gone wrong in the past and to help us craft improved procedures for the future.

Six months ago, I put out a call to anyone who wanted to volunteer. Our Conference Working Group filled up fast and pulled off our conference. If you attended the conference and have some ideas for improvement, please join that group by reaching out to Eduardo De La Casas.

Every organization should, at times, look in the mirror. This board lives with gaps it inherited and has the duty to correct what is wrong so that we pass along a more sound governance to the next group of board leaders.

At the conference I used the example of a road. The SNAP road is worn out and needs repair. For the next six months, we will be focusing on repairing potholes, some big, some small. The signs will say: "SNAP is open but under construction. Please pardon our dust as we make our road better."

How You can Help:

During those months I plan on working with the board and any capable volunteer on three important tasks

- A) Shoring up our finances so that we never again run out of money,
- B) Improving our governance by reviewing and adhering to our by-laws and developing accountability procedures so there are measures to ensure staff, board and leaders are compliant with SNAP's by-laws.
- C) Improving communications so that SNAPregains its communications edge.

How do we plan to do these things? With Working Groups for Finance, Governance, and Communications. We need volunteers for each of these groups. If you have a skill set or a passion related to these areas, please reach out to me. All Working Groups will be supported by our paid staff.

As to our finances, at the end of 2022, SNAP was down to \$51,000. This board identified two emergency grants that enabled us to survive 2023 and 2024. We let go of two people and now have a paid staff of three. Now that we've stabilized at a higher grant level, we want to raise another \$100,000 per year to afford an executive director. I'm working in the ED role for free for now and that is not sustainable. Help our treasurer with that fundraising work. Like you, he is a volunteer. What he offers is 40 years of finance background, a crucial skill in the role of treasurer and fundraising.

As to the Communications group, to me this is the most important Working Group to form. Communications touches everything we do. If you have writing, social media or general communication expertise, please help by reaching out to me.

For transparency's sake, I need to address a recent controversy. The Board received a letter from a group of people, some leaders, some not, who are upset with how the organization is being run. We are working with them to better understand their concerns. Once we do, we'll determine what next steps are necessary, including reporting to the broader leader community.

In closing, 2024 is almost in the books, and 2025 is a pivotal year. By this time next year, we plan to have these four functioning Working Groups, to have raised the money to hire a full-time executive director, to have added another three board members, and to have a policy in place to properly vet and onboard leaders in accordance with our by-laws and donor agreements.

I must express my appreciation for our board. We have six hardy souls who work for nothing, and all give a lot. They wear many hats and somehow find the time to meet as often as weekly when needed. They are:

Guila Benchimol – a survivor from the Jewish faith

Eduardo De La Casas – an Hispanic man, LGBTQ, abused in the Catholic church

Judy Larsen – a Mormon who was abused in the Catholic church

Dan McNevin – No faith, abused when in the Catholic church

Paul Peterson – a Baptist who was abused in the Catholic church

Also, a special shout out to Hana Dingle. Hana was our summer intern who is still doing some volunteering for us.

I will endeavor to communicate updates to you every month. Feel free to hold me to that.

Thank you,

Shaun,

President of the Board, and Interim Executive Director, abused in the Catholic church

Shaun Dougherty

814-341-8386

sdougherty@snapnetwork.org

<https://www.snapnetwork.org/>

SNAP · PO Box 16376, Chicago, IL 60616, United States

This email was sent to susan8324@gmail.com. To stop receiving emails, [click here](#).

You can also keep up with SNAP on Facebook.