

## **WHO'S IN THE ROOM?**

### **ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTIONS**

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*This list includes descriptions of some of the organizations represented at this meeting.*

#### **Regional Equity Strategies for Sustainable Metropolitan Communities, Ford Foundation**

*Participant / Supporter: Carl Anthony*

I am responsible for the Ford Foundation's initiative, Regional Equity Strategies for Sustainable Metropolitan Communities. Ford is interested how philanthropy can respond to challenges of reducing poverty in the City of Camden and increasing its residents' access to opportunity both within the City and the region as a whole. The City of Camden is among the poorest in the United States in the richest state in the nation. It would be helpful to us to learn what the participants in the conference see as the main barriers to overcoming poverty and unemployment in Camden and what steps should be taken to overcome them.

#### **Annie E. Casey Foundation**

*Participant / Supporters: Roger Williams, Jim Gibson, Salin Geevarghese*

In its work in Camden, the Annie E. Casey Foundation aims to:

- Ensure that low-income children and families living in neighborhoods targeted for revitalization are better off as a result of responsible approaches to redevelopment and relocation;
- Support the development of mixed-income communities with high-performing schools;
- Improve the access of low-income children and families living in distressed neighborhoods to higher-quality opportunities available throughout the metropolitan region;
- Build partnerships with local and national philanthropies, other private funders, and public agencies in support of the efforts described above; and,
- Provide catalytic support to facilitate the above goals, working in partnership with state and local governments, and the private sector.

#### **The Reinvestment Fund (TRF)**

*Participants: Jeremy Nowak, Pat Smith, Sean Closkey, Alissa Weiss*

TRF has been working with various partners who we believe are capable of affecting change in Camden. Whether it's providing funding to St. Joseph's Carpenter Society so that they can continue rehabbing Camden's housing stock, or to Cooper's Ferry Development Corporation, so they can continue their successful recovery of Yorkship Square, TRF wants to help Camden revitalize. Without redevelopment, Camden will never be able to offer opportunities – education, workforce development, high quality of life – for its residents. At the same time, TRF is starting to work outside the city's limits. We will continue offering funds and technical assistance to effective implementing partners in the inner and outer ring suburbs, which will help us gain a regional view of the potential opportunities for growth. Additionally, we will be studying the housing markets outside the city in order to determine areas of growth and decline, which can help inform policy and investment decisions. All of

this work is to advance opportunities for both the city of Camden and its surrounding areas, with the knowledge that neither can survive without a healthy interdependence between the two.

### **Camden Community Connections**

*Participant: Martha Chavis, Eric Baines, Al Walker*

Camden Community Connections has as its main focus the delivery of innovative educational and employment services to 14-21 year old youth residing in Camden County. The program's focus is to increase, improve and/or enhance their self-motivation, interpersonal and coping skills employment and career assessment, job counseling and family relations.

The Camden County Prosecutors Office & The Camden County Workforce Investment Board in a joint community program effort, established a work & educational enhancement program for Camden City Youth. This program, funded by the Department of Labor, has brought together the best of Camden's resources in the justice system, workforce system and the faith based community in Camden City. The CCC Program provides positive yet reality based experience that prepares the youth for work, career opportunities and self-sufficiency.

### **New Jersey Regional Coalition**

*Participants: Paul Scully, Kate Atkins, Barbara Heisler-Williams*

The New Jersey Regional Coalition (NJRC) is a faith-based, grass roots organization composed of congregations, unions, community groups and policy advocates throughout the state of New Jersey. NJRC developed as a coalition of three regional groups: NJRC has dozens of member congregations, with thousands of families in each region of the state. NJRC organizes congregations around shared values and common interests. Its purpose is to support regional community organizing and provide coordination among regional groups, and with partners and allies.

There are unprecedented opportunities today in New Jersey around the issues of housing, land use, property tax and school funding reform. The opportunities result from an intersection of recent political trends: 1. debate around land use and sprawl; 2. intense political pressure growing out of severe fiscal distress and rising property taxes felt by towns and school districts throughout the state; and: 3. the hope, uncertainty and fear of middle and working families in response to a slowing economy, growth in foreign immigration and the shrinking supply of affordable to working people.

