"This is Democracy in Action"

AMERICASPEAKS

2007 Program Report

About AMERICA*SPEAKS*

America*Speaks'* mission is to reinvigorate our nation's democracy by engaging citizens in the public decision-making that most impacts their lives. Our vision is to bring millions of Americans together in critical policy discussions that are linked to decision-makers and governance processes. To achieve our vision, we are developing innovative tools and infrastructure and implementing them across the country and around the world.

Believing deeply in the collective wisdom of ordinary people, America*Speaks* integrates state-of-the-art technology with small-group, face-to-face dialogue to allow thousands of people to deliberate simultaneously about important issues and come to shared priorities.

Our 21st Century Town Meeting® has engaged over 135,000 people. Among other initiatives, America*Speaks* brought large-scale citizen participation to the redevelopment of the World Trade Center site and post-Katrina New Orleans; to the creation of municipal budgets in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco; and to regional planning and economic development efforts in greater Chicago and Northeast Ohio.

Founded in 1995, America*Speaks* is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization based in Washington, D.C. Our international arm is Global Voices. For more information, please visit us on the web at www.americaspeaks.org

What is the 21st Century Town Meeting?

America*Speaks'* 21st Century Town Meeting® is a public forum that links citizens to decision-makers on key policy issues. Cutting-edge technology – a combination of keypad polling, groupware computers, large screen projection, teleconferencing and other techniques – enables simultaneous small-group, face-to-face dialogue among large numbers of people (hundreds, or many thousands, at a time). These intimate discussions are then themed to uncover the shared priorities of the assembled representative citizens. The 21st Century Town Meeting® creates a level playing field on which citizens can be authentically engaged with each other in policy and planning discussions that are directly and transparently linked to decision-makers and real governance processes. This methodology is also used in organizational settings as a 21st Century Summit®, which allows leaders to tap into the collective wisdom of constituents and stakeholders to identify shared priorities for action.

AMERICA*SPEAKS*

Message From the President:

A Time of Possibility

Change is on the horizon. As we move closer to electing a new President this fall, record numbers of citizens across America are making their voices heard. Together, we are weighing new priorities and new directions for our country. Health care, the economy, immigration, climate change – as of this writing, it is not yet clear which directions we will choose on these and other vital issues.

What is clear is that our nation faces critical questions about how we will conduct our democracy in the coming years. Will we rein-in the undue influence of money and special interests? Will citizens be given real opportunities to participate? Will our leaders listen to us and be held accountable for action? Can America resolve its most challenging concerns?

Over the last year, America*Speaks*' work across the country has answered these questions with a resounding "Yes!" This 2007 Program Report highlights three projects that prove revitalizing democracy in America is not just a possibility – it's already happening. America*Speaks*' 21st Century Town Meeting is making sure citizens, leaders, and communities can recapture their rightful roles in our democracy and get real results.

You'll read these inspiring stories:

California*Speaks*: In California, nearly 3,500 diverse citizens come together to give lawmakers concrete guidance on health care proposals under discussion in the state legislature. (Page 5)

Shaping America's Youth: Four cities across the country and the state of Iowa develop action plans on childhood obesity based on the views of more than 2,700 citizens. (Page 7)

We the People: In Northwest Kentucky, 650 citizens come to consensus on key community concerns, and then stay involved in order to resolve them. (Page 9)

This report also outlines our long-term mission and vision – it is our dream that citizen engagement like this becomes a routine part of America's democracy. Finally, you'll see how you can get involved in this exciting work – in your community, in your state, and at the national level.

America*Speaks* is changing how decision-making works: we're bringing democracy back in action! We hope you'll join us.

Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer, Ph.D.
President and Founder, America*Speaks*

Democracy in Action: A Role for Everyone

Tough Challenges

From health care to climate change, our nation faces a host of compelling issues whose solutions will be complex and require real trade-offs. And yet, our decision-making processes are not functioning as they should: civic participation is inconsistent, trust in government is low, and snap-judgment opinion polling often rules the day. Creating meaningful and lasting change in this environment is increasingly challenging.

For more than a decade, America*Speaks* has been working to address these concerns. We have found that bringing the public's voice into government decision-making requires the involvement of a diverse group of participants, each with a critical role to play.

Citizens are the lifeblood of a democracy. But before they will participate – in numbers and diversity sufficient to influence decision-makers – citizens must believe their voices will be heard.

