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**- Murali Muraleetharan,  
Clovernook Center for the Blind**

Left to Right: Murali Muraleetharan, Kathy Ivie, Clovernook Center for the Blind and Rich Batterberry - Barnes Dennig

## **Superior Service and Speedy Audit Turnaround Impress Local Not-For-Profit / Manufacturer**

**Barnes Dennig helps organization through internal accounting staff transitions; returns audit in tight timeframe.**

Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, a not-for-profit organization located in North College Hill—a suburb of Cincinnati, Ohio—used to work with a large, international accounting firm to handle its audit and tax needs. But after a few years, the Clovernook board decided it was time to make a change. So they switched to Barnes Dennig in 1999.

“When we first began working with them, Clovernook was going through several transitions with their internal accounting staff,” recalls Rich Batterberry, a Barnes Dennig Director. “As it worked out, we were kind of the glue that held the finance side together. We provided continuity, and I think that was a big help to them.”

When the turnover settled, Murali Muraleetharan came on board as Clovernook’s vice president of finance. Although he wasn’t involved in the selection of Barnes Dennig as the organization’s audit and tax return provider, he sees no reason to change.

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“They really do a good job,” Muraleetharan says. “They plan the audit very well, selecting the areas to concentrate on based on previous experience. Barnes Dennig also has a planning meeting with us where we schedule the audit timing, and then they follow that plan.”

Timing is critical to Muraleetharan, who instituted a goal of presenting the audit to the Clovernook board at their first meeting prior to the organization’s April 30 financial year-end—typically about seven weeks later. The quick turnaround helps Clovernook meet the requirements of their grants and for fundraising, as well as allows the board to close the books on the previous year to better focus on the future.

“The turnaround time is just amazing to me,” notes Julia Kyser, Barnes Dennig engagement specialist. “But over the years we’ve worked together to improve processes on both sides, so Clovernook can have their final audit report by mid-June.”

The audit process is so refined, in fact, that Barnes Dennig auditors only spend about a week on-site at Clovernook gathering the information they need. This not only includes testing transactions, confirming investments, and reviewing the cash balance—all typical not-for-profit data—but also observing Clovernook’s inventory and evaluating their investments in capital equipment and accounts receivable. This is because the organization also has a sizeable manufacturing facility that produces braille printing, paper cups, and manila folders, among other items, making them somewhat unique in the not-for-profit world.

Muraleetharan appreciates the relatively minimal demands on his, and his staff’s, time.

“When the auditors are here, you need to spend your time answering their questions and filling in the information schedule,” he says. “It saves an awful lot of time when Barnes Dennig is here, because they’re only around for a week—they’re in and out in a flash because they do their homework so well.”

In fact, Clovernook has been so happy with Barnes Dennig’s audit work, they’ve entrusted the firm to handle their 990 Tax Return preparation, as well as audit their pension plan.

And Muraleetharan, a former auditor himself with over 16 years of experience with two large, international accounting firms, knows good service when he sees it. Quickly returned phone calls, the accessibility of the entire Barnes Dennig field team to answer questions at any time, and general professionalism coupled with expertise, he says, makes their working relationship a pleasant one.



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