NJRC is working to bring about a different kind of outcome in New Jersey. One that brings poor, working and middle class constituencies from cities, suburbs and rural communities in New Jersey into a single conversation about the need to provide support for meaningful reform and to ensure that reform truly serves the interests of those communities most in need and directly harmed by the current policies.

### **The Mid-Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities (MARCH)**

*Participant / Co-host: Howard Gillette*

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities (MARCH) at Rutgers University-Camden is organized around a series of demonstration projects that develop innovative

humanities strategies and programs to improve the quality of life in the Mid-Atlantic. As a catalyst for collaboration and change, MARCH

- Advances understanding and appreciation of regional identity through research, training, communication, and public programming;
- Connects humanities organizations to each other and to their communities
- Informs discourse among policymakers, educators, community leaders, and the media; and
- Communicates a meaningful sense of place to create a picture of the Mid-Atlantic region as a locus of American diversity, past and present

### **Center for the Study of Social Policy, Washington, DC**

*Participant / Speaker: James O. Gibson*

In my role as a Senior Fellow at the Center for the Study of Social Policy in Washington, DC, I have served since 2000 as a consultant to the Annie E. Casey Foundation on its involvement with urban revitalization in Camden, New Jersey. I expect to continue to advise the Casey Foundation regarding initiatives that facilitate the full re-integration of the city of Camden into its regional economy. This focus includes support for technical assistance to the Camden municipal government, promotion of civic engagement by residents in the neighborhoods targeted for redevelopment, workforce development and other supportive services to ensure that low-income persons derive benefits from the redevelopment process, and the expansion of regional mobility for low-income and minority residents.

### **City of Camden and the Camden Redevelopment Agency**

*Participants: Melvin R. Primas, Jr. (Randy Primas) and Arijit De*

\*What do you see as the most strategic future opportunities for your organization/the region? The greatest opportunity that the CRA/City has is to use Redevelopment initiatives to increase the tax base in the City and reduce the burden on the State to provide increasing amounts of (band) aid to the city, a cost which is ultimately borne by the tax payers of the State. In addition there are regional opportunities to share services, both municipal and supportive, to increase efficiency and reduce the financial burden for the participants. \*How does a regional perspective inform your work and how does your work advance a regional perspective? The concentration of poverty in Camden vs. the region leads to increased specialized services that the city needs to provide. By not supporting the addition of additional affordable housing units in the City, other than affordable housing opportunities for our existing residents. This strategy advances the idea that there is the equitable distribution of affordable housing opportunities across the region and State. \*How does your work inform, advance, or depend on a workforce development strategy? The overall redevelopment strategy involves the idea of recreating economically and socially diverse neighborhoods. While part of this is the attraction of a new middle class population into the City, the more important and concurrent strategy is to maximize human capital opportunities and work on upward mobility for our residents. This clearly depends on an informed and workable workforce development strategy.

### **Cooper's Ferry Development Association**

*Participants: Tom Corcoran (speaker), Joe Myers, Jenny Greenberg, Melinda Sanchez*

The goals of Cooper's Ferry Development Association (CFDA) over the past 22 years have been to: establish a new center of economic activity that can help rebuild Camden's depleted tax base; create a significant number of jobs for City residents; and help improve Camden's image as a place within which to live, work, visit, and invest. Since its inception, CFDA has successfully attracted and coordinated more than \$500 million of private and public investment into the City's downtown waterfront. Serving as overall planner, promoter, and master developer for the waterfront, CFDA has put in place the building blocks for a vibrant, mixed-use waterfront community with the primary economic catalyst being family entertainment.

Based upon its success in the downtown waterfront, CFDA has begun to work with other communities in Camden in 2001 that face redevelopment challenges, particularly those in industrial or formerly industrial areas along the Delaware River and the back channel of the Delaware River. Working to establish a new base for economic activity and to improve the quality of life, CFDA has been invited to enter into formal partnerships to provide its technical assistance on the implementation of the neighborhoods' development plans while also strengthening the organizational capacity for each group. As partners, CFDA provides its expertise in areas including land assembly, brownfield remediation, infrastructure development, identification of public and private funding and navigation of local, county and state reviews and approvals.

