



## Denise Byrne Report on April 2009 NOLA Meetings

### **Mid City Neighborhood Organization - April 7, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

Jennifer Weishaupt – President of MCNO

Jennifer Farwell – Vice President of MCNO

Virginia Blanque – Advisory Council of MCNO

Jeannette Thompson – Past MCNO Board Member, Currently working on initiative to Charter Dibert Elementary School

Jeff Schwartz – Main St. on Broad St. Executive Director (Bus. Corridor Initiative)

Bart Everson – President of Friends of Lafitte Corridor in Mid City

Daphne Durven – Exec. Director of the Food and Farm Network

Susan Guidry – Parkview Neighborhood Assoc. (shares boundaries with Mid City)

Jack Davis and Denise Byrne – FONO Board Members

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

Strategy is to utilize other non-profits who are "experts" to carry out their initiatives. Initiatives have come primarily from the Lambert and other planning processes. Current work includes: Creating a "green way" and bike path along the Jean Lafitte neighborhood, and bringing about rehabilitation and development along that path. They have engaged with various nonprofits to do the work. They will create the bike lane by going from 2 to 3 lanes on Broad St. The business corridor initiative is called "Main St. on Broad St." The idea for Main St. on Broad St. started with the Nat'l Historic Trust bringing out folks from the Smart Growth for LA people. They are very excited about the possibility of Revolution Foods, a San Francisco company, coming out to New Orleans and setting up in their business corridor. Revolution Foods is being contracted to prepare all the food for NOLA charter schools. The Mid City area has the largest need for more schools. Right now they are working to charter an elementary school that will have an environmental science focus.

MCNO is also working on crime and safety through the Mid City/Parkview Security District which they have funding for, and the restoration of Bayou St. John through the Bayou St. John Conservation Alliance which was formed with 19 other organizations.

#### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

Charity Hospital issue is big for them since it is in their backyard. No matter what they end up doing with Charity they need to consider the impact on the Mid City neighborhood. Crime is still a big problem. They also want to clean up the buildings and facilities that already exist in the neighborhood.

They are very concerned about the high level of PTS exhibited by school children in their community, and the lack of treatment options available.

Bayou St. John issue – Corps has not been doing what it was supposed to be doing for the past 20 years.



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### **3. What do they need/want?**

Capacity building grants for the nonprofits that are working in their community.

### **4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

“Government keeps failing us and local citizens have to get things done.”



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### **Lakeview Civic Improvement Association – April 7, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

Brad F. Fortier – President of LCIA

Denise Byrne – FONO Board Member

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

They feel they have moved from a crisis/recovery phase to a point where they can think about the future of the neighborhood and long term growth. Approximately 55% of the people who live in Lakeview have returned and 44% of the properties still need to be cleaned or rebuilt. They are very proud of what they have been able to accomplish. Examples: They put their fire stations back in operation by selling t-shirts and doing neighborhood fundraisers. They have cleaned up and beautified the neighborhood by using volunteers from all over the country to clean up and replant all public spaces. Using volunteers and making the place look better has made the residents feel better and built their morale.

Have an incredible network of block captains that they use to get data/information and get the work done. Right now their focus is to make Lakeview a desirable community that families and businesses want to return to by: a) cleaning, “greening” and beautifying the neighborhood, b) fighting blight and the “Jack O Lantern” effect, and c) creating a family atmosphere and fostering love for the community through family friendly activities like “movie night”, market day and festivals. LCIA feels that NORA is the first government bureaucracy that is working well with the community because they are letting the community dictate the future of the properties.

They are thinking about creating their own Chamber of Commerce to market Lakeview to local, state and national businesses.

All of the private schools are up and running. The public school needs to be redone.

#### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

Getting rid of blight and the “Jack o Lantern” effect. Bringing families and businesses back to Lakeview.

#### **3. What do they need/want?**

They want FONO to inform others what they have been able to accomplish and that they exist.

#### **4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

“Government has failed us at every level.”



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### **Plaquemines Community Foundation and the Committee for Plaquemines Recovery (CPR) – April 7, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

Perry Triche – Plaquemines Community Foundation President  
Betsy A. Brien – Plaquemines Community Foundation Board Member  
Angele Rogers – Plaquemines Community Foundation Board Member and Member of CPR  
Marco Cocito Monoc – GNOF Affiliates Director  
Denise Byrne – FONO Board Member

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

The foundation has focused on creating quality after-school programs and a new “Blueberries and Peaches” agricultural project. They are very proud of a new YMCA that is being built in Davant with support from Conoco Phillips and the foundation. This will offer an outlet for our young people and the elderly and also go a long way in restoring a sense of community.

CPR has its own construction company and is focused on rebuilding homes and bringing families back to Plaquemines. There is a lot of collaboration with faith based organizations.

#### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

Number one thing on every residents’ mind is safety from storms so marsh and coastal restoration and the diversion of the Miss. are big issues for them. This is followed by the high foreclosure rates and high insurance rates in the parish, and the need for better education. Access to quality healthcare and mental health services is also an important issue. The population there is very stressed as evidenced by the very high rates of domestic violence and divorce in the parish. Perry Triche is the new President of the Plaquemines Community Foundation and, as Manager of the United Bulk Terminal, a local business leader. He says the following: *“I can already feel a change in our people, it’s similar to the elephant in the room, everyone knows that June 1<sup>st</sup> is just around the corner but no one really wants to talk about it and it’s not just the possibility of a storm making landfall it’s the realization that decisions will come down to do I purchase my medicine or save money in case I need to evacuate due to an approaching storm. Several team members have asked about our storm prep plan here at work, these people have been through so much but what can you say it’s HOME.”*

The schools in Belle Chasse are doing a great job but in other areas of the parish they are terrible. Right now there is a very high drop out rate in that parish. Perry says that most of the local men that apply for jobs in his company flunk a test that an 8<sup>th</sup> grader should pass. This is why they want programs like Teach for America to come to Plaquemines.



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### **3. What do they need/want?**

Finding funding for community projects and initiatives is a major struggle for them. The community is also in need of the small “Mom & Pop” type grocery stores, basic medical care and a transportation system that can bring them to facilities.

### **4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

“Government is not engaging the community to find out what the issues are.”



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### **Mary Queen of Vietnam CDC – April 7, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

Cam-Thanh Tran, Senior Organizer  
Christina Wadhvani – Health Project Assistant  
Denise Byrne – FONO Board Member

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

Education/Youth - Their Intercultural Charter School is up and running and has a long waiting list. Will be adding 6<sup>th</sup> grade next academic year and they would like to expand all the way to high school. MQVN CDC identified a plot of land immediately across the church to remediate into an open field for recreational purposes. This initiative is now youth led and a youth member from the community is spearheading the project to redevelop the field for sports and recreation.

Health - They opened a pediatric clinic with Children's Hospital and an adult health clinic with Tulane School of Medicine. This is temporary and the funding is running out. They own the post office building and will be using this building for the primary health center.

Economic Development - Because of the storm, their local farmers' market was reduced to 30% of its former capacity. So they are working on an urban farming and community gardens project in order to create employment and provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables. They purchased some land that they want to hand over to the farmers and residents to garden, and are working with organizations such as the New Orleans Food and Farm Network. John Besh, the Iron Chef on TV, said he would buy products from them and use them at his restaurants. However, the problem is that the land they purchased for this project is a wetlands area and they are waiting for a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers to begin cultivation.

CDC has been giving matching funds to local business owners so that they can replace their store front signs and improve their facades which were all torn up due to the storm. The Alcie Fortier strip was declared a business corridor and Viet Village (Village de L'Est), the Community in East New Orleans, was declared a cultural tourist district designation. MQVN CDC also created a business resource center in its office that local entrepreneurs and small business owners have access to. They also hired a Vietnamese Social Services Coordinator that helps people access resources and services.

#### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

Access to quality health care and mental health services, quality public schools, and permits for the urban farm are priority issues.



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### **3. What do they need/want?**

They need better schools that meet the needs of their culturally diverse low income residents. Reed HS is their only HS and it is an RSD (Recovery School District) school with a lot of problems. They have a high drop out rate, kids are acting out and the place is more like a prison than a healthy learning environment. They also need a proper facility for their elementary charter school. RSD offered them a facility that was 10 miles away, in a very blighted neighborhood where residents had not returned so the community turned it down. The Intercultural Charter School is currently leasing space in the church facility while they search for a better alternative location.

### **4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

They feel they have done everything without much government help. Want others to respect their desire to do things in a culturally competent way. MQVN CDC has faced a lot of challenges and has worked hard to overcome these obstacles while ensuring that all of their services are culturally competent and linguistically appropriate.



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### **New Schools New Orleans – April 8, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

Sarah Usdin – Founder and President, NSNO

Denise Byrne and Jack Davis – FONO Board Members

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

NSNO turns 3 years. By this Fall, they will have launched 11 schools. Half of these are Kipp like quality. Making New Orleans the HUB for Education Innovation is their focus now. Results so far are impressive: a) city has the largest educational entrepreneur community per capita in the country, b) charter schools currently serve 58% of the public school population, c) have demonstrated significant increases in student achievement in 3 years, d) autonomy has led to ground-breaking practices in the classroom. New Orleans now has 4 of the highest performing public schools in the State as a result of their work. The charter schools, the nonprofit community and the Recovery School District (RSD) have worked together closely to demonstrate reform at scale. They are well on their way to providing exceptional schools for all kids in New Orleans. In just 2 years, 35% of the schools in the city have moved from failing to academically acceptable.

#### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

Make the nation see that NOLA has a great model of how to do school reform.

Launching a multi-million dollar campaign for building the capacity of their network of education entrepreneurs.

