



GREATER **NEW** ORLEANS FOUNDATION

PHILANTHROPY AT WORK

IMPACT

SPRING 2010



REGIONALISM



Dr. G. Albert Ruesga

Dr. G. Albert Ruesga, President & CEO

About the Cover: Thanks to our donors, we are helping to preserve oyster fishermen John and Kuzma Tesvich's way of life. (photo © Jackson Hill)

In partnership with Seedco Financial, the Greater New Orleans Foundation opened the Southeast Louisiana Fisheries Assistance Center in Belle Chasse. The center provides financial assistance and comprehensive business services to commercial fishermen, with a focus on fishermen in Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Jefferson, and Orleans Parishes. More than 450 fishermen have received either financial or technical assistance at the center.

In 2007, the board of the Greater New Orleans Foundation committed itself to helping rebuild two of the parishes hardest hit by the storms of 2005: Plaquemines and St. Bernard. The Foundation made a five-year commitment of money and talent to encourage philanthropy in these two parishes and to work in partnership with parish leaders to strengthen civic infrastructure. Then as now, our trustees realized that our fates were intertwined—that the good (or ill) that happened in one part of our region couldn't help but affect the rest.

If we want to effectively address some of our toughest challenges—economic development, environmental degradation, housing, transportation—our unit of analysis will need to be larger than a single parish. These are challenges that cross borders, that pay little heed to our neatly drawn political jurisdictions. And while cities and small towns may have driven Louisiana's 20th century economy, it's the state's larger metropolitan regions that will drive it in the 21st. These metropolitan areas concentrate human, economic, and cultural capital. It's

their ability to collaborate that will determine whether or not we will thrive in the emerging global economy.

The Greater New Orleans Foundation is committed to the equitable and sustainable development of our region, to the kind of regionalism that will help *all* our citizens. We're committed to helping our most vulnerable neighbors share in the region's prosperity because we realize that the principles of regionalism apply at the community level as well: the fate of any one of our neighborhoods is linked to that of all the others.

It was Meg Wheatley who once wrote that, "When we seek for connection, we restore the world to wholeness. Our seemingly separate lives become meaningful as we discover how truly necessary we are to each other." In this issue of *Impact* we describe just a few of the ways the Greater New Orleans Foundation is seeking to bring to our region to the kind of wholeness that Wheatley describes, crossing neighborhood, parish, and even state lines in service of that place each of us calls home.

Q & A WITH LINETTA J. GILBERT, FORD FOUNDATION



Linetta J. Gilbert is a senior program officer in community philanthropy at the Ford Foundation. She designed and co-directed Ford's Gulf Coast Transformation Initiative, which oversaw the investment of over \$100 million in philanthropic resources in this region. Linetta's career in grantmaking began at the Greater New Orleans Foundation where she worked for 10 years. Last year, Linetta received the highest awards in her profession—the Council on Foundation's Scrivner Award for her courage in making creative grants, and the Critical Impact Award for her innovative leadership in advancing the common good.

Q: *What grantmaking principles did you learn at the Greater New Orleans Foundation that remained with you at Ford?*

A: I learned to listen. When I came to Ford, I spent the first year listening to people in various communities around the country and the world. By listening, you learn to acknowledge the life experiences of all kinds of people and what their core opportunities and challenges are. Grantmakers may have the resources, but not always the answers. It begins with listening.

Q: *What are your thoughts in regards to the local recovery efforts?*

A: What New Orleanians have done in the past five years is equivalent to 10 to 15 years of work. You've had to re-create community, not just infrastructure, and no U.S. city has had to do that before. It is crucial to work toward a shared community vision, to bring together a community that works for everyone. There were many people who left New Orleans angry. It's time to create the environment that says, "Welcome home."

Q: *What is the role that the Greater New Orleans Foundation serves?*

A: New Orleans, the state, and the region have functioned with inequities for hundreds of years. Now is the time for everyone to begin looking at

what we can become if we put our minds together for the good of all its people. The Foundation is poised to be the engine that enables New Orleans residents and those of the region to imagine a different and brighter future.