Leaders and decision-makers increasingly realize that sustainable solutions cannot be attained without broad public support. By opening-up the decision-making process and listening to citizens, they can garner needed support and substantially improve governance.

Local organizations and volunteers respond to, and often help to shape, our country's policies. They also help mobilize and sustain civic involvement. Their success depends on capacity, resources, and the volume of competing demands.

The media has historically served as a link between citizens and their elected representatives. By championing the role of "public educator" and being a megaphone for citizen views, all media can play a vital part in community change.

Financial supporters, such as foundations and other donors, are necessary in a democracy that is not thriving on its own accord. Healing today's broken political system requires support from across all sectors.

Taking-Up the Challenge

In the last year, America*Speaks* has worked with citizens, leaders, decision-makers, local organizations, volunteers, the media, foundations and donors to successfully take-up their roles in our nation's democracy. Among a robust portfolio of work, three 2007 projects demonstrate, in particular, what can be achieved.

California*Speaks* brought together nearly 3,500 demographically representative citizens across eight cities to deliberate about a slate of health care policy proposals being considered by the state legislature. Citizens made substantive contributions to the policy discussion, and leaders worked across party lines to incorporate their recommendations. California's volunteer and foundation communities played critical roles in implementing this groundbreaking citizen engagement work.

> **"[The 21st Century Town Meeting] was a really important model for moving people from raw, uninformed opinions, to more informed judgment."**
>
> Kim Belshé, Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency

Shaping America's Youth (SAY), a national initiative to respond to the crisis of childhood obesity, has brought together more than 2,700 people and 300 organizations in five communities across the country: Memphis, Dallas, Philadelphia, Chicago, and the state of Iowa. The project has built action agendas at the national, state, local, and family/individual levels and is inspiring institutions to change. Coalitions of leaders and local organizations played key roles in the success of Shaping America's Youth.

> **"The SAY meeting showed the importance of retooling our approach – of taking incremental steps that get all of us working together in unison, and that helps build momentum."**
>
> Julia Thorius, Bureau Chief, Education Department, State of Iowa

We the People is bringing to life a vision for community change in Northwest Kentucky. With the support of a dedicated local foundation, and a cadre of elected officials and volunteers, 650 citizens prioritized solutions to long-standing problems. Citizens not only designed a path to the future, they are continuing to participate – with real results. The media plays a key role in this project's remarkable forward momentum.

> **"A gathering like this reminds leaders of who they're leading, and shows how citizens' expectations of their leaders are changing."**
>
> Libby Alexander, consultant to City of Owensboro

Democracy in Action:

Californians Tackle Health Care Reform

The "CaliforniaSpeaks" Story

californiaspeaks
Working Together for Better Health Care

California, home to more than 37 million people, spends nearly $200 billion each year on a health care system that leaders acknowledge is inefficient, costly and lets people fall through the cracks.

In early 2007, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger declared the "Year of Health Care Reform" and major legislative proposals began to emerge from across the political spectrum. Many feared the issue would fall victim to "politics as usual." But in February, the large-scale citizen engagement work of America*Speaks* caught the eye of business and philanthropy leaders eager to avoid a stalemate. California*Speaks* was launched.

On August 11, 2007, 3,500 Californians participated in a day-long, eight-site, in-depth conversation about the top two health care proposals before the state legislature. California*Speaks* participants were drawn randomly – with over-sampling and added outreach for harder-to-reach groups – and roughly mirrored the state's demographics, health insurance status and income levels. This diverse group of citizens gave leaders specific guidance on policy options related to employer, government, insurer and individual responsibility.

Soon after the "21st Century Town Meeting®," Governor Schwarzenegger and Democratic Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez together filed health care reform legislation that aligned with many of the consensus views developed during California*Speaks*. The plan drew support across political lines and 64% of citizens endorsed it (*The Field Poll*, Dec. 21, 2007). Unfortunately, a projected state budget deficit of more than $14 billion raised concerns about the $14.4 billion health care proposal. A Senate committee failed to pass the legislation in a special session.

Though the legislation itself was not successful, California*Speaks* enabled the state's top decision-makers to participate and hear citizens uncover agreements on a complex and seemingly intractable issue. Leaders then worked across party lines to create legislation reflecting the views of the people.

Leaders in Action

By design, citizens and leaders emerge from a 21st Century Town Meeting® as co-owners of a concrete action plan. California*Speaks* was one of the largest town meetings ever convened in the United States. The participation of key leaders – the Governor, Assembly Speaker, Senate President pro Tem, Assembly Republican Leader and many other legislators – connected the consensus views of thousands of citizens to a live policy debate.

