

# **Connecting Communities Across the Americas Conference Report**

## **Following were the Sessions:**

**Monday, September 16, 2024**

### **WELCOMING REMARKS WERE GIVEN BY:**

Nancy Van Milligen, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque

Karla Twedt-Ball, Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation, USA

Mary Thomas, CFLeads and Lisa Schalla, Connecting Communities in the Americas

### **PLENARY - COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER DUBUQUE: VISION & STRATEGIES FCGD:**

Nancy Van Milligen, President & CEO and Alex Baum, Director of Advocacy, Data & Learning

### **PANEL DISCUSSION - WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP**

Moderator: Jesus Garcia-Gonzalez, San Antonio Area Foundation, USA

Panelists: Kimberly Lavalley, Community Foundation of Portage & District, Canada

Sheila Kramer Tjaden, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, USA

Erik Friend, Fundación Comunidad, Mexico

Caroline Tran, Community Foundation of Northwestern Philippines

### **TAKING A SYSTEMS APPROACH IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA**

Adoptando un enfoque sistémico en el suroeste de Florida

Lisa Schalla, CCA, Jonathan Romine, Collaboratory, Florida, USA

### **TABLE DISCUSSIONS**

#### **FINDING COMMON GROUND IN A POLARIZED WORLD**

Moderator: Mary Jo Jean-Francois, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque

Panelists: Alex Baum, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, USA

Karla Twedt-Ball, Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation, USA

R.R.S. Stewart, League of Women Voters, USA

Amy Gilligan, Telegraph Herald, USA

## **OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES FOR SMALL AND EMERGING COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS**

Workshop Facilitators:

Lisa Schalla, CCA and Kari McCann, Iowa Council on Foundations, USA

## **LEADING FOUNDATIONS INTO THE FUTURE**

Moderator: Mary Jo Jean-Francois, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque

Panelists: Mary Thomas, CFLeads, USA, Nancy Van Milligen, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, USA, Guerda Nicolas, Ayiti Community Trust, USA-Haiti

## **PANEL DISCUSSION - EVOLVING FOUNDATIONS & LEADERSHIP ROLES IN SOUTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Panelists: Ursula Moscoso, Mosaic Lab-Comuna Nación, Peru, Georgia Nicolau, Instituto Procomum, Brazil, Haley Cutler, St. Croix Foundation for Community Development, Virgin Islands Felipe Bogotá, TerritoriA, Colombia

### **Tuesday, September 17**

Bus left for Dubuque at 8:00 a.m. (travel time 1.5-2 hours)

Site visits:

Northeast Iowa Community College

Lunch at the McCarthy Center, CFGD, 700 Locust St.

Data Walk

Crescent Community Health Center, 1690 Elm St.

Down time in downtown Dubuque – JASON Arch. Walking tour 5:30 p.m.

Loaded bus to National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium, 350 E. 3rd St. 6:00 p.m. for dinner at the Museum

Loaded bus to return to Cedar Rapids - approx. 9:00 p.m.

### **Conference Take aways:**

It was so interesting to hear about what other CF's are doing in the different countries.

On the first day of the conference many CF's talked about their successes, their challenges as well as telling us about many of the projects they fund.

In the afternoon, we were paired with leaders from CF's very different from ours. I was paired with Andrea Saena, COE of the Chicago Community Trust. They are a very large foundation and fund projects that address poverty, crime, substance abuse and brain health. They do a lot of their own charitable activities and direct funding.

The following day were site visits. The first was to the Northeast Iowa Community College in Dubuque, Iowa. There we met folks who work for non-profit organizations who were given grants from the foundation in Dubuque.

We met Carol who works at the college and is the manager of a program that receives grants to assist people attend college who would not be able to otherwise.

We also met Carmain who works for the housing department for the city of Dubuque. She assists people struggling with poverty with rent reduction.

The third person was Caprice Jones who is the founder and ED of the Fountain of Youth. He was a very inspirational person. He grew up in extreme poverty and spent most of his youth in detention centers and the first 20 years as an adult in and out of prison. One day he had a vision and completely turned his life around. He now works hard to help change the mindset of those struggling with generational poverty, one person at a time.

After lunch we went to the Crescent Community Health Center where they provide high-quality, respectful, affordable, and comprehensive care to improve the health and well-being of their communities. They provide medical, dental and brain health services. Most of the doctor, dentists and therapist's volunteer. They run 100% on donations and grants. The foundation in Dubuque has provided them with many grants.

I love that in Iowa, they call mental health, brain health. This has helped break the stigma and more professionals in their community have spoken out about receiving help with brain health.

That evening we went for dinner at the museum in Dubuque. It has been completely restored, with the help of the foundation in Dubuque.

The Dubuque Foundation runs a program called Small Towns Dream Program. They reserve 10% of their annual granting allocation to this program. It is made up of their ED as well as several other community people who decide on which community challenges to fund. There is no application, only a small grant agreement and a final report. It has been very successful in assisting high risk people overcome issues that affect their lives. One example is a single mother who had a brain tumor and could not pay her rent for three months as she needed to recover from brain surgery and treatment but went back to work shortly thereafter.

The whole trip was a wonderful experience but left me wondering if CFPD could do more to provide assistance to our community's most vulnerable such as people living in poverty, people with substance abuse issues and people suffering with brain health.

Respectfully submitted by Kim Lavalley, ED