#### **3. What do they need/want?**

- a) Leverage the bully pulpit and publicly support the reform efforts in New Orleans
- b) Policy changes that would enhance ability of charter schools to operate more efficiently and reach more students.
- c) “Race to the Top” grants and other federal funding for qualified personnel, facilities renovation and computerized data tracking systems.

#### **4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

Walter Isaacson’s article in Time was invaluable. Want other high profile FONO board members like James Carville to talk about the NOLA charter school movement as an incredibly successful model. Right now it seems that the nation is only focused on DC public schools.





## Denise Byrne Report on April 2009 NOLA Meetings

### **Beacon of Hope – April 8, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

Denise Thornton – Founder and President

Irma Dixon – Executive Director

Tina Marquardt – Executive Assistant

Denise Byrne – FONO Board Member

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

Beacon information centers - which offer assistance, info. and resources to current and returning residents, re-builders and prospective/new homeowners and businesses – can be found in Lakeview (7), Gentilly (4), Lakewood (1) and Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward (1). They bring about sustainable neighborhood revitalization by engaging and empowering residents. Each center has an incredible network of “block captains” that gather data within their neighborhoods, using GIS mapping on a block by block basis, tracking progress and assessing community needs. Volunteers have generated more than 35,000 hours of community service. Have established monthly outdoor markets to create family friendly community environment and promote local businesses. Harrison Business Corridor was completely deserted after the storm. Now, thanks to Beacon’s support and marketing efforts, it is up and running better than ever and almost every business that was there before is back and operating. Other programs launched by Beacon include the neighborhood tours, community gardens, the “Welcome Home” program for returning residents and a Senior Program to educate and protect their senior residents. They also do local and state advocacy for the residents of Lakeview, Gentilly and Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward. They are now heavily involved in Gentilly, and are trying to recreate the success of the Lakeview area beacon there.

#### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

Key issues they are working on now are: a) blight and crime, b) mental health (depression is still high in that area), and c) job growth and economic development.

Their biggest challenge is that their funding is waning at a time when the organization has expanded its programs and services. Gentilly operation is ready to get going and they are afraid they will lose their momentum due to funding shortfalls.

#### **3. What do they need/want?**

They want funding to increase their internal capacity, package their model and lessons learned so that they can share with others, and improve their capacity to do advocacy at a local and statewide level.



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### **4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

They are excited about sharing what they have learned with others. Are very open to, and interested in, collaborating and developing partnerships with others.



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### **Women of the Storm and Americas Wetland – April 8, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

Anne Milling – Founder and President  
Carmen Duncan – WOS member  
King Milling – Chairman, Americas Wetland

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

WOS - So far they have gotten 157 members of congress to go to New Orleans and have them take them around. They are now working hard to get the First Lady to come to New Orleans. Have sent a formal invitation but have not heard back yet. Are now planning another WOS trip to DC in the Fall. Have also met with the new governor and NOLA Mayor to get information and build consensus.

Americas Wetland – Is working with the Woodrow Wilson Institute to do a major conference in New Orleans in 2010 with deltaic experts from around the world. America's Energy Coast – Spearheading a convening of the four oil producing states in the Gulf (TX, LA, MS, AL). They are also collaborating with LSU to engage students in coastal rebuilding through planting, etc.

#### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

Concerned that people are forgetting NOLA and what happened after Katrina is on the “back burner.” The State's Master Plan is moving towards diversions, coastal restoration and protection which is good. However, the Army Corps of Engineers' Plan, which is currently being reviewed by the Academy of Science, is 18 months late, and does not follow the dictates of the Bill that was adopted by Congress. The Corps and the OMB control the money needed to make things happen.

#### **3. What do they need/want?**

Want help with getting First Lady down to New Orleans.

#### **4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

They are optimistic and frustrated at the same time. They feel that there is too much talk and no action on the Federal Government side, and precious time is being wasted. They feel there is a general lack of commitment by the Administration and the Corps.



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### **Neighborhood Partnerships Network (NPN) – April 8, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

Timolynn Sams – Executive Director

Denise Byrne – FONO Board Member

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

They are focused on building a network of city neighborhoods that is much stronger and organized than it was in the past. At the beginning there was a lot of energy in the neighborhoods to do their own advocacy work. However, a lot of the neighborhoods were working in isolation or “silos” instead of looking at issues in a city wide way. In addition to getting them to address and work together on the big picture issues, NPN is helping neighborhood groups build partnerships and coalitions, and use these to do advocacy work. There is also a great need to do capacity building work which is why they launched their “capacity college” and their “resource library.” They also still have their “hot topic” forums where people can come and learn. Before the focus was the neighborhood association. Now it is more holistic - they are looking at the entire neighborhood and everyone that is living, working or investing in the neighborhood. NPN wants to convene the neighborhood associations and CDCs and have them reach out to others that are not at the same level (i.e. “adopt a neighborhood” program).

#### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

A lot of “disconnect” between neighborhoods still exists. The level of civic engagement has gone down since Katrina.

#### **3. What do they need/want?**

Need resources for building their internal capacity. Need resources so that they can teach others how to advocate or “navigate the system.”

#### **4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

Lots of excitement about the future, and frustration with city and state governments. Although AmeriCorps has helped the organization grow and increase its ability to reach and service others, it poses a problem because people are always leaving and the organization has to retrain new staff every time. Now they want to devote resources to building a permanent staff.



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**Levees.org** – April 9, 2009

**Participating:**

Sandy Rosenthal – President and Founder

Denise Byrne and Jack Davis – FONNO Board Members

Albert Ruesga – GNOF President (joined group at the Industrial Canal breach site)

**1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

Levees.org is still very focused on its founding mission which is to educate Americans that New Orleans flooded primarily due to federal levee failure not a weather event. She feels that if Americans understand this, they will be more inclined to approve federal funding to rebuild the levees properly.

Levees.org wants to educate and set the record straight, and bust the myths that keep popping up about what took place. The organization is not involved in advocating for better levees moving forward. She leaves that work to organizations such as the Flood Protection Alliance or the Levee Board. She uses her “CAT” (Counter Action Team) which is made up of about 15 people who will make phone calls, send emails, write letters to the editor, etc. Levees.org accomplishes its goals through advocacy efforts that include public service announcements, videos, myth-buster emails, and letter writing.

**2. What are the important issues for them now?**

Very concerned that the only studies or investigations that congress pays attention to about what happened have been done by the Corps (i.e. self-investigations).

She is also concerned that people are forgetting what happened in New Orleans. It is not like it was before when she had hundreds emailing her and knocking on her door, wanting to get involved.

**3. What do they need/want?**

Wants a 8/29 investigation not unlike the Columbia Shuttle Commission, where the president selects a Democrat and a Republican to chair the investigation and they in turn staff it with a team of experts.

**4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

Has been asked by Sen. Landrieu to join a congressional delegation from New Orleans that is going to the Netherlands to meet with their government leaders and levee experts. She has heard good things about Terrence “Rock” Salt.



## Denise Byrne Report on April 2009 NOLA Meetings

### **Idea Village – April 9, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

Tim Williamson – President

Lauren Baum - Staff

Albert Ruesga – GNOF President

Denise Byrne and Jack Davis – FONNO Board Members

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

Their focus is to ID entrepreneurial talent, support them in their work and keep them in the city. They like to say that they are in the “birthing business.” They are doing this by working with the private sector, universities and nonprofits. Core services include consulting/counseling /mentoring for small businesses (have a network of accountants, lawyers, business execs, that they use for this in addition to staff), Ideas Corps. (MBA students from top US business schools come down and work with local entrepreneurs), a Capital Fund that invests in high impact local ventures and 504ward, an initiative that seeks to retain the 23-35 crowd by building local social networks for them to participate in. In April a team of 55 MBA students and faculty from 5 of the top US business schools in the country came to New Orleans for one week of service learning to provide business development support to local entrepreneurs. A team from Google and [salesforce.com](http://salesforce.com) also participated in this program. The student teams had a tremendous positive impact on these local businesses, and the service learning experience was a life changing event for all involved. Now Idea Village is getting the word out to the rest of the country about what took place there. The organization has just moved into a gorgeous new, state of the art facility that will house several entrepreneurial businesses, a hip café/restaurant where entrepreneurs can hang out, and has large conference and smaller break out rooms that can be used for programs, entrepreneurs or other organizations. They have just been awarded an \$800,000 3 year capacity building grant from the US Commerce Dept.’s Economic Development Admin. to support and grow programs such as the IdeaCorps that engage national universities in economic recovery.

#### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

Funding and keeping the momentum going.

#### **3. What do they need/want?**

Help with getting the word out about what is happening in NOLA. Idea Village believes that New Orleans is a laboratory for social and entrepreneurial innovation.

#### **4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

New Orleans is an exciting place to be in if you are young, talented and have ideas.



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### **New Orleans Center for Creative Arts Institute (NOCCA) – April 9, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

Sally Perry – Executive Director  
Elizabeth McMillan – Development Director  
Albert Ruesga – GNOF President  
Denise Byrne and Jack Davis – FONO Board Member

