Voinovich Spotlight: Shmuel Roth

The Voinovich School’s master of public administration program does significant work with nonprofits in southeast Ohio. One former student—Shmuel Roth—returned to the Voinovich School and TechGROWTH Ohio after graduation to continue this work.

Before college Roth entered the business world, owning and operating his own custom wood workshop for seven years in his home state of Illinois. As an undergraduate at Ohio University, he studied math, science, and political science with a particular interest in seeing how the political environment influences the scientific community. When he returned to school for his master’s degree, he knew the Voinovich School was a perfect fit, and stayed as a business consultant after he finished the program.

“In my time as an undergraduate, in my time as graduate student, and in my time working at TechGROWTH I just fell in love with the region, really, and southeast Ohio has a lot of means and has a lot of ways that I can serve,” he said.

Roth has many goals for his time with the Voinovich School. “There are so many things that I wanted to get back to work for, so many causes I wanted to champion, so many personal interests and so many personal desires I wanted to address in the workplace.” Searching for a way to address these many interests, he began developing a venture that will provide co-working space, consultation, shared services, grant writing, education and development opportunities, and potential funding sources for regional nonprofits. Through this “coalition of the giving,” comprised of the many organizations and resources that serve nonprofits in the area, he hopes to create a space to serve, develop, and start new nonprofits that will enhance the collective public good in southeast Ohio.

He currently serves as treasurer of the Ohio Valley Summer Theater, a nonprofit community theater, and sits on the board of ReUse Industries, a used goods store aiming to redirect waste stream products into usable items. Roth attributes these opportunities to his graduate studies.

“I wouldn’t have established those connections or possibly those interests had it not been for the MPA program,” he said.

Roth believes the Voinovich School not only offers its students training and opportunities, but also an important focus on encouraging social change and making a positive impact on the community.

“It’s an excellent home for people who have a social purpose they want to champion,” he said. “Whether it be serving people through government or serving people through nonprofit causes, it is an excellent home for social purpose, advocacy, and innovation.”