

THE JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T.

MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

## News Release

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### MacArthur Foundation gathers county leaders to explore new ideas in community-building

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PALM BEACH COUNTY--Strengthening the bonds of community through new methods of leadership and collaboration can play a major role in the revitalization and growth of Palm Beach County. This message formed the core theme of the presentation that representatives of the New York-based Committee for Economic Development (CED) made today to Palm Beach County's business, political and community leaders.

The presentation marked the second installment of the *Community Matters* series that the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation instituted and sponsors [SEE *Why It Matters*].

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"A primary objective of today's forum was to explore ways that businesses, policymakers and community-based organizations could collaborate on community-building issues," said Carmen M. Ayala, the Foundation's director of communications. "We wanted to open a dialogue on some new approaches that might merit further consideration."

The Foundation invited Sol Hurwitz, president of the CED, and Marc Bendick, project director for one of CED's major policy papers on community redevelopment, to lead the discussions. The forum consisted of four segments: a communitywide breakfast assembly, followed by three separate and small-scale roundtables. One roundtable was held for community-based organizations, another for businesses and the third for policymakers.

Hurwitz and Bendick devoted much of their discussion to the challenge of moving community-building from concept to reality. Businesses play a pivotal role in making or breaking the building of community, said the speakers, and governments and community-based organizations need to partner on more programs.

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Hurwitz and Bendick based their presentation on the landmark policy statement addressing community restoration that CED recently formulated. Now being implemented in five U.S. cities, CED's recommendations will provide the framework for a national approach to rebuilding American cities.

Nonprofit and nonpartisan, the Committee for Economic Development is one of the country's foremost "think tanks" in the areas of economic and social research. Its 250-member board of trustees consists primarily of the presidents of the nation's leading universities and major corporations. In addition to its work in community-building, the CED has taken on issues such as saving the Social Security system, sustaining America's science and technology bases, and strengthening the connection between education and economic opportunities.

The MacArthur Foundation, founded in 1978, is one of the major philanthropic institutions in the country. In Florida, the Foundation's Philanthropy office awards grants in one of the Foundation's two core areas of giving, Human and Community Development. The Operations office manages the Foundation's real estate investments in the state, most of which are in Palm Beach and Martin counties. Although the real estate and philanthropy arms of the Foundation function independently from one another, both are concerned with issues relating to successful and sustainable communities.

The Foundation's Florida offices are in Palm Beach Gardens; its headquarters are in Chicago.

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## *Why It Matters*

In managing its real estate investments, part of the mission of the MacArthur Foundation in Florida is to help create a successful and sustainable community. The *Community Matters* series speaks to this goal.

The Foundation instituted *Community Matters* in 1996 as a way of bringing together diverse groups of people to discuss topics relating to community. These are issues that often appear to be germane to only one segment of the community, but in reality affect all of us in Palm Beach County.

The *Community Matters* series provides an opportunity for business leaders, policy makers and members of community-based organizations to literally sit down at the table with one another and discuss these issues. (Assigned seating ensures a cross-section of communicants.)

In selecting speakers and topics, the Foundation draws on its resources as an international philanthropic institution concerned with major human issues. The objective is to bring to Palm Beach County individuals and viewpoints that might not otherwise find their way to our community.

The desired outcome? To stimulate thinking, conversation and new ways of sustaining the Palm Beach County community.

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### *About the Foundation*

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