



Telescope

WINTER 2008

Upcoming Events

February 22 –
8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.
– Winter Forum on Aging
– Chelsea Center

February 23 –
8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.
– SCOPE in UW South
Walk-A-Thon – downtown
Venice

February 29 –
9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. –
Summit for Environmental
Action – Selby Gardens



Diversity and the Landscape of our Democracy

In biological systems an absence of diversity dooms a species to extinction. This can be said for ideas and perspectives as well. If we cannot consider other ideas, those different from our own, how can we grow and mature and respond to the ever changing landscape of our neighborhoods, community and country?

When we encounter an idea or opinion that is opposite to our own, there is a choice to make regarding how to respond – to be closed, or to be open. The choice to be closed is one of entrenched resistance that declares that since you hold a position different from mine you must be wrong. Even worse, this has increasingly included a vilification of the individual whose opinion is different. This approach of fusing the problem and opinion with the person leads to an oversimplification of the complex world we live in. Declaring “good guys” and “bad guys” is not a powerful model.

The choice to unlock our minds to allow opposing ideas to enter creates the opportunity for active citizenship. Adam Kahane helped facilitate the planning of post-Apartheid South Africa. In this very contentious environment, Kahane worked to separate the people from the problem. He suspended the problems and positions from the ceiling so that all “sides” could walk around them together; he de-personalized the situation so that more people could be involved in the solutions.

Choosing to be open means that we could instead welcome a conversation and perspective that is different than our own, even when we experience it as disturbing. Margaret Wheatley, who writes and speaks about making progress in our complex world, says that she has started to listen FOR what surprises her, “... but when I notice what surprises me, I’m able to see my own views more clearly, including beliefs and assumptions.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

2008 Winter Forum on Aging

Join us to explore creative and productive roles for a new generation of retirement-aged people. Hear from Ronald Manheimer, executive director of the award-winning North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement (NCCCR), which offers lifelong learning, leadership and community service opportunities. How might NCCCR’s focus and strategies apply to each of us individually and as a community? Roundtable discussions will follow Dr. Manheimer’s presentation and a panel of local leaders will offer comment and

reflection. This program will be informative and interactive.

2008 Winter Forum on Aging
Featuring Ronald J. Manheimer, PhD
Director of the North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement
Friday, February 22, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

The Chelsea Center
2506 Gulf Gate Drive, Sarasota
Sponsored By The Community Foundation of Sarasota County

Hosted By SCOPE and the local initiative

“Sarasota: A Community for all Generations”

Media Partner -SRQ Magazine

Cost: \$20 if received by February 8,
\$30 after deadline.
Advance payment/
RSVP required:
(941) 365-8751

Artwork: “New Energy 1 ½” by Lynn Zoe, Sarasota
www.lynnzoe.com



Spotlight on ... Nick Gladding



This month, you will hear from Nick Gladding, Environmental Attorney for Ruden McClosky and a SCOPE Board member. Nick is this month's feature because of his active role as the Chair of the Summit for Environmental Action. The Summit will be held on February 29, 2008. He has a JD from Vanderbilt University, and completed his undergraduate studies at Yale. He originally hails from Washington D. C.

What is the Summit for Environmental Action?

The Summit is a day-long event that will bring people together from different groups and focus on specific actions everyone can take to improve our natural environment.

How is it different from other "green" or environmentally-focused events?

This event is not just about learning or talking, by the end of the day we will have committed to action steps to strengthen our community's natural environment. It is also different in its design. We are being intentional about getting people to register before the Summit so we can ensure a balance of groups - community, environmental, business and government.

What inspired you to get involved in planning the Summit?

I saw the need to bring together people from diverse backgrounds to identify specific actions that could improve

Sarasota's natural environment. It's true that we are known as an environmentally-friendly community, but there are new issues and challenges, such as climate change. We can always do more.

What's your favorite place in the Sarasota County area?

Siesta Beach at sunset, it doesn't get any better than that.

What other organizations are you currently involved in?

I serve as the Vice Chair of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program's Citizen Action Committee and as legal counsel to the Board of the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce. I also serve as the Chair of the newly-formed Chamber Council on Sustainability.

Do you have any words you live by?

"Never stop learning and never give up."

Read more about the Summit for Environmental Action at: www.scopexcel.org

10 WAYS TO STRENGTHEN MY COMMUNITY

- 10 Ask to see a friend's family photos
- 9 Say "hi" to those in elevators
- 8 Build a neighborhood playground
- 7 Send a "thank you" letter to the Editor about a person or event that helped build community
- 6 Organize a town-wide yard sale
- 5 Take in the programs at your local library
- 4 Collect oral histories from older town residents
- 3 Call an old friend
- 2 Start or join a carpool
- 1 Form a local outdoor activity group



Thank you to all of the people, businesses, organizations, foundations, local governments, agencies and institutions who support SCOPE's work. Without you, there would be no SCOPE.

Promising Projects from SCOPE's Race & Culture Relations Focus

The Coalition for Inclusion & Diversity is a SCOPE-supported initiative that grew out of the focus on race & cultural relations. Several exciting things are happening in our community as a result of the CID and SCOPE's focus on race and cultural relations. Here are three of them:

Diversity Awareness Workshops



Despite the huge array of influence diversity has on our lives, barriers exist to discussing and learning about the issue, such as the complexity of the subject and fear of saying something wrong.

Therefore, the CID offers "Speaking of Diversity", a 3-4 hour conversation-based, interactive workshop for adults designed to build awareness in a safe setting. The workshop explores three important areas in which diversity impacts our lives: assumptions, privilege and speaking up to bigotry. To date, about a dozen workshops have reached over 250 people.