Q: *Everything you touch seems to last. What does an organization need most to keep it going?*

A: It takes leadership. Organizations need leaders who are committed to their mission, imagine the future, and manage relationships and resources. At Ford, we invest in building individual leaders and institutional leadership within organizations as we invest in social impact.

Q: *If you created a bumper sticker, what would it say?*

A: Invest in People. Invest in Hope.

Q: *Is it true you are leaving Ford at the end of the year?*

A: Yes, I will be retiring from Ford, but not from my profession. I am considering the next leadership move to culminate my career.

We're certain that whatever Linetta does next will bring much success.

COMMUNITY

FOUNDATION

A NEW CENTER FOR CENTRAL CITY

The first five years of life are the most crucial years determining success through high school and beyond, but 90 percent of Central City's children are entering kindergarten at a three-year-old developmental level. The Mahalia Jackson Center, opening this spring, aims to reverse that trend.

"This will be a one-stop shop for children and families, with services from pre-natal through

kindergarten all in one place," says Pat Cooper, president and CEO.

The school will teach young children and provide outreach to other neighborhood child-care centers. Adult education will include technology training, GED preparation, parenting, nutrition, and more. Families can access a health clinic, public library, fitness center, arts and culture and music practice

rooms, and social services. With referrals provided for any services not offered on-site, no one will be turned away.

Movies will be screened at the theater in the meeting room, which looks out on the courtyard, community garden, playground, and citrus grove. Trees, benches, hanging plants, and a fountain will make the Center a place to relax, socialize, and have fun.

Cooper has worked as superintendent in St. Francisville and McComb, where the one-stop shop model has brought higher test scores, a near 100 percent graduation rate, and a 70 percent reduction in juvenile violent crime. The Mahalia Jackson Center will serve Central City, with six other centers planned in additional New Orleans neighborhoods over the next 10 years.

The Mahalia Jackson Center received a Community IMPACT grant from the Greater New Orleans Foundation. The Center is a project of the Central City Funders Collaborative, of which GNOF is a member.

Pat Cooper is president and CEO of the Mahalia Jackson Center, which will open this spring in Central City. Cooper served for more than 20 years as superintendent at the highly successful early childhood learning centers in St. Francisville and McComb, Mississippi, before bringing his expertise to New Orleans.



A "LIVING" GRANT

Carol Bebel is executive director and co-founder of the Ashé Cultural Arts Center. One of many GNOF grantees on Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard, Ashé was able to buy the building it rented and turn the apartments on the upper floors into affordable living for artists.

INTRODUCING COASTAL 5+1: REGIONAL SOLUTIONS FOR A REGION'S SURVIVAL

The most serious challenges to the Greater New Orleans region don't recognize differences between urban and rural communities, and the lines we draw on maps certainly don't contain them. These are issues of coastal land loss and growing vulnerability to storms—challenges that confront the very existence of one of America's most culturally vibrant and ecologically important areas.

Nothing could bring home the region's interdependence as profoundly as Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent levee failures. Just as the disaster wreaked havoc across neighboring communities, it laid bare the need for regional solutions for survival. Coastal 5+1 is the Greater New Orleans Foundation's vehicle to help answer this need and bring regionalism to the fore in planning, policymaking, and grant funding.

The name Coastal 5+1 encapsulates the geographic reach of this initiative. It refers to our region's five coastal parishes—St. Bernard, Plaquemines, lower Jefferson, Terrebonne, and Lafourche—plus Orleans Parish, the urban hub containing New Orleans itself.

"THAT 'PLUS ONE' IS KEY because it acknowledges the shared fate of the region's largest city and its neighboring rural communities," says Marco Cocito-Monoc, director of regional initiatives for the Greater New Orleans Foundation. "Through Coastal 5+1, we'll build a regional agenda to make our communities more resilient in the face of this crisis." Our best solutions can simultaneously increase environmental sustainability and foster new economic opportunity for the region.



Ric Smith, chairman of the Jefferson Community Foundation, at the future home of the Jefferson Chamber Foundation Academy.

ST. BERNARD COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

After Hurricane Katrina, most of St. Bernard Parish was underwater, nearly every structure was damaged, and the population was completely, if temporarily, displaced. Faced with such widespread destruction and social disruption, local leaders of the St. Bernard Community Foundation determined they could do the most for their community by helping residents who were forging ahead.