### **Roundtable on Community Change, The Aspen Institute**

*Participants: Anne Kubisch and Patricia Auspos*

The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change is a national forum where leaders working on innovative and promising community revitalization efforts can share strategies and lessons and work on common challenges. In recent years, many community-based initiatives have become increasingly cognizant of the fact that they must develop deliberate strategies to connect more effectively with resources and power bases outside of their neighborhoods, and to leverage those external resources on behalf of the community. This has led to new efforts to understand metropolitan and regional economies and to determine how community-based actors can link to and benefit from those larger market forces. The Aspen Roundtable is studying the strategies that various community institutions are using to strengthen community connections to the outside and the outcomes that result for communities and their residents.

### **STRIVE International**

*Participant / Speaker: Jose M. Adorno*

\*What do you see as the most strategic future opportunities for your organization/the region? Being able to set the standard for moving "hard-to-employ" individuals into the mainstream workforce and helping them rapidly exit, or avoid altogether, the designation of "working poor." \*How does a regional perspective inform your work and how does your work advance a regional perspective? A regional perspective informs workforce development by tying together the entire ancillary needs of "hard-to-employ" individuals as they navigate their way

back into the mainstream. Workforce development informs a regional perspective because it provides the structure and discipline that individuals will need as they begin to explore home ownership, community activism, and good citizenship, as well as buy-in to the many “brick and mortar” economic development initiatives slated for the Camden region. \*How does your work inform, advance, or depend on a workforce development strategy? We are the strategy.

### **The Camden Higher Education and Healthcare Task Force**

*Participant: Louis S. Bezich*

The Camden Higher Education and Healthcare Task Force is a coalition of major institutions that work cooperatively to support the revitalization of the City of Camden. The members include: CAMCare Health Corporation, Camden County College, Cooper University Hospital, Lourdes Health System, Rowan University, Rutgers University, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, and Virtua Health. The Task Force was instrumental in the passage of Camden’s revitalization legislation and its members continue to play a leading role in the expansion of the City’s economic base.

**Carol Dann**, *Consultant, Camden resident*

The many positive aspects of the Camden/ South Jersey region have been well documented because of the region’s location within the Boston to Washington corridor. In the future, this location coupled with a knowledgeable workforce that is reinforced by the institutions of high learning could enable this area to be a center for “high-tech” research, especially in the bio-tech arena, while maintaining the ability to be “high touch” through the arts. For the past 17 years, I have been connected with agencies that truly recognize the significant need for investing in the Camden workforce. Those agencies have included the Interfaith Homeless Outreach Council, Camden County College’s GED program, and Camden Neighborhood Renaissance. Through the work of these agencies, many Camden residents have increased their basic skills, while being exposed to a broader world. As the Camden/ South Jersey region positions itself in relation to the global economy, it is well understood that the skills of our residents must match the needs of our high tech world. From my experience, I believe that reaching many of our residents, who do not currently have high tech skills, can be partially addressed by concentrating upon the arts. This region has the potential to be an “arts engine.”

### **The Innovative Housing Institute (IHI)**

*Participant: Patrick Meier*

The Innovative Housing Institute (IHI) and the New Jersey Regional Coalition (NJRC) submitted a final report and joint proposal for a Camden Area Opportunity Project (CAOP) to the Ford Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation on April 20, 2006. With its partners Fair Share Housing Center (FSHC), Fair Share Housing Development (FSHD), Isles, and OPEN, the coalition proposed a comprehensive approach to creating housing choice and regional community development, focused on low-income families who are currently Camden residents, but targeted on creating “opportunity-based housing choices” for them in 52 higher opportunity towns in the three-county Camden region. Through a combination of:

- a) Identifying and opening up affordable rental housing that already exists in higher opportunity towns,

- b) Creating and promoting additional affordable housing developments through FSHD and private developers in higher opportunity towns, and
- c) Securing statutory and regulatory reforms that would require and assist higher opportunity towns to implement genuine “growth share” housing policies.

The CAOP projected that from 2,400 to 3,000 low-income Camden families who choose to move would be enabled to move to higher opportunity towns over a ten-year period.

### **Wachovia Regional Foundation**

*Participants: Denise McGregor Armbister, Lois Greco, Mailee Walker, Kimberlie Allen*

We fund the creation and implementation of resident-driven neighborhood plans in 62 counties in New Jersey, Delaware, and eastern Pennsylvania. A regional perspective informs our work because we recognize that regional forces (i.e. market forces) impact the quality of life for residents on the neighborhood level. We also use lessons learned in different communities to inform our place based funding decisions and grant management. Workforce development is usually a component of a neighborhood plan – it is usually a key issue identified by residents when considering ways to improve quality of life.