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

They have recently completed an extensive strategic planning process which is resulting in the development of a full-day, diploma-granting curriculum (currently, NOCCA students attend regular high school for academics and then they go to NOCCA in the afternoon for their intensive arts training). To develop this cutting edge education curriculum they engaged 35 centers of learning and innovation across the country including MIT, San Francisco Exploratorium, Juilliard, MoMA, Google and YouTube. In addition to becoming a full-day, degree-granting institution, they will be building dorms in order to provide statewide, national and international access to their programs. NOCCA students will continue to be admitted by arts audition. However, in addition to studying the arts and becoming professional artists, NOCCA students will also learn to be young scientists and mathematicians. To aid in all of their goals, NOCCA is working with an international Advisory Council that includes a member of NASA's Mars Exploration Rover Mission and the former director of Apple's multimedia lab among others. Another recent and exciting development is the addition of a four-year credit-granting Culinary Arts Curriculum which will become the NOCCA's 7<sup>th</sup> discipline and is being funded by The Emeril Lagasse Foundation. (Note: NOCCA's faculty and administration are funded by the State of Louisiana and tuition is free for all students. The NOCCA Institute, as NOCCA's support organization, funds critical programs for students and provides financial aid for other costs associated with their training and the Artists-in-Residence program. The NOCCA Institute also funds expansion planning, capital projects and equipment.)

#### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

NOCCA's budget, already reduced by the State after Katrina, has been slashed an additional 20% by the new Governor. It is difficult to find private funding when others consider you to be a public school that should be fully funded by government. Needed expansion plans have had to be put on hold while NOCCA and The NOCCA Institute fight for an adequate operating budget for the existing program. The economic slow down has also affected their private sources of funding from individuals, foundations and corporations.



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### **3. What do they need/want?**

They need money and resources to do effective advocacy at the state level, as well as funding for expansion and existing programs.

### **4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

Louisiana has the crown jewel of what exceptional arts education should be like in the US and beyond. Yet, given the current economic crisis, funding for education is facing extremely tough challenges at the State level. NOCCA is very committed despite these challenges, to be a vital institution for creativity, innovation and educational excellence for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.





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### **St. Bernard Project – April 9, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

Zack Rosenberg – Director and Founder

Denise Byrne and Jack Davis – FONO Board Members

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

They recently completed their 200 house in St. Bernard with help from more than 11,000 volunteers from around the country. Have developed their capacity so that they are able to work on 30+ houses at a time and able to finish them in under 12 weeks. They are a volunteer driven rebuild organization and they use anywhere between 100-250 volunteers each day. Have recently opened a community wellness and mental health center in partnership with the LSU School of Medicine, Psychiatry Dept. The focus of this Wellness center is to meet the void in available mental health services by providing diagnostic services and short-term clinical therapy. In addition, the Center for Wellness and Mental Health will offer programming to promote sustainable mental wellness and self-care. They are now on their way to opening housing triage centers in New Orleans (Gentilly, New Orleans East, Lakeview or Center City). These housing triage centers will offer various levels of rebuilding services. They are also starting a nonprofit construction company by the name of Good Work/Good Pay that will train and hire returned war veterans and under/unemployed residents and offer their rebuilding services at below contractor prices. The organization prides itself in running the organization more like a business and in being able to offer a “one stop shopping housing triage service” to residents in need. Banks not writing rebuilding loans because there is no equity in the house yet when they see that St. Bernard Project has committed to doing the home, then they will do a loan.

#### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

There are still 16,000 people living in FEMA trailers in greater New Orleans and all of these folks must vacate their trailers on May 1. Lengthy process that exists for people to be able to get their money and start working on their homes.

#### **3. What do they need/want?**

Needs to develop a better local board of directors. Wants to make connections and contacts to people in NOLA since he is now going to be doing business there.

#### **4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

They developed great contacts and relationships at the FONO convention.



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### **St. Bernard Community Foundation and Lexington Place Civic Corp. – April 9, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

Robert E. Showalter – St. Bernard Comm. Foundation Board Member

Polly Boudreaux – Lexington Place Civic Corp. President and St. Bernard Comm. Foundation Board Member

Marco Cocito Monoc – Exec. Director, St. Bernard Comm. Foundation

Denise Byrne – FONO Board Member

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

Their goal is to restore the neighborhoods to a healthy condition. There were 849 properties wiped out and now 315 of those are now lived in. There was a population of about 67,000 before Katrina and about 30% of these have returned. There is also a very high number of renters and most of the elderly have not come back. The focus of their work is to bring neighborhood leaders together to talk about their concerns and come up with ways to improve conditions in their neighborhoods. They want to celebrate St. Bernard and accent the positive things about living and working in their parish. Right now a big push for them is a marketing campaign they are launching to get new and former businesses and families to come to live and work the parish. They have done a series of informal meetings with neighborhood leaders to share information on how they can improve their neighborhoods. Are also very proud of the neighborhood clean up and beautifying projects they have been able to do with volunteers from around the country. Most of their public schools are great and they are all up and running. The construction of a new hospital will be breaking ground soon. They are very passionate about their community.

#### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

Safety from storms is still the #1 issue for everyone in St. Bernard and they feel it is one of the reasons why the majority of the people have not returned. They are concerned about money being put into projects that will “cheapen” the neighborhood and the “Jack O Lantern” effect that is seen throughout St. Bernard. Zoning is also an issue for them and something that they want to restrict more.

