

2017 Annual Conference on Citizenship

Strengthening Civic Life in America

Thursday October 19, 2017

5:00 **Registration Open**

6:00 **Opening Remarks**

Garrett Graff, Chairman, National Conference on Citizenship

6:15 **Dinner and Awards Presentations**

Franklin Award

Presenter: **Sally T. Prouty**, Interim CEO, National Conference on Citizenship

Recipient: **Robert L. Gordon III**, President, Be the Change, Inc.

The National Conference on Citizenship shares Ben Franklin's belief that "to provide benefits for the common good is divine." In his name, the Franklin Award is given annually to an outstanding individual whose federal service and beyond have worked to strengthen citizenship in America.

Major George A. Smith HOOAH Award

Presenter: **Michael Weiser**, Chairman Emeritus, National Conference on Citizenship

Recipient: **Eli Williamson**, Co-Founder and Board President, Leave No Veteran Behind

The Major George A. Smith HOOAH Award recognizes a notable veteran who defines their citizenship through service to our country in uniform and beyond.

7:00 **Exploring Civic Learning as a Pathway to Equity and Opportunity**

A collaboration between the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) and Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE)

This salon discussion, led by NCoC and Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE), explores civic learning as a tool to equip communities in addressing the challenges and divisions they face. Join us to discuss how we can begin to reclaim civics during this divisive time, enable communities to build an inclusive foundation of committed changemakers, and embrace the civic learning of our young people as part of a solutions-oriented approach to addressing the issues facing our country.

Learnings from this session will be released as a brief, co-authored by PACE and NCoC, outlining key recommendations which will spark further discussion and inform a working session to be held in early 2018. Attendees are invited to respond to the dialogue via blogs, op-eds, and other forums.

Objectives:

- Advance dialogue and explore the potential of civic learning as a pathway to equity and opportunity, by equipping young people to be a part of building the solutions to tackle their communities' challenges
- Generate conversations and learnings about the power of civic learning to address societal inequities, improve community outcomes, and find a place for everyone in the civic experience
- Identify tangible ways philanthropy and other leaders can support and invest in civic learning as a mechanism to influence equity and opportunity outcomes

7:00 **Panel Presentation**

Moderator: **Kristen Cambell**, Executive Director, Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement

Student Speaker: **Maya Branch**, Alum and Student, Mikva Challenge DC and Temple University

Panelists:

Rebecca Burgess, Program Manager, American Enterprise Institute's Program on American Citizenship

Decker Ngongang, Fellow, Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement

Verdis Robinson, National Director, The Democracy Commitment

Robert Sainz, Assistant General Manager in charge of operations including the Economic and Workforce Development Department, City of Los Angeles

7:45 **Audience Q & A and Framing of Discussion**

8:05 **Facilitated Roundtable Discussions**

8:20 **Closing Summary Remarks**

Maya Branch, Alum and Student, Mikva Challenge DC and Temple University

Keesha Gaskins-Nathan, Director for the Democratic Practice – United States Program at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Thank you to the following partners who gave input to this session: American Democracy Project, Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, Campus Compact, Center for Law and Social Policy, Center on Democracy and Citizenship (Augsburg College), Civic Nation, The Democracy Commitment, iCivics, the Jack Miller Center, National Constitution Center, National Issues Forum Institute, the Ogdon Collaborative, Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute, and Tufts University's Tisch College of Civic Life.

8:30 **Concluding Remarks and Overview of Friday's Sessions**

7:00 **Continental Breakfast**

8:00 **Welcome and Overview**

Sally T. Prouty, Interim CEO, National Conference on Citizenship

8:15 **Keynote Address**

Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic

Sam Quinones, a journalist, former LA Times reporter, storyteller, and author of three acclaimed books of narrative nonfiction including *Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic*

Opiate addiction has devastated hundreds of cities, small towns, and suburbs across America. *Dreamland* is the riveting story of how that happened. Named after a sprawling swimming pool in a blue-collar town of Portsmouth, Ohio, *Dreamland* is the story of colliding interests and unwitting victims, and the corrosion of a once-thriving community. Sam Quinones chronicles the story of life in Portsmouth—a reflection of many other American communities—from devastation to the beginning steps toward recovery. And at the end of a multi-year research effort, he has come to believe that the “antidote to heroin is community.”

9:00 ***Dreamland* Response**

A panel responds to Mr. Quinones' presentation by providing positive examples of actions that are being taken to repair the civic fabric of communities.

Objectives:

- Explore if and how a focus on civic renewal can support communities in recovery from critical challenges, including the devastation resulting from the opiate epidemic
- Identify tangible ways philanthropy and others can join forces in support of action steps designed to repair the civic fabric of communities

Moderator: **Margaret Talbot**, Staff Writer, The New Yorker, author of *The Addicts Next Door*

Panelists:

Deidra Lewis-Robertson, Director of Operation H.O.P.E. (Helping Our Pupils Excel), Community Renewal International

Mary Hyde, Director of Research and Evaluation, Corporation for National and Community Service

William Muse, President Emeritus, National Issues Forums Institute

Sam Quinones, author of *Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic*

10:15 **Reflective Breakout Session**

Room assignments are indicated on the back of your name badge.

