

**Meeting of Community Economic Development/Job Opportunities for Low Income Adults (JOLI) Program**

April 1, 2011

*Speech by Carla I. Javits*

YOU ARE THE EMBERS GROWING ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. HERE YOU CAN IGNITE THE FIRE THAT GENERATES SUPPORT FOR YOUR WORK.

COMING HERE I WAS THINKING ABOUT WHAT A JOB MEANS – THE CAMRADERIE THAT ALL OF YOU HAVE FORGED OVER THE YEARS, THE LEADERSHIP OF BOB BRANDWEIN AND HIS DAUGHTER JEN – AND OTHERS HERE.

A JOB IS ABOUT A PAYCHECK – BUT ALSO MUCH MORE – THE NETWORK OF SUPPORT, THE SENSE OF VALUE AND PURPOSE AND MEANING. THAT'S WHAT THE PEOPLE WHO WORK FOR THE GROUPS REDF SUPPORTS TELL US IS THE PRIMARY VALUE OF THE JOBS THEY GET IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE.

AND THAT WAS MY FATHER'S MOTIVE – HE WANTED TO MAKE SURE THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WAS AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE. THE SPECIAL IMPACT PROGRAM NOW KNOWN AS CED WAS ONE OF THE FIRST OF THESE INITIATIVES.

HE THOUGHT THAT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MOBILITY SHOULD NOT BE THWARTED BY CIRCUMSTANCE OF BIRTH -- NEIGHBORHOOD, CLASS, OR RACE. HE ALSO HAD STRONG VIEWS ABOUT THE ROLE THE PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD PLAY.

IN A WONDERFUL INTERVIEW WITH THE CONSERVATIVE WILLIAM F BUCKLEY MY FATHER ACCEPTED BUCKLEY'S CHARACTERIZATION OF HIM AS A 'LIBERAL' – ALTHOUGH HE SAID HE PREFERRED THE TERM REPUBLICANS LIKE BETTER -- 'PROGRESSIVE' AND NOTED:

“IF THE PEOPLE HAVE TO HAVE SOMETHING DONE FOR THEM THEY NEED IT DONE, AND YOU CAN'T BE DOCTRINAIRE ABOUT THE METHOD. BUT I PREFER AS A REPUBLICAN THE PRIVATE ENTERPRISE METHOD EITHER AS A SOLE RELIANCE OR AS A SUPPLEMENT. HOWEVER I DO NOT GO WITH THE CONSERVATIVES IN REFRAINING FROM DOING IT OR REJECTING IT BECAUSE I CANNOT DO IT THROUGH PRIVATE ENTERPRISE – BUT I WILL DO IT EVEN IF IT TAKES GOVERNMENT TO DO IT, AND I THINK THE POVERTY EFFORT IS A CASE IN POINT.”

ONE OF HIS OTHER FAVORITE STATEMENTS, “IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO – DO SOMETHING!”

HE TOOK UP THE CHALLENGE OF HIS COLLEAGUE NEW YORK SENATOR BOBBY KENNEDY TO GALVANIZE SUPPORT FOR A NEW MODEL OF NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MEANT TO REVITALIZE POOR COMMUNITIES AROUND THE US. HE HELPED BUILD THE CIVIC INRASTRUCTURE OF COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES AND LEGAL AID.

WHILE HE RECOGNIZED THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD PLAY A ROLE – FROM HIS PERSPECTIVE IT WAS NOT THE CENTRAL ACTOR – THE PRIVATE SECTOR WAS. BUT IT COULD BE A LEVER.

HE PUT HIS MUSCLE INTO CAJOLING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO FIND WAYS TO INVEST IN THESE FLEDGLING CDCS AND THE COMMUNITY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. PRIVATE CAPITAL TO CREATE SOCIAL GOOD.

IN THIS SENSE, HE WAS A VISIONARY – PUTTING INTO PLACE THE KINDS OF PROJECTS THAT TODAY WE CALL 'IMPACT INVESTING' AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE BEFORE THOSE TERMS WERE INVENTED.

THESE ECONOMIC ISSUES THAT HE CARED SO DEEPLY ABOUT ARE AT THE ROOT OF ALMOST EVERY POLITICAL PROBLEM WE DEAL WITH TODAY – FROM THE REBELLIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE FRUSTRATED WITH JOBLESSNESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA, TO THE STUBBORN FACT THAT 50 MILLION AMERICANS DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO SUFFICIENT FOOD WHILE OBESITY ALMOST IRONICALLY GROWS, TO THE BUDGET DEFICITS.

I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU TWO STORIES – A 'ONCE UPON A TIME' STORY OF WHAT WE HAVE DONE; AND AN ADVENTURE STORY OF WHAT WE MUST DO.