"Our focus has been on supporting community groups as they lead the rebuilding of our neighborhoods and our parish," says Robert Showalter, chairman of the St. Bernard Community Foundation and CFO of Boasso America Corp. The foundation hired nationally-renowned Healthy Neighborhoods founder David Boehlke to convene a cross-section of residents and business leaders. Together, they identified the enduring community assets that make St. Bernard special and crafted a strategy to market them.

"The recovery of our schools and recreation resources since Katrina have been astounding success stories, and making our neighborhoods more attractive and appealing to returning residents and newcomers is another key piece of the equation in rebuilding this community," says Showalter.

"We tell everyone how great it's been to work with the Greater New Orleans Foundation," says Showalter. "They have the experience and they share that institutional knowledge with us. That means we don't have to go it alone and learn lessons the hard way. Instead, we can focus our efforts on rebuilding a better community here."

JEFFERSON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Seeded with \$100,000 per year for five years, each of the Greater New Orleans Foundation's community-based affiliate foundations empower local leaders to make local funding decisions in their parishes.

For instance, since forming in 2008 the Jefferson Community Foundation has focused on quality of life issues to stabilize neighborhoods and encourage investment by new homeowners. The foundation has supported façade improvement programs, and directed grants to community groups beautifying targeted neighborhoods.

"These are projects where we can apply modest funds to make a significant and immediate impact on community pride and the perception of neighborhoods," says Ric Smith, chairman of the Jefferson Community Foundation and president of Metairie Bank.

Education has been the foundation's second major area of focus, with early support for the Jefferson Chamber Foundation Academy. The new high school will be the country's first charter school run by a Chamber of Commerce and will offer a curriculum designed to prepare at-risk students for success in the increasingly competitive workforce.

"What the Greater New Orleans Foundation has done is help us move past charity and get to philanthropy," Smith says. "Recognizing what it takes to make a grant most meaningful and effective is what the Greater New Orleans Foundation is enabling us to do now with its support and expertise."



Robert Showalter, chairman of the St. Bernard Community Foundation, in front of one of several signs they donated to the Hannan Complex.

PLAQUEMINES COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Plaquemines Parish contains the last leg of the mighty Mississippi River, and its long and ecologically rich coastline makes it one of the nation's most productive commercial fishing communities. Plaquemines is also home to key port facilities and is the center of Louisiana's citrus industry. This all adds up to an area where heritage and economics often go hand-in-hand.

"Our traditional industries shape our way of life in Plaquemines, so we're doing our part to support the sectors that are so important to our people here," says Perry Triche, chairman of the Plaquemines Community Foundation.

Working with its neighbors at the St. Bernard Community Foundation, the Plaquemines Community Foundation helped create the Southeast Louisiana Fisheries Assistance Center to bolster the local fishing industry. Operated by the national nonprofit Seedco Financial and based in the Plaquemines Parish town of Belle Chasse, this is the first comprehensive, one-stop center for technical and financial assistance for fisheries in the country. Here, local fishermen can access free business planning, explore grant opportunities and low-interest loan programs, and tap an array of industry-specific training services, all close to their homes and their docks.

To assist local citrus growers, the foundation helped fund an alternative crop project now testing the viability of blueberry and peach cultivation in the parish, which could bring more diverse harvests in coming years.



Perry Triche, chairman of the Plaquemines Community Foundation, at the Southeast Louisiana Fisheries Assistance Center.

INVESTMENT IN HOUSING

THE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE: INVESTMENTS MAKING AN IMPACT

Positive change in the affordable housing system holds the promise of far-reaching benefits for New Orleans, from driving economic development in neighborhoods to fostering greater civic engagement. It has the power to uplift communities and transform lives.

With the support and participation of 22 national and local foundations, the Greater New Orleans Foundation launched the Community Revitalization Fund in 2007. Since that time, the Fund

has made 40 investments totaling \$13.6 million to support housing and community development in Orleans Parish. The Fund is a vehicle for implementing lasting improvements to the housing system in New Orleans and nurturing a more effective and responsive infrastructure. This takes the work of the Fund far beyond grantmaking alone and makes it a uniquely powerful tool for planning, convening, and mobilizing our community's nonprofits, busi-

nesses, and government.