#### **3. What do they need/want?**

They would like to do events to bring attention on St. Bernard and raise money for the foundation. Were very interested in CC Lockwood coming to do an event with them around the issue of coastal restoration. Right now they have a Cyprus planting project in their marshlands.



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### **4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

They are very worried about the quality of the rebuilding work being done by nonprofits in St. Bernard. They feel that if the homes are not to the level of quality they should be and this will hurt the families that move into them and also lower the values of property for everyone in St. Bernard. This works against their efforts of making St. Bernard a community of choice.



## Denise Byrne Report on April 2009 NOLA Meetings

### Global Green New Orleans – April 10, 2009

#### **Participating:**

Beth Galante – Executive Director

Albert Ruesga – GNOF President

Denise Byrne – FONO Board Member

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

Global Green's main projects now are:

- a. Holy Cross Project – This is the result of their international design competition with actor Brad Pitt, where they are building 5 houses, an 18 unit apartment building and a community development center, all LEED Platinum, and with energy reductions of 70 to 100% over standard housing and 7 feet above sea level next to the Mississippi River. More than 5000 residents, tourists and government officials have already toured their Zero Energy House in Holy Cross since it opened last year. This is the only LEED Platinum home regularly open for public tours in the U.S. The next 2 houses are almost completed and will be going on the market in the Fall. These homes are reserved for former Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward residents. They are about to break ground on 2 more homes and their 18 unit apartment building should be under construction later this year.
- b. Green Schools Project – This includes: an energy efficiency retrofit of 4 New Orleans public schools, 1 new school and 1 major renovation to LEED Silver, and a green curriculum for 10 elementary schools and 2 high schools. Calculated carbon reductions and payback periods of less than 4 years for the retrofits, saving the schools 10s of thousands of dollars each year that they can use for teachers, books, etc, in the lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward, Gentilly, 7<sup>th</sup> Ward and Lower Garden District. The first LEED Silver schools in Louisiana will be in Broadmoor and Algiers neighborhoods. Research has shown that kids in green schools have higher test scores, fewer asthma attacks and fewer missed days, and green schools retain teachers longer, have lower utility costs, and lower overall maintenance and insurance costs.
- c. Build It Back Green Initiative – This is a target outreach to all federal Road Home grant recipients with unparalleled green building outreach and education, one-on-one technical assistance, and case studies on green renovations to dramatically improve energy efficiency. First Louisiana green vendors guide was published in April 2009 in the Gambit Weekly, and the first Southeast regional vendors guide was compiled and distributed widely. Their outreach to different neighborhoods throughout Greater New Orleans is up to 12 a month. They are also reaching out to the nonprofit developers. By doing one house at a time, Global Green is helping New Orleans residents make smart choices to help them lower utility bills and improve air quality in their homes thus improving their financial strength and quality of life.



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Two new initiatives they are excited about:

- a. Wetlands restoration/carbon offset pilot program – They are assembling stakeholders to begin an innovative carbon sequestration project that will utilize the private market to help fund a wetlands restoration/preservation pilot project in Louisiana.
- b. Climate Action Center for Louisiana – They are launching a capital campaign to build the first-ever center devoted to addressing climate change impacts in coastal communities, with world renowned experts in climate change convening government officials, community leaders, and business innovators to evaluate the unique threats posed by climate change to coastal populations and facilitate progressive responses to mitigate and adapt
- c. Beth is now establishing a New Orleans Committee to help fundraise locally to support Global Green's programs there.

### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

Global Green donations are down approximately 50% in the past year due to the global economic crisis, and fundraising requires an ever-growing capacity to maintain current programs. This is siphoning off valuable time that Beth needs to devote to expand/improve existing work and grow the organization into new and promising areas.

The Green Schools funding runs out in approximately 8 months. Their past 2 years work has been incredibly effective, but without their technical assistance, policy advocacy and seed pass-through funding for green features, future school construction is unlikely to achieve current high performance levels, jeopardizing the impressive improvements in student test scores.

Supervising a staff of 9 leaves little time for independent and reflective work, but budget issues have prevented her from hiring an assistant director to handle administrative duties.

### **3. What do they need/want?**

Wants FONO to help her with the following:

- a. Finding potential supporters for their efforts in New Orleans.
- b. Help her take on a more proactive and effective role in their public education and advocacy efforts.
- c. Would like to set up quarterly meetings with FONO and other local partners that will help keep everyone focused and more effective going forward.
- d. Government access/support remains extremely challenging – anything FONO could do to facilitate appropriate meetings and lend credibility to their work would be extremely helpful, particularly given that there is such a high level of federal funding available at this time.



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- e. Initial interaction with local and state officials unfortunately indicates that the vast majority of these funds will be siphoned to large contractors with pre-existing construction/engineering contracts with government. These businesses are extremely expensive comparatively, have little expertise in green building, tend to waste valuable time and money preparing voluminous reports with no clear action plan and timeline, and are unlikely to achieve significant energy efficiency/carbon reduction results.
- f. Connecting her to New Orleanians who will serve and be effective on her local fundraising committee.
- g. Persuade James Carville to use his “bully pulpit” and connections to educate and get strong commitment from emerging political leaders on sustainable building and wetlands restoration for New Orleans and region.