I KNOW HOW MY FATHER WOULD RESPECT AND ADMIRE YOU. MANY OF YOU IN THIS ROOM ORGANIZED PEOPLE TO ADVOCATE FOR THEMSELVES, TO LEARN HOW TO DO BUSINESS TO BENEFIT THEIR COMMUNITIES. YOU HAVE CREATIVELY MOBILIZED PRIVATE CAPITAL TO INVEST IN LOW INCOME COMMUNITIES.

AFTER CONGRESS PASSED THE COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT ACT, AND ESTABLISHED THE LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT PROGRAM THE CDC MOVEMENT WAS JOLTED BY INFUSIONS OF CAPITAL AND INCENTIVES TO FOCUS ON CREATION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING. WITH THE FINANCING TOOLS TARGETING REAL ESTATE, COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOK SOMETHING OF A BACK SEAT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING AMONG MANY CDC'S. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS BEGAN TO GROW.

LATER, ENTERPRISE ZONES, NEW MARKETS TAX CREDITS, AND OTHER MECHANISMS OFFERED TAX INCENTIVES TO LOCATE BUSINESSES IN POOR COMMUNITIES

WE'VE HAD MULTIPLE JOB TRAINING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

ALL OF THESE INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS MORPHED OVER THE YEARS AS THEY FLEXED THEIR MUSCLES, THEN LOST STEAM, REINVENTED THEMSELVES, AND WERE DISCOVERED, SUPPORTED, AND CHALLENGED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, FOUNDATIONS, TAXPAYERS, AND THE RESIDENTS OF LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES.

TODAY WE ARE IN A CHANGED AND DRAMATICALLY CHANGING LANDSCAPE. SOME OF THE AMBITIONS OF THESE EARLY PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN REALIZED AND THEY PLAYED A PART IN CREATING CHANGE FOR MANY PEOPLE AND MANY NEIGHBORHOODS. BUT TODAY, THEIR FUNDING IS UNDER ASSAULT.

AT THIS CRITICAL MOMENT, WE HAVE TO ASK OURSELVES -- WHAT HAS HAPPENED AS A RESULT OF ALL OF THIS ACTIVITY?

I WILL CALL OUT JUST A FEW OF THE INCREDIBLY POSITIVE RESULTS:

- THOUSANDS OF BUSINESSES AND JOBS HAVE BEEN CREATED BY THE LOCAL GROUPS IMPLEMENTING THE CED/JOLI PROGRAM
- CDC'S HAVE HELPED TO CREATE MORE THAN 2 MILLION UNITS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING. AS A RESULT CDC'S BECAME STRONG INSTITUTIONS WITH MORE RELIABLE INCOME STREAMS. LOW INCOME HOME OWNERSHIP GREW. THE ASSETS AND ECONOMIC STATUS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IMPROVED - THEY HELPED DEVELOP A HOST OF INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES LIKE INNER CITY GROCERY STORES, MINORITY AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES, AND IN SOME CASES REVITALIZED WHOLE COMMUNITIES -- ENTREPRENEURSHIP BECAME A BIGGER PART OF THE PICTURE HELPING FUEL ECONOMIC MOBILITY
- NOTABLY DURING THE LATE 20<sup>TH</sup> c THE POVERTY RATE OF ELDERLY PEOPLE DROPPED PRECIPITOUSLY AFTER SOCIAL SECURITY AND PENSION REFORMS WERE ENACTED.
- LEGAL AID HAS ASSISTED MILLIONS TO PROTECT THEIR RIGHTS AND OPENED DOORS TO JOBS, HOUSING AND EDUCATION.
- WORKFORCE TRAINING PROGRAMS HELPED MANY WHO HAD BEEN DISPLACED INTO NEW JOBS – THERE HAVE BEEN EFFORTS TO BETTER INTEGRATE WORKFORCE PROGRAMS AND TANF, AND TO PROVIDE JOB OPPORTUNITIES TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES – SOME TARGETING PEOPLE WHO WERE HOMELESS OR EXITING PRISON.

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DESPITE ALL OF THE PROGRESS – WE ALL KNOW THAT MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE. SOME OF WHAT HAS OCCURRED HAS NOT BEEN SUSTAINED. SOME HAS NOT DELIVERED THE PROMISED RESULTS – ESPECIALLY FOR THE POOREST AMERICANS WHO LIVE IN THE TOUGHEST NEIGHBORHOODS AND STRUGGLE WITH SOME OF THE MOST CHALLENGING PROBLEMS.

- SUSTAINED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE POOREST COMMUNITIES HAD PROVEN TO BE A HARD NUT TO CRACK.
- SOME ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HAS ALSO BRED STRUGGLES OVER GENTRIFICATION CREATING OTHER POCKETS OF POVERTY STILL UNADDRESSED.
- AND WORKFORCE PROGRAMS GENERALLY WERE STRUCTURED AND THE INCENTIVES WERE IN PLACE TO BE MORE OF A BOOST TO DISPLACED WORKERS OR RELATIVELY ABLE WORKERS, RATHER THAN THOSE LIVING IN DEEP POVERTY WITH HIGH BARRIERS – IN FACT EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT THE METRICS OF WORKFORCE PROGRAMS HAVE DISCOURAGED MANY COMMUNITIES FROM SERVING PEOPLE WITH GREATER BARRIERS
- SOME OF THE ASSET GAINS WERE LOST WITH THE MORTGAGE CRISIS AND ON PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT METRIC OF ALL – ECONOMIC MOBILITY – THE NEWS IS DECIDEDLY MIXED ACCORDING TO THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUST'S ECONOMIC MOBILITY PROJECT.

ON THE POSITIVE SIDE -- FOR MOST OF OUR HISTORY, AMERICANS HAVE EXPERIENCED RAPID ECONOMIC GROWTH AND THEREFORE OVERALL EVERYONE'S

INCOME HAS GROWN. TWO-THIRDS OF AMERICANS HAVE HIGHER INCOMES THAN THEIR PARENTS.

82% OF CHILDREN BORN INTO THE BOTTOM QUINTILE HAVE GREATER FAMILY INCOME THAN THEIR PARENTS, COMPARED TO 43 PERCENT OF CHILDREN BORN INTO THE TOP QUINTILE.

THE BAD NEWS THOUGH IS THAT DESPITE ALL OF OUR EFFORTS, OVER THE LAST GENERATION, ECONOMIC GROWTH HAS SLOWED AND INCOME INEQUALITY HAS WIDENED WITHOUT EVIDENCE OF AN OFFSETTING INCREASE IN MOVEMENT BETWEEN THE INCOME RANKS. DESPITE THE AMERICAN DREAM -- SEVERAL STUDIES SHOW THAT ECONOMIC MOBILITY IN OTHER COUNTRIES LIKE ENGLAND ARE GREATER THAN THAT OF THE US.

AS HAS BECOME SO EVIDENT, ECONOMIC GROWTH HAS BEEN UNEVENLY DISTRIBUTED IN THE PAST FEW DECADES, WITH THE MOST RAPID GROWTH CONCENTRATED IN THE TOP OF THE INCOME DISTRIBUTION. INCOME IS STILL INFLUENCED BY WHO ARE OUR PARENTS ARE.

INDIVIDUALS IN THE BOTTOM QUINTILE ARE NOT THAT LIKELY TO "PULL THEMSELVES UP BY THEIR BOOTSTRAPS." HS AND COLLEGE EDUCATION MAKE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE.

MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF INDIVIDUALS WHO START IN THE BOTTOM INCOME QUINTILE REMAIN THERE 10 YEARS LATER, AND 70 PERCENT REMAIN BELOW MIDDLE-INCOME STATUS. DESPITE NOTABLE UPS AND DOWNS IN THE U.S. ECONOMY, THIS IMMOBILITY AT THE BOTTOM HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED SINCE THE 1980S.

AND THE IMPACT OF RACIAL DISPARITIES AND DISCRIMINATION IS STILL AT PLAY. AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHILDREN ARE HALF AS LIKELY TO SURPASS THEIR PARENTS' FAMILY INCOME AS ARE WHITES.

ALARMINGLY, ALMOST HALF (45 PERCENT) OF BLACK CHILDREN WHOSE PARENTS WERE SOLIDLY MIDDLE-INCOME END UP FALLING TO THE BOTTOM OF THE INCOME DISTRIBUTION, COMPARED WITH ONLY 16 PERCENT OF WHITE CHILDREN.

FIFTY-FOUR PERCENT OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS WILL REMAIN IN THE BOTTOM INCOME QUINTILE IN ADULTHOOD, COMPARED WITH JUST 31 PERCENT OF WHITES.

AND MEN STILL EXPERIENCE GREATER UPWARD MOBILITY AND LESS DOWNWARD MOBILITY THAN WOMEN.

OVERALL, THE US POVERTY RATE STAYS STUBBORNLY STUCK – AND IS A BIT HIGHER NOW THAN IN PREVIOUS YEARS – BETWEEN 10 AND 13% FOR WORKING AGE ADULTS – AND EVEN HIGHER FOR YOUTH UNDER 18. FOR MANY DECADES.

DESPITE MYRIAD ACHIEVEMENTS OF PEOPLE WHO ONCE WERE POOR OR ON WELFARE AND HAVE MOVED INTO THE WORKFORCE, AND