Nonprofits accomplish amazing things. They are the "good guys" in our society – helping those who cannot fully help themselves. Our nonprofit client, with more than a century of helping at-risk children and families build better lives, is no exception.

The need for their services has grown steadily. The agency offers community-based programs like foster care and adoption services; counseling; residential group homes; and community support and early childhood education – all spread out over nine locations.

Our nonprofit client – which touches the lives of more than 2,800 people annually – looked to technology to help improve productivity, gain faster network speed and adopt technology that would streamline documentation for case managers in the field. 3Points composed a plan to help the social services agency thrive using technology. The new technology tools even led to a surprising outcome: a sharp reduction in staff turnover.

Connectivity Gave Us "Extra Hours"

They are the first to admit she is not a technology expert. Yet, their COO says the responsibility of IT fell under her directive. "I'm a therapist," she said, "so I asked a lot of questions. I realized, when looking at 3Points' plan, that they were right. It was what we needed to be doing."

After a technology audit, 3Points started with a list of 10 things that included new PCs, a better backup solution, cloud-based applications and laptops in the field. Like most nonprofits, the social services agency couldn't do it all so 3Points helped prioritize the list.

Prior to 3Points, case managers and support staff would spend up to 30 minutes going through ten or more screens just to get to the information they needed. Entering notes was frustrating. Sometimes the information didn't even save properly. 3Points brought them light years ahead with cloud computing and 120 new laptops/PCs. She said most of the 129 staff members were so impressed with how 3Points improved network speed and connectivity, many asked the question: "Now what are they going to do for us?"

The answer hit upon one of the most important areas for a nonprofit: documentation and workflow. 3Points would use technology to streamline this critical step.

More Documentation, More Revenues, More Helping Others

Case managers and other professionals travel all over the Chicagoland area – as far south as Harvey and as far west as Elgin. They make visits to family homes or meet people in places like McDonalds or Panera. Visits last up to 90 minutes, generating lots of notes. Prior to 3Points, staff returned to the office to complete and enter documentation electronically, delaying submission of information and eventual reimbursement from the State of Illinois.

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Cloud computing means applications are accessible from any computer with an Internet connection. This freed their staff to take the office with them – literally.

Case managers now capture information real-time by using a destination's Wi-Fi or creating a hot spot with their phones. Specific criteria mandated by the State of Illinois include the description of the intervention, the client's response, and next steps. Notes are securely saved with reliable backup. A supervisor reviews and approves notes faster speeding up the billing process. "The more documentation, the more we bill, the more revenue we bring in," She adds.

New computers and software have also helped the resource development team cultivate donors, capturing donor levels and sending reminders to specific lists about upcoming fundraisers and sponsorship opportunities. With the new laptops, the development team takes thier story to potential sponsors and donors with poignant PowerPoints and other information.

Technology Influences Sustainability and Turnover Rate

3Points tackles technology in stages, which helps them budget and plan. "They identified that our fax machine, copy machine and printers were so archaic we couldn't even get the cartridges any longer. We now have new machines – all-in-one printers. They increased our firewalls and we now have minimal risk of people coming in and getting our information. In my eyes, they are superheroes" she said.

With more than a century of making a difference, they recognize the role of technology in continuing its mission. "Having the right technology allows us to provide better services and to be more proactive with our billing," she said.

Of course, the key to improving service is often found in the quality of people delivering it. This is where they realized significant impact from technology. Three

years ago, the turnover rate was 65 percent. She joined in 2013 and shares how, during a staff meeting, the chief of staff asked all the new people to stand. She turned to the person next to her and quipped that there were far more standing than sitting. That was then. In 2015, the turnover rate dropped to 32 percent and so far in 2016 that number is even less.

What's the connection between technology and retention? She points out that "people are committed when they have the right technology." 3Points helped train staff, ensuring early adoption. Technology impacts the leadership team too as sharing information translates into a more cohesive team with no silos. She works closely with their CEO Dan Kotowski and VP of Resource Development April Redzic.

She has 3Points on speed dial, including personal numbers of her contacts there. "They are phenomenal. They also believe in our mission so there hasn't been a fundraiser where they haven't shown us support. The key is you have to have a partnership with your IT team, a partnership based on trust. When I don't know something, I call Steve or Kevin and I ask them. In a few moments, they put it into my terms. They don't make me feel bad that I didn't know and we laugh about it. I'm never going into IT. I never want to go into IT. I have 3Points."