### **Fair Share Housing Center**

*Participants: Kevin Walsh and Adam Gordon*

Fair Share Housing Center was founded in 1975 to advance and protect the Mount Laurel doctrine. We believe the efforts to revitalize Camden and to improve the lives of Camden residents must include consideration of regional opportunities. FSHC is concerned about the the spatial mismatch between jobs and housing. Too often, efforts focus exclusively on urban revitalization when, for better or worse, the overwhelming trend of the private economy is decentralization on jobs. Also, efforts frequently assume that lower-income people, especially those of color, wish to remain in the neighborhoods they currently live in, when experience demonstrates overwhelming demand for affordable housing units in the South Jersey suburbs, e.g., 1800 people lining up for 40 units developed by Fair Share Housing Development in Mount Laurel.

We’re committed to the city of Camden. Fair Share Housing Development maintains 400 units of supportive affordable housing and we recently invested \$10 million in our Northgate II Development. But focusing on Camden alone in isolation from the much larger and more rapidly growing region surrounding it has severe limitations. We believe that workforce development can be most effectively advanced with the implementation of a regional housing strategy that allows people from Camden who wish to move closer to centers of job growth to do so. Our future work including litigation, housing development and policy work, will continue to focus on developing such a strategy with an increased emphasis on helping Camden residents who want to move to affordable housing in the region.

### **Camden Center for Youth Development**

*Participants: Dr. Stella Horton, Mrs. Veronica Wynn, Noemi Sanabria*

The Camden Center for Youth Development, Inc. is dedicated and committed to engaging young people, their families, key leaders, funders, and all stakeholders to understand and promote youth development concepts and practices. We also have an agenda to increase the

capacity of youth serving organizations. The overall theme of this convening provides the Camden Center for Youth Development, Inc. the opportunity to learn more about work opportunities, specifically aimed at youth in Camden City and County. CCYD serves youth throughout Camden City and County therefore this conference provides us an opportunity to learn about “linking regional equality” and identify strategies that promote youth development. Finally, Camden City has 67.6% of school aged youth between the ages of 16-19 years who are jobless (U.S. Census 2000) therefore it is imperative that the CCYD continue to advance a workforce development agenda for youth. Much of the future work at CCYD will focus on policy development with workforce development being one agenda of focus.

### **Camden Area Health Education Center**

*Participant: Carol Wolff*

The New Jersey Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) were established in 1978, in partnership with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, as part of a national initiative to strengthen the health of communities through educational partnerships. NJ AHEC's goal is to enhance the quality and accessibility of health and human services and promote optimal health, especially for the underserved population. Camden, Garden, and Shore are centers that make up NJ AHEC. The centers serve 8 of the 21 counties in New Jersey: Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Ocean and Salem. More than two million people or 27% of the state's population live in this region - a region of ethnic and cultural diversity, with an increasing number of Asians, Hispanics and African-Americans. Camden AHEC is committed to improving the health of the medically underserved - the ethnic and culturally diverse, the aged, the poor, the very young, the unemployed, the homeless and the uninsured. Particular emphasis is on providing services in the city of Camden and Camden, Gloucester and Burlington Counties. It is our job to know the needs of our neighborhoods and take action in helping them solve their health care challenges.

### **Camden Churches Organized for People (CCOP)**

*Participant: Joshua Chisholm*

Camden Churches Organized for People or CCOP is a citywide federation of 30 churches working together to improve the quality of life for families in Camden, New Jersey. Since 1985, CCOP has united many of Camden's churches to seal over 2,000 vacant buildings and to demolish over 750 hazardous ones. The perseverance and commitment of CCOP to break the cycle of poverty and rebuild the city of Camden has resulted in a \$200 million investment into Camden by the State of New Jersey.

### **Cramer Hill Community Development Corporation**

*Participant: Manny Delgado*

Cramer Hill Community Development Corporation is dedicated to building a thriving, safe, family-oriented community that is economically and culturally diverse. Cramer Hill Community Development Corporation believes that development is most successful when there is continuous input from residents. It works toward these goals by advocating for the rights and needs of all Cramer Hill residents, by fostering resident leadership and civic

engagement, by creating affordable housing, strengthening economic opportunity and by improving the quality of life in Cramer Hill.