> **"After today we must have legislative action. Inaction is not acceptable. To provide leadership on the issues of today...we must...bring health care to a solution."**
>
> California Senate President pro Tem Don Perata

Leaders encouraging public participation. State leaders sent letters of invitation to participants and recorded public service announcements. They raised awareness about the public's important role in health care reform.

Participating in the conversation. California's leaders joined the face-to-face table discussions, giving them a unique and important perspective on the public's views.

Committing to action...and taking it! Through California*Speaks*, state leaders publicly committed to carrying out the people's priorities. The Republican Governor and Democratic Assembly Speaker reached a compromise following the statewide conversation.

> **"I walked out of [California*Speaks*] with a real sense of mission, that I had an obligation and a responsibility to work my heart out to try to deliver to the people."**
>
> California Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez

More of Democracy's Participants in Action

Citizens step-up.

California*Speaks* brought together citizens from all backgrounds to dig in to the complexities of health care policy. After the event, 95% of those polled had discussed the issue with family and colleagues; 40% had contacted a government representative. Participants also stayed in touch with each other.

> **"For people to spend a whole day, during the summer, on Saturday – ordinary Californians, not folks who do this for a living, but people who are really affected... I think it spoke volumes."**
>
> Paul Hernandez, former Director of Communications and Public Affairs, The California Endowment

Volunteers facilitate real dialogue.

At the heart of California*Speaks* was substantive, face-to-face dialogue among 3,500 people across eight sites. More than 400 trained facilitators volunteered – some flying across the country – to support Californians in this important conversation.

Local media cover the event.

Coverage of California*Speaks* reached millions of people and included articles in *USA Today*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Los Angeles Times*. The California Channel, modeled after CSPAN, broadcast the day-long program.

Foundations collaborate.

In an unprecedented collaboration, Blue Shield of California Foundation, The California Endowment and The California Wellness Foundation sought an authentic role for the public in the health care debate. Partnering with America*Speaks* – and joined by Alliance Healthcare Foundation, The Sierra Health Foundation, and The San Francisco Foundation – these foundations helped bring policy-makers and stakeholder communities to the table.

> **"This was a live, interactive event bringing together Californians of every viewpoint -- so leaders got an unedited earful from the public. California*Speaks* dispelled the myth that people won't make tradeoffs. They'll roll up their sleeves if it's something they care deeply about."**
>
> Crystal Hayling, President and CEO, Blue Shield of California Foundation

For more information, please visit ▶
www.californiaspeaks.org

Democracy in Action:

Building a National Response to Childhood Obesity

The "Shaping America's Youth" Story

More than 15% of American children are overweight or obese, and the numbers are growing. Yet there is no national strategy to combat this public health crisis. Experts say focusing on "personal responsibility" isn't enough – that the problem is greater than any one sector can address on its own.

In 2003, Nike, McNeil Nutritionals, Campbell Soup, the U.S. Surgeon General, and the American Academy of Pediatrics launched a multi-year effort to bring together policy makers, service providers, doctors, educators, parents and communities to address childhood obesity. Shaping America's Youth (SAY) aims to establish a national action plan, launch community-based work, create a national registry of programs and promote coordination.

The engine behind SAY has been large-scale community dialogues produced and facilitated by America*Speaks* using the 21st Century Town Meeting® model. From January 2006 through August 2007, more than 2,700 people and more than 300 organizations came together in Memphis, Dallas, Philadelphia, Chicago and the state of Iowa to develop consensus solutions to childhood obesity.

Designed to build a national voice, SAY has clearly demonstrated that citizens from urban Philadelphia, to the mid-south, to rural Iowa agree about the barriers to improving nutrition and increasing physical activity for youth – and the strategies for overcoming them. SAY participants prioritized solutions that are different from current policy directions: increasing the availability of healthy foods instead of imposing higher taxes on unhealthy foods, for example. SAY is poised to issue a "Community-Based Plan of Action" this fall.

Local Organizations in Action

In each of the five SAY communities, local organizations have energized citizens and helped keep follow-up activities going. By working in coalition, they have been able to bridge multiple sectors.

Building new partnerships. In Philadelphia, SAY resulted in a new collaboration between government agencies and academic institutions. This alliance of organizations is now matching Town Meeting participants with community groups to work on neighborhood-level improvements.