GNOF awards Community Revitalization grants to a diverse mix of organizations working to improve the New Orleans housing sector. These grantees are showcased on these pages. Each is making an important contribution to the sector, making a difference in our neighborhoods, and helping build back a stronger, healthier, more equitable New Orleans.

ACORN HOUSING To assist with the construction of 50 affordable housing units in the Lower Ninth Ward.

BAYOU DISTRICT FOUNDATION To help purchase lots and vacant homes in the area surrounding the St. Bernard public housing redevelopment site.

BROADMOOR DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION To help expand the Broadmoor Residential Housing Renovation Program for low income, elderly, and disabled Broadmoor residents.

CENTER FOR URBAN REDEVELOPMENT EXCELLENCE, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA To supplement Rockefeller Foundation support of the CUREx Scholars Program to improve the quality of the course experience, broaden exposure for scholars to national leaders, and help cement networks around the bare framework of the class schedule.

CENTRAL CITY RENAISSANCE ALLIANCE To develop a common baseline of data and analysis and a resulting unified strategy for investment and development that addresses housing needs at every economic level in Central City.

CITY-WORKS A matching grant for a feasibility study of the commercial district along South Claiborne serving the Broadmoor and Central City neighborhoods.

GLOBAL GREEN USA (N.O. RESOURCE CTR.) To support Global Green's Build It Back Right initiative to provide education, advocacy, and technical assistance to residents of New Orleans engaged in rebuilding.

GREATER NEW ORLEANS COMMUNITY DATA CENTER To create reliable data around housing and the recovery that is easy to use and will influence decision making at many levels including the production of an annual housing report.

GULF COAST HOUSING PARTNERSHIP To build Gulf Coast Housing Partnership's organizational capacity and project development portfolio to be self-sustaining through developer's fees by 2012.

JERICO ROAD EPISCOPAL HOUSING INITIATIVE To hire and train a housing project manager to drive the development of affordable housing in Central City.

LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION (LISC) To perform an organizational diagnostic for five new Orleans CDCs working with the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority to ensure long-term sustainability in the recovery and rebuilding of New Orleans.

LOUISIANA CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH DISASTER RESPONSE INC. (LCDR) To support volunteer construction efforts to rehab and rebuild 250 damaged homes for uninsured or under-insured homeowners.

LOUISIANA DISASTER RECOVERY FOUNDATION (LDRF) To extend the contract for a loaned executive to the City of New Orleans Office of Recovery and Development Administration.

LOUISIANA HOUSING ALLIANCE To support the coordination of efforts to retain resources for affordable rental housing.

LOWER 9TH WARD NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT NETWORK ASSOCIATION To quicken the pace of the return of 9th Ward residents and the resettlement of the Lower 9th Ward by providing housing case management to former residents.

MARY QUEEN OF VIETNAM CDC To provide financing for the Mary Queen of Vietnam Retirement Community in Eastern New Orleans.

MILANO THE NEW SCHOOL FOR MANAGEMENT AND URBAN POLICY To support a partnership between Milano and the University of New Orleans to develop and implement a Community Development Finance Curriculum at UNO.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY LAND TRUST NETWORK To provide interim technical assistance to entities interested in developing a Community Land Trust initiative in New Orleans.

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION To hire an additional homeownership counselor and a CFO.

NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING SERVICES To support the start-up of the NHS Design/Build program, which is a full-service community design center that provides housing and community design assistance for individuals and nonprofits.

NEW ORLEANS NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE (NONDC) To provide funding for Phase 1 of the development of a property information system and a geographic information system that will interface with data systems of the City of New Orleans.

NEW ORLEANS REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (NORA) To develop a property and geographic information system to interface with data systems at the City of New Orleans.

NEW ORLEANS VACANT PROPERTIES INITIATIVE To support the first two phases of the Vacant Property Reclamation Assistance Program.

OPERATION HELPING HANDS To expand the capacity of OHH's home renovation program to continue to respond to the critical needs of Katrina-impacted elderly and disabled homeowners in Orleans Parish.

ORLEANS RECOVERY FOUNDATION, LLC To fund the hiring of three key housing staff positions at the Office of Recovery and Development Administration.