#### **4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

Local officials’ passivity/deference to Corp and state officials is no longer acceptable.



## Denise Byrne Report on April 2009 NOLA Meetings

### **Holy Cross Neighborhood Association – April 10, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

Pam Dashiell – Executive Director  
Albert Ruesga – GNOF President  
Beth Galante – Exec. Director, Global Green New Orleans  
Denise Byrne – FONO Board Member

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

They are still focused on fostering civic engagement, civil society principles, community interaction, the exchange of ideas, opportunities for self advocacy, dissemination of information and dynamic democracy through bimonthly community gatherings and weekly "GET IT DONE" committee meetings. (They don't want to call it "planning" meetings.) They are very involved in the oversight of water projects that directly affect their community, particularly the Industrial Canal or IHNC lock project, and they are ready to return to court if needed.

Since Katrina, the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association has focused on the sustainable restoration of the Holy Cross and Lower Ninth Ward neighborhoods and people. In support of the overall goal, the Lower Ninth Ward Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development (CSED) was created in January of 2007 to represent Lower Ninth Ward and Holy Cross neighborhoods and to make that entire area become the most sustainable and carbon neutral community in the world. CSED programs include: providing sustainable rebuilding materials and volunteer rebuilding assistance; the restoration of Bayou Bienvenue; collaboration with larger sustainable development partners such as Global Green, Rebuilding Together and Operation Comeback; a community wide landscape architecture assessment and building project; a deconstruction project; the St. Claude Initiative, an economic development project; advocacy around natural and physical protections; hazard & storm water mitigation strategies; and a mental health project. Pam is now going to be working for CSED so she will be stepping off the board of Holy Cross as a result.

They are very excited about new initiatives such as the St. Claude initiative which aims to bring back people and businesses to the corridor. There is an MIT fellow currently working with them on this to recruit sustainable businesses by using an energy efficiency package. There is also a murals project to involve neighborhood kids and beautify the area. They want to develop a concrete strategy to "get off the grid" and move forward to true sustainable restoration. They also want to continue the landscape architecture and streetscape work, and have plans for a National Institute of Health Campus and a National Center for Community Health Research that will be established on the Holy Cross School Campus. Next steps for them is to recruit residents for Global Green and Make it Right developments, and to assess how far they have come and develop a plan for where they want to go.



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### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

Repopulation is still a major issue for them. Right now there is anywhere from 19-40% return rate for that area depending on which part of the neighborhood you are talking about. Young families with children are still missing in their neighborhood. They are also concerned about the lack of resources and infrastructure, and the lack of movement by the local political and bureaucratic systems.

### **3. What do they need/want?**

Help attracting businesses and young families to the neighborhood. In Pam's words: *"We want FONO to spread the word about sustainable restoration of the Lower Ninth Ward far and wide and we need help with technical assistance and a variety of resources."*

### **4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

Concerned about gentrification in their neighborhood.





## Denise Byrne Report on April 2009 NOLA Meetings

### **Broadmoor Improvement Association and Broadmoor Development Corporation – April 10, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

LaToya Cantrell – President, Broadmoor Improvement Association

Hal Roark – Executive Director, Broadmoor Development Corp.

Albert Ruesga – GNOF President and Denise Byrne – FONO Board Member

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

The key to Broadmoor's success has been their model of public and private partnerships that include universities, the faith based community, nonprofits, for profit businesses and developers and government. Lack of vision of what can be done and how you can partner with others to do it has not been a problem at Broadmoor. In order to eliminate 100% of the blight, they needed to work with the market. This raised some issues but in the end they decided that this was the way to go. They created a CDC (Broadmoor Development Corp) to focus on community development and they partnered with universities like Harvard and with rebuilding nonprofits such as Rebuilding Together New Orleans. Projects now include one with the Salvation Army called "Environew" with a goal to build 25 silver LEED certified homes. They are buying houses from NORA and they redesign them to look like the historic homes that are typical in their neighborhood. Projects are fully funded because they have good partnerships, have invested in good building designs and have been able to tap into financing as a result of the strong partnerships they have and the good work that is being done in their neighborhood. Right now they have interns from MIT, Harvard, Yale and Bard College. Other projects are the Wilson school and a state of the art library in their neighborhood.

#### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

Road Home program is a joke and no one is talking about it. There are still many problems with contractor fraud all over the city and this is really hurting the residents. Government (city and state) hasn't been there and the residents and the private organizations have had to do all the work for themselves. Right now the city is focused on race issues and not recovery issues. In LaToya's words: *"They want to talk about race when we are trying to put people back in their homes, educate our kids and bring back our neighborhoods. Give me a break! We don't need to talk about race. We need to get the work done in the neighborhoods."* Neighborhood leaders are very, very angry and frustrated about all of this. They think there is no leadership coming out of the city or the state. In their words, there is too much talk and not enough action.