A guided, small-group discussion among conference participants.

What steps will be required if we are to assume individual and collective responsibility for strengthening civic life in America with the goal of aiding communities in responding effectively to the challenges they face - including the opiate epidemic? Participants will reflect on previous sessions and share ideas regarding individual and collective action steps that will be required.

Objective:

- Provide participants the opportunity to reflect on civic learning as a pathway to equity and opportunity and the opiate epidemic presentation and panel discussion

11:15 **Networking Expo**

11:45 **Lunch**

12:15 **2017 Joseph H. Kanter Citizen of the Year Award**

Presenter: **Senator Robert Graham**

Recipient: **Robert D. Putnam**, Malkin Professor of Public Policy, Harvard University

The Joseph H. Kanter Citizen of the Year Award is named in honor of NCoC's long-time Chairman, Joseph H. Kanter. It aims to recognize the extraordinary contributions of a private citizen in furthering the cause of civic engagement and democratic practice.

12:30 **Keynote Address**

How Did We Get Here? Social Change in America, 1900 – 2020

Robert D. Putnam, Malkin Professor of Public Policy, Harvard University

By a 3:1 margin Americans on all parts of the political spectrum today say that our country “is on the wrong track.” This is the worst of times: Deep and accelerating inequality; political polarization; social fragmentation; public and private narcissism; the death of the American Dream. Yet by virtually all material measures, it should be the best of times, for we are healthier, wealthier, and have niftier gadgets than ever. How did we get here? Within living memory all these adverse trends were going in the opposite direction—for decades America was becoming steadily more equal, less polarized, more socially connected, less self-centered. Putnam’s newest research traces one massive swing of the national pendulum over the last 120 years from an “I” society to a “we” society but then back to an “I” society. The challenge is not to celebrate a past that we cannot recreate, but to seek lessons from our history to create for the 21st century a new, more diverse, and more encompassing sense of “we.”

1:15 **Panel Discussion: Exploring what we can do to strengthen civic health and enable equal access to the American Dream**

Over the last 15 years, Harvard social scientist Robert Putnam has released two groundbreaking bestsellers, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* and *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*. His forthcoming book will knit these works together, exploring the relationship between various trends in civic health and economic inequality over the last century. NCoC has been committed to “big citizenship”—enabling more Americans to engage in the civic lives of their communities and country—and will release the 2017 update to the nation, *Civic Deserts: America’s Civic Health Challenge*. A wealth of studies shows strong linkages between civic health and better outcomes in education, public safety, health, the economy, and good government. One of America’s biggest challenges is closing the opportunity or inequality gap. This engaging panel of leaders at the national, state, and local levels will explore what we can do to strengthen civic health and enable equal access to the American Dream.

Objectives:

- Explore the relationship between declining civic health and a growing opportunity gap. Highlight promising efforts underway to strengthen civic engagement as a means to increasing opportunity.
- Discuss bold ideas that could strengthen our civic health and provide more equal access to the American Dream.
- Identify tangible ways philanthropy and others can support and utilize the study of civic health as a tool for aiding communities and the nation in addressing the inequality gap.

Moderator:

John Bridgeland, CEO, Civic Enterprises, Chair, NCoC National Advisory Committee

Panelists:

Diane Douglas, Executive Director, Seattle CityClub

Shawn Healy, Democracy Program Director, Robert R. McCormick Foundation

Valeriano Ramos, Director of Strategic Alliances and Equity Officer, Everyday Democracy

Stuart Comstock-Gay, President and CEO, Delaware Community Foundation, representing Community Foundations Opportunity Network (CFON)

Robert Putnam, Malkin Professor of Public Policy at Harvard University

2:30 **Networking Expo**

3:00 **Challenge to Conference Participants**

Advancing, supporting, and modeling the strategic actions and behaviors that we want to see in ourselves and others.

NCoC, with support from its partners across the nation, is challenged to *Strengthen Civic Life in America*. At the core of our joint efforts is the belief that every person has the ability to help their community and country thrive.

- We have the power individually and collectively to influence change.
- Do we have the will to take a step back from currently held positions in an attempt to understand those who hold different positions, with the goal of bridge-building in ways that support positive change?
- What will it take to repair the civic fabric of our communities, begin closing the Opportunity Gap, and focus civic learning to support both?

Moderator: **Keesha Gaskins-Nathan**, Director for the Democratic Practice – United States Program at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Panelists:

Kristen Cambell, Executive Director, PACE

Rob Gordon, President, Be the Change, Inc.

3:45 **Closing Comments**

Garrett Graff, Chairman, National Conference on Citizenship

4:00 **2017 American Civic Collaboration Awards**

A presentation and networking reception hosted by Bridge Alliance and Big Tent Nation to present the inaugural “Civvys” awards, honoring and inspiring collaborative work.