PONCHARTRAIN PARK COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION To hire staff with relevant experience to lead the redevelopment of Ponchartrain Park. This grant was approved in conjunction with a \$500,000 Program Related Investment (PRI) approved to provide client enhancement to the project.

PRESERVATION RESOURCE CENTER (PRC) To hire staff who will advocate to stop the demolition of salvageable, historic homes; educate property owners regarding historic renovation options; purchase, repair, and sell blighted historic properties; and renovate historic homes owned by low income and elderly New Orleanians.

PROVIDENCE COMMUNITY HOUSING To support the acquisition of properties throughout the Treme and Tulane/Gravier neighborhoods to build and rehabilitate homes for working families and the elderly.

QATAR/TREME LAFITTE RENEWAL PROJECT To support the project management of a 60 home rehabilitation project serving low-income homeowners in the historic Treme.

RENAISSANCE NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION To build 400 units in the Gentilly and Irish Channel neighborhoods and to build staff capacity.

THE NHP FOUNDATION To support the construction and preservation of Walnut Square, a 209-unit mixed-use, mixed-income, affordable rental complex in Eastern New Orleans.

UNITY OF GREATER NEW ORLEANS To produce 108 workforce and permanent supportive housing units in Mid-City and to support 500 units in the development pipeline by the end of 2010.

Urban Conservancy To hire an intern to work as a liaison between the Oak Street Commercial District and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Urban Institute To design and implement the year-long speaker series New Orleans Housing Institute: Strategies that Work.

2009 HIGHLIGHTS

CONNECTING TO PROMOTE REGIONAL PHILANTHROPY, THE FOUNDATION CONTINUED ITS SUPPORT FOR ITS AFFILIATE FOUNDATIONS IN JEFFERSON, PLAQUEMINES, AND ST. BERNARD PARISHES AND BROADENED ITS REACH BY ALLOCATING \$625,000 TO NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING IMPORTANT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS IN ST. CHARLES, ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, ST. TAMMANY, LAFOURCHE, AND TERREBONNE PARISHES.

ADVISING WITH OTHERS, THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS FOUNDATION PRODUCED AND DELIVERED TO THE WHITE HOUSE A PAPER TITLED, "NEW ORLEANS AS A MODEL CITY" TO ENCOURAGE FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN THE REGION.

COLLABORATING THE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION FUND PARTNERED WITH 21 NATIONAL AND LOCAL FOUNDATIONS. TO DATE, A TOTAL OF 40 GRANTS TOTALING \$13 MILLION HAS SUPPORTED THE BUILDING OR REHABILITATION OF 6,500 NEW HOUSING UNITS IN ORLEANS PARISH.

REBUILDING TO HELP THE FIVE COASTAL PARISHES OF SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA CONFRONT PRESSING COASTAL ISSUES AND TURN NATIONAL ATTENTION TO LOUISIANA'S CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES, THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS FOUNDATION FORMED THE COASTAL 5+1 INITIATIVE.

LEADING ASSEMBLED A TEAM OF ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERTS TO AWARD \$500,000 TO 14 ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TO MAKE OUR REGION MORE SUSTAINABLE.

SUPPORTING TO ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL ECONOMY ON OUR NONPROFITS, THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS FOUNDATION LAUNCHED THE COMMUNITY IMPACT PROGRAM, AND AWARDED \$1 MILLION TO 49 ORGANIZATIONS.

ADVOCATING THE NEW ORLEANS COALITION ON OPEN GOVERNANCE WAS ESTABLISHED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE, COMMITTEE FOR A BETTER NEW ORLEANS, GREATER NEW ORLEANS COMMUNITY DATA CENTER, PUBLIC LAW CENTER FOR TULANE/LOYOLA LAW SCHOOLS, AND PUENTES TO HELP MAKE LOCAL GOVERNMENT MORE TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE.

COMMUNICATING THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS FOUNDATION LAUNCHED A COMPLETELY REDESIGNED WEBSITE, INTRODUCED THE SECOND LINE BLOG, AND ATTRACTED NEW FOLLOWERS ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER.

MAKING AN IMPACT

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