#### **3. What do they need/want?**

They want FONO to continue helping them with the donor linking, educating others about what is happening in NOLA, and using the bully pulpit which they need at all levels especially for local government advocacy work. They want lobbyists/advocates speaking on their behalf at the state level and they want allies like FONO to speak on their behalf at the state level. Opportunity cost: they need



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to do advocacy at the state level but they have so much to do at home that they don't have time for this. They need money, training and resources to be able to do effective advocacy. They want help to organize all the organizations, neighborhood leaders, etc. in New Orleans to go together to Baton Rouge. In addition to releasing monies that were promised long ago, they also want to make sure that state officials are applying for the money that the federal government is offering now. They also want info. on where the stimulus dollars are going and how to access these.



## Denise Byrne Report on April 2009 NOLA Meetings

### **Operation Comeback of the PRC – April 10, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

Pamela Bryan – Executive Director

Denise Byrne – FONO Board Member

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

The Operation Comeback program of the PRC is a nonprofit real estate developer. Over the next 5 years their goals are to acquire, rehabilitate and sell approximately 150 sustainable historic structures and newly construct 60 properties in Holy Cross, Treme and Mid-City. They sell these homes to low to moderate income and market rate buyers. Right now they have launched an exciting new project called “Preserving Green” which will initially restore 22 architecturally significant houses in the Holy Cross historic district of the Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward and provide training and technical assistance to homeowners, contractors, tradespersons and students in LEED design and building. PRC is getting funding from the Prince of Wales Foundation for the Built Environment for this initiative and is collaborating with the union building trades of New Orleans, Delgado Community College and Tulane University to create and implement this program. Operation Comeback has also recently submitted a proposal to HUD to build a LEED certified building for the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association that will also include materials from the stage that President Obama stood on when he was inaugurated. Once this building is completed, they are hoping to have approval to place the presidential seal on the structure so that it will highlight the community center at Holy Cross. Other activity includes the expansion of their warehouse to include salvaged materials from their deconstruction projects. They are also working with the MIT school of architecture (Larry Sass) to build the first digitally manufactured prefabricated house in Holy Cross.

#### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

Their greatest challenges now are insufficient working capital and market evaporation due to the economic downturn, the increase of interest rates and the absence of financial incentives.

#### **3. What do they need/want?**

Need FONO to help them connect to new sponsors and donors, and to find out about new government funding opportunities.



## Denise Byrne Report on April 2009 NOLA Meetings

### **Gentilly Civic Improvement Association – April 10, 2009**

#### **Participating:**

Laurie Watt – President  
Maria Mercedes Tio – Chair, Gentilly Fest  
Gretchen Bradford  
Karran Harper Royal  
Norm Whitley – President, Gentilly Terrace  
Connie Udo – Director, St. Paul’s Homecoming Center/Beacon of Hope  
David Welch  
Tina Marquardt  
Jr. Seyler  
Denise Byrne – FONO Board Member

#### **1. Where are they now? What are they working on?**

The neighborhood is very diverse and tightly knit. Before Katrina, 80% of Gentilly residents were homeowners. There is a definite feeling that people want to come back to Gentilly. Many in the leadership feel that Gentilly has an identity crisis. People on the outside don’t know what a jewel Gentilly is so marketing the neighborhood is their focus now. People have to drive long distances now to get what they need. So they want large, national retailers and other types of businesses to move to their area. They want to form an economic development brigade that will get businesses to move to Gentilly. They want to develop a regional marketing plan and develop successful public and private partnerships. They feel the SBA should make New Orleans a test case for microloans and that local government give tax credits to homeowners and businesses like they do to the film companies. The Gentilly Fest was a great success. One of their members, David, is trying to get a community technology center off the ground that will help neighborhoods communicate and share resources with one another. One of their members, Karran, is very involved in the local public school, Greater Gentilly HS.

#### **2. What are the important issues for them now?**

Crime/safety are #1 issue for them. Keeping the doors open of the local nonprofits that are doing important work in their neighborhood, and access to more and better mental health services.

#### **3. What do they need/want?**

Want help in marketing their neighborhood to national retailers like CVS, Walmart and Target, and to the business community in general. Interested in a neighborhood “summit” so that they can share info. on what they are doing, network with others and learn. Want GO and capacity building monies for their local nonprofits. Want support for developing high quality public schools.



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### **4. Other messages that came through in the meeting?**

“Government has failed us at every level.”

“While using elected officials as "ambassadors" is a great idea, and while Women of the Storm have been wildly successful in getting Congress to focus on aid to New Orleans, the city needs a mechanism to grab the attention of the regional and national business community and get them to focus on business development pitch in New Orleans.”