### **The William Penn Foundation**

*Participants: Candace Bell and Geraldine Wang*

The William Penn Foundation, founded in 1945 by Otto and Phoebe Haas, is dedicated to improving the quality of life in the Greater Philadelphia region through efforts that foster rich cultural expression, strengthen children's futures, and deepen connections to nature and community. In partnership with others, the Foundation works to advance a vital, just, and caring community. Learn more about the Foundation online at [www.williampennfoundation.org](http://www.williampennfoundation.org).

### **Rutgers University Center for Children and Childhood Studies and Vice President of the Camden City Board of Education**

*Participant: Nyeema C. Watson*

As the Vice President of the Camden City Board of Education I know that the quality and function of the Camden city schools is tied directly to the revitalization of the city. In order for the members of the Camden Board of Education to be able to appropriately and effectively change the current state of the school district, we will need to work more cooperatively with key entities that are involved in redevelopment of the city and undergo appropriately leadership training on how to oversee an urban school district in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We need a workforce development strategy that will assist us in attracting knowledgeable and committed individuals willing to do the challenging work that is involved in re-shaping the school district, from custodial staff to central administrators. Leadership training, strategic partnerships and workforce development are the key issues the school board needs to tackle over the next several years.

### **Cooper University Hospital**

*Participant: Monica Lesmerises and Doug Allen (speaker)*

As the leading provider of comprehensive health care in southern New Jersey, Cooper University Hospital requires a superior, diverse and well-trained staff of clinicians, researchers, administrators, information technology specialists, and support services workers. Cooper employs nearly 5,000 workers. Significant expansions at the Cooper Health Sciences Campus - which include a new, 10-story patient care pavilion and a new academic and research building – will necessitate significant growth in our staff over the next several years. Cooper University Hospital provides competitive compensation, a comprehensive employee benefits programs, attractive working conditions, and the chance to build careers by offering professional development.

Cooper's Human Resources Department operates a "Skills Bank" as a means to introduce new workers to various work settings and find a "fit" with the Cooper system. Skills Bank employees fill in at various positions for employees on leave or if a short term temporary is needed – from clerks to medical assistants to administrative assistants. Many have excellent experiences interfacing with departments and are hired for permanent openings. Cooper also hosts a paid Summer Employment Program for Camden high school students, along with a



Health Sciences Academy (also for Camden high school students) that meets weekly during the school year. We hope these programs engage Cooper's regional workforce of tomorrow. Looking toward the future, Cooper anticipates a high need for both traditional health care workers (nursing, medical assistants, technicians), and for computer-literate support staff. Computer competency is a requirement for success in many positions within Cooper. As we continue to implement cutting-edge computer technologies to improve basic tasks - like registering patients – Cooper's need for skilled workers grows. We hope to be a part of creating a "pipeline" of workers in the city and the region who can be successful employees at Cooper University Hospital.

### **Regional Planning Partnership**

*Participants: Dianne R. Brake and Zenobia L. Fields*

The Regional Planning Partnership (RPP) is a founding member of the New Jersey Regional Coalition (NJRC), and RPP's President, Dianne Brake, is NJRC's Treasurer and Co-Chair of the Policy Advisors Council. RPP helped to form NJRC to change the political climate for policy reform through grassroots organizing by regions. RPP's vision is that communities in the future will have a sustainable environment and economy, based on resource efficiency and social equity. The regional approach to these issues provides the appropriate context for more success at the local level.

Founded in 1968, RPP unites people-based and place-based planning, integrating workforce, housing, transportation and redevelopment policies and programs to produce better outcomes for communities across regions. RPP has created new policy frameworks and tools, shaped laws (such as the Fair Housing Act and State Planning Act), published planning workbooks, conducted breakthrough research (such as measuring the land use/transportation connection) and has a reputation for facilitating public discussions and finding common ground among competing stakeholders. RPP's current premier project is the Smart Growth Economy Project, in which we bring issues of the economy and equity to the forefront of New Jersey's environmentally- focused Smart Growth Programs.