Youth Initiative

Many have heard by now that that by 2050, the current racial majority, whites, will be a minority. However, did you know that

will occur in the youth population (0-14) about 20 years earlier? Not only is the youth population more diverse, these years are when people learn critical skills about valuing diversity and interacting with people different from themselves. That is why adult and youth CID members have helped create "Unity Days," day-long, in-school diversity activities. These Unity Days reached over 180 students in 2007 and more are planned for 2008. In addition, diversity clubs are in place in two schools through CID activities.



Forums to Galvanize Community Collaborations

It is the role of the CID to convene the community several times a year to address diversity related issues such as hate crimes. When a Sarasota family's home was targeted for arson and vandalism because the family is Muslim, many were outraged



but there was little reaction initially. The Coalition for Inclusion & Diversity convened 200 community members in October 2007 to address the question, "How can our community prevent and respond to hate crimes?" Results included continuing discussion among interfaith leaders and commitment from law enforcement to get special training.

To learn more about these and other efforts and to get involved, please visit www.scopexcel.org/scope_studies/race_cultural_relations/index.html

Important Questions CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

in a conversation with the possibility that we might change our minds. Unfortunately, we just don't do that very often. Wheatley continues, "sometimes we hesitate to listen for differences because we don't want to change ... we have to be willing to move into the very uncomfortable place of uncertainty."

Until recently, I believed that the cynical and deeply divisive approach to public debate was largely at the national level; however, I have come to see that it also exists at the local level and even here in our community where the public debate is at times peppered with accusation, personal attack, and inadequate depth. We can do better.

Creativity and great ideas happen not in the comfort of uniformity of thought, but in the gray space of not knowing, yet being open to possibilities. The challenges we face in our community depend on us finding comfort in being uncomfortable – and taking comfort in the knowledge that this is, in essence, the vital sign of a living democracy.

Community Report Card

INDICATORS INFORM THE ISSUES

The 2007-2008 Community Report Card is progressing on schedule. The redesigned and completely Web and E-mail based Community Report Card provides an in-depth look at one indicator each month for a year. An introduction and five indicator reports have been released, with seven more reports to come by August 2008.

- The reports tackle questions like:
- Can we access our parks and natural areas? (September)
 - Are our bays healthy? (October)

- How much of our lands are protected, and where are they? (November)

- How prepared will we be when a hurricane strikes? (December)
- How do residents of Sarasota County get around? (January)

For more information and to read these reports, please visit the "Data" section of the SCOPE Web site. If you would like to join the growing list of community members who receive the Community Report Card in their inbox, please email Kate Irwin at kirwin@scopexcel.org or call 941-365-8751.

Putting Passion Into Action: GLI's Class of 2007



We would like to congratulate the 2007 GLI Fellowship Class. The 2007 class graduated on December 14 at a festive ceremony and reception held at the Sarasota Herald-Tribune. Here is an overview of our 2007 graduates and the great work they did in Sarasota and Manatee counties.

Rebekah Brightbill

From: Bradenton

Passion: empowering neighbors to make a great community

Project: helped form the Washington Park Neighborhood Association in East Bradenton.

Mentor: Pastor Kelvin Lumpkin from Abundant Life Church.

Jeff Darwin

From: Bradenton

Passion: helping youth discover their potential

Project: mobilized volunteers to share their experiences with teens in the Teen Life Skills program at the Anna Maria Island Community Center.

Mentor: Keith DuBose of Matthews, Eastmoore,

Hardy, Crauwels & Garcia, P.A.

Natalia Cava, Sandra Figueroa-Walker and Patty Snyder-Atkins, aka "Red Latina"

From: Sarasota

Passion: empower the

Latino community in Sarasota

Project: these three fellows teamed up with area partners to create a directory of local resources in Spanish.

Mentors: Catherine Clouse of SCOPE (Natalia), Tracy O'Neil of Kerkering, Barbario & Co. P.A. (Sandra) and Suzanne Gregory of SCOPE (Patty).

Jose Manuel Godinez Samperio

From: Sarasota, New College of Florida

Passion: immigration reform

Project: gathering volunteers to host educational forums and rallies for immigration reform.

Mentor: Jim Delgado from Kallins, Little, Delgado, Opstal.

Wendy Hernandez

From: North Port

Passion: ending domestic violence

Project: North Port's first Domestic Violence Awareness Candlelight Vigil.

Mentor: Judge Charles Williams of the 12th Circuit Judicial Court.

Debby Miedema

From: Sarasota

Passion: the plight of the uninsured and underinsured in Sarasota County

Project: supported the Get Sarasota Insured! campaign to connect the uninsured with opportunities for health coverage.

Mentor: Doug Kerr

Pola Sommers

From: Sarasota

Passion: teaching youth the tools to succeed

Project: introducing the basic rules of personal finance to youth by creating a brochure called the Five Tips for Personal Finance.

Mentor: Dr. George Mims

Judith Williams

From: Sarasota

Passion: actively improving her neighborhood

Project: partner with her neighbors, area business and government offices to make Sarasota's Rosemary neighborhood environmentally-friendly.

Mentor: Trish McConnell of the Herald-Tribune Media Group

Welcome the 2008 Fellows! Cesar Gomez, Kelsey Hitchingham, Wendy Holden, Neshia Leverett, Leigh Llewelyn, Sean McCartney, Jolene Smith, Jae Langston Williams, Ashlee Wortham and Carlos Yancey.

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