Strengthening capacity. In Chicago, SAY helped solidify a recently-formed partnership among the four city agencies most involved in youth issues: the Public Schools, Park District, Public Health, and Children and Youth Services. At the 21st Century Town Meeting®, citizens were enthusiastic about this coalition's action plan: more than 80% supported it and wanted city dollars to fund it.

Changing organizational culture. Following SAY, the Healthy Memphis Common Table, a coalition of 800 community leaders and individuals that helped sponsor the meeting, broadened its organizational focus to better align with SAY's diverse stakeholder groups.

> **"We have converted from a medical model – which left the job up to doctors, nurses and hospitals – to a community model with the help of SAY."**
>
> Denise Bollheimer, Chair, Healthy Memphis Common Table

More of Democracy's Participants in Action

Leaders' participation gets results.

Many leaders in key positions – the U.S. Surgeon General, city mayors, county executives, and city and state health leaders – have been directly involved in SAY, increasing its visibility and credibility, and driving real policy outcomes. In Tennessee, SAY energized statewide school health policy changes and new funding. In Iowa, legislation was introduced to enact a top priority from the SAY meeting: mandating 30 minutes of structured physical activity during the school day. As of May, 2008 the legislation had passed the state Senate and was pending in the House.

The private sector provides key support.

National-level corporate partners and local business sponsors made the SAY meetings possible. They have also supported key local follow-up activities. Independence Blue Cross, for example, is supporting development of local plans in communities around Philadelphia and GlaxoSmithKline is working with Iowa's Partnership For Better Health on childhood obesity prevention, intervention and innovation.

For more information, please visit ▶
www.shapingamericasyouth.com

Democracy in Action:

A Kentucky Community Mobilizes Around Core Goals

The "We the People" Story

Like many small communities, the city of Owensboro, and surrounding Daviess County, Kentucky face challenges such as slow growth, under-performing schools, environmental degradation, and community health concerns. Over the years, Owensboro-Daviess citizens have participated in many "community conversations" aimed at addressing some of these issues. Yet their successes have been hindered by low civic trust, urban-rural tensions, government jurisdictional struggles and polarized political discourse.

In April 2007, the Public Life Foundation – which had seeded earlier community discussions – sought a new approach to build upon work that had gone before. They knew that engaging a larger and more demographically representative group of citizens would be key; and that there would have to be a broader agenda and a real commitment to follow-up. In the end, citizen voices would have to be directly linked to decision-makers who could take real action. America*Speaks* had the experience needed to achieve these goals, and a partnership was launched.

On November 10, 2007, We the People brought nearly 650 residents of Owensboro-Daviess County together in a 21st Century Town Meeting® to prioritize options and develop an action plan. The Mayor, the County Judge, all city and county commissioners, a state senator and two state representatives participated. During the day-long deliberation, citizens found a common vision then prioritized action options. They kept a close eye on tradeoffs, costs, and consequences to ensure their recommendations were realistic.

Since the initial deliberation, participants have come together repeatedly to refine plans, create an oversight structure, and dig-in to core issues like recycling, downtown planning, substance abuse, and government collaboration. The breadth and depth of the community's commitment has inspired establishment of the "We the People Initiative" which will carry-out the work begun at the 21st Century Town Meeting®.

Citizens in Action

Before We the People, a County Commissioner said: "I suspect the people that show up will be the more educated, wealthy and urban people in the community." This legitimate concern underlies the 21st Century Town Meeting®'s requirement that all voices participate. Without demographic representation, the results are not credible. When you do engage a wider demographic, here's what's possible:

A broad-based conversation. Intensive outreach to traditionally hard-to-engage groups and support for transportation, child care, and translation were key to bringing the whole community into the room.

Tackling complex issues. Facilitated face-to-face discussion enabled robust and productive deliberation. Among many possible actions, citizens established clear priorities. More than 60% said they'd changed their opinion because of the discussion.

Staying involved. More than 300 participants signed-up for follow-up work. Several weeks later, 150 citizens (25% of the original attendees) reconvened to develop 90-day work plans; three months later, another 150 came together to assess progress.

Five grassroots working groups continue to tackle citizens' priorities. On the hot-button issue of environmental protection and recycling, officials and citizens are making progress. Owensboro-Daviess has no curbside recycling and a single collection center; only one private company accepts household recyclables, but not on weekends or evenings. The working group is making site visits and educating the community on the issue so all residents can consider the costs and trade-offs involved and come up with a more comprehensive and lasting solution.

> **"It was very rewarding to see so many different folk come together. Everyone brought their own perspective. These differences made it work so well. That's what's important: not just having a voice, but having your voice heard."**
>
> Valerie Holcomb, Participant, We the People

More of Democracy's Participants in Action

A local foundation takes the lead.

The Public Life Foundation played – and continues to play – many key roles in We the People – financially supporting it, helping lead implementation, generating on-going participation, and pushing for concrete outcomes. This single foundation has helped change governance in its community: citizens of Owensboro-Daviess County now expect their voices to be heard on critical issues.

> **"We the People illuminated how civil public dialogue and deliberation engages, educates and empowers people to assume rightful ownership of their public institutions. With leaders committed to citizen sovereignty, we can realize the kind of community and world we want for the 21st century."**
>
> John Hager, Founder, Public Life Foundation of Owensboro

The media helps keep the issues alive.

Media coverage of We the People helped motivate initial involvement and continues to stir-up interest. In addition to educating the public about the issues, it helps ensure that decision-makers keep citizens' priorities in the forefront.

Volunteers make it possible.

More than 200 volunteers made We the People possible – planning the meeting, developing materials, doing promotion and outreach, facilitating table conversations, analyzing data, and filling many logistical roles. As a result, citizens of Owensboro-Daviess County were part of a truly democratic process.

> **"Thomas Jefferson would have been proud to see this group in action."**
>
> Belinda Abell, Table Facilitator, We the People

For more information, please visit ▶
www.wethepeopletownmeeting.org

AMERICA*SPEAKS* in Action: Looking Ahead

This is an extraordinary and exciting time in our democracy.

America has witnessed unprecedented mobilization and voter turnout in election primaries across the country. Citizens of all political stripes are expressing a desire for significant change – they want action on key issues like health care, the economy, immigration, and climate change.

But perhaps even more significant, they want the way this country conducts its public business to change; this is the key message embedded in what's happening today.

At America*Speaks* we believe that no matter who is elected, the way we conduct our business won't change, nor will the major policy issues find resolution, unless the public stays mobilized and engaged. All of democracy's participants described in this report – citizens, local organizations, leaders, decision-makers, the media, funders – must stay in dialogue with each other to sustain the public will our founders recognized as a cornerstone of a healthy democracy.

To build and sustain this dialogue, America*Speaks* will continue to pursue its long-term mission and vision. By advancing strategic partnerships and taking on more and more local, state and national citizen engagement initiatives, we are working to bring democracy back in action.

America*Speaks* aims to:

Institutionalize national discussions. Our democracy must regularly engage the public in national deliberations on critical policy issues to build a government that is truly of the people, by the people and for the people.

Sustain citizen participation. Engaging more and more citizens in deliberations about key policy issues is only the first step. Building their capacity to take action on public policy over time is the key to a healthy democracy.

Help foster a better role for the media in our democracy. As a vital participant in our democracy, the media must re-own its roles as public educator, as a primary vehicle for expressing public sentiment, and as a central mechanism by which government can be held accountable.

Capture the Internet's full capacity for deliberation. With its demonstrated ability to mobilize and bring together large groups of people, the Internet should be a key deliberative environment. It has yet to be fully tapped.

YOU in Action:
Get Involved with AMERICA*SPEAKS*

You have an important role to play in strengthening our democracy – in making sure that Americans can routinely engage in discussions about the decisions that most impact their lives.

www.americaspeaks.org

Here are six ways you can take-up the challenge.

1. **Participate in America*Speaks* events.** Our 21st Century Town Meetings take place around the country. For a list of upcoming opportunities to participate, go to the "Get Involved/Events" tab on our website.

2. **Stay informed.** "America*Speaks* News" is a free, quarterly, electronic newsletter on public engagement in decision-making and features our current work. Sign up for "America*Speaks* News" on our website.

3. **Facilitate citizen discussions.** Over 4,400 skilled facilitators are a part of America*Speaks'* network of dedicated volunteers. All over the country they are supporting small group discussions among diverse citizens and ensuring all voices are heard. America*Speaks* facilitators receive a "Facilitator Newsletter" so they can stay up-to-date on volunteer opportunities and advances in the field. Go to the "Facilitators" tab on our website.

4. **Bring a 21st Century Town Meeting® to your community.** America*Speaks* is always looking for new opportunities to involve citizens in decision-making. How can our innovative deliberative tools bring citizen engagement to a pressing issue in your community? Tell us about your project idea and how we might work together on the "Get Involved/Request our Services" tab on our website.

5. **Discuss and debate the future of our democracy.** Should all government decisions have citizen input? What would it take for people to feel their voices matter? How can we sustain citizen involvement after a 21st Century Town Meeting®? You can discuss and debate issues like these live, online. Go to the "Get Involved/Discuss and Debate" tab on our website.

6. **Donate.** Generous contributions from foundations, individuals and corporations are essential to our success – providing more than two-thirds of our operating revenue. Please consider supporting America*Speaks* with a tax-deductible donation today. Go to the "Get Involved/Donate" tab on our website.

2007 PROJECTS

January

Community Congress, Unified New Orleans Plan (total 4,000 people)

Two New Orleans "Community Congresses" enabled current and displaced residents to come together to overcome bottlenecked politics and produce the Unified New Orleans Plan, the official recovery blueprint for the hurricane-ravaged city.

February

The 2010 Imperative: Global Emergency Teach-In (world-wide webcast)

An interactive webcast engaged hundreds of thousands of people from 47 countries on how designers can think differently about energy use, climate change and the built environment.

March

One New Orleans City Wide Planning Day for Employees, New Orleans, LA (700 people)

City employees discussed their role in implementing New Orleans' recovery efforts and emergency preparedness for the future. The Office of Recovery Management incorporated employee recommendations in collaboration with department heads.

April

Shaping America's Youth, Philadelphia, PA (350 people) *See page 7.*

National Emergency Medical Services Preparedness Initiative, Washington D.C. (60 people)

EMS Chiefs, Officers, Administrators and Directors from America's largest cities explored their role in disaster protection, preparedness, response and recovery. Recommendations were submitted to the Department of Homeland Security.

Port Phillip Speaks, Australia (750 people)

A ten-year community plan was developed from the vision and priorities of a diverse group of citizens from Port Phillip. Participants also made personal commitments and joined neighborhood groups focused on implementing their vision.

May

Shaping America's Youth, Chicago, IL (600 people) *See page 7.*

Donna Karan's Urban Zen Well Being Forum (2,000 people)

This ten-day event brought together patients and world-renowned traditional and alternative health care practitioners to develop creative initiatives that address serious health care problems in patient care and advocacy.

June

National Rural Assembly, Washington D.C. (300 people)

More than 300 rural leaders from across the country developed a common vision for strengthening rural America. The convening raised the visibility of their concerns, produced policy initiatives, and has helped launch a national network of rural interests.

July

ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability National Workshop, Fayetteville, AR (150 people)

Local government staff and elected officials from across the country exchanged ideas to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make their cities more sustainable.

August

CaliforniaSpeaks (3500 people) *See page 5.*

Shaping America's Youth, IA (250 people)
See page 7.

September

Clinton Global Initiative, New York, NY (1,000 people)

Former President Bill Clinton hosted heads of state and international business, government and nonprofit leaders at an annual three-day conference, which generates several billion dollars of commitments aimed at solving the world's most pressing problems.

October

ICLEI National Conversation on Climate Action (4,500 people)

Mayors and other local government leaders across the country convened meetings in their communities to discuss the science and what is needed to solve global warming.

November

We the People, Owensboro-Daviess County, KY (650 people) *See page 9.*

Greater Washington Board of Trade, Washington, D.C. (200 people)

The 2007 Potomac Conference convened area business, nonprofit, and government executives to discuss enhancing Greater Washington's competitive advantage through environmental stewardship.

Washington Regional Area Grantmakers Annual Conference, Washington D.C. (230 people)

A roundtable discussion with grantmakers from the National Capital Region identified the key issues facing their region and then explored existing and required strategies for cross-sector collaboration.

December

Renaissance Village FEMA Trailer Park Community Meeting, Baton Rouge, LA (300 people)

Over three-hundred residents of the largest FEMA trailer park for displaced New Orleans residents presented a plan for transitioning to safe, affordable and permanent housing. The plan was developed and implemented by leaders of the New Orleans diaspora with support from AmericaSpeaks.

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America*Speaks*

America*Speaks* honors dedicated board member Adam Solomon, who passed away in April 2008.

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Painting of CaliforniaSpeaks' 21st Century Town Meeting® in Oakland on August 11, 2007, by Daniel Camacho. Contact him at camacho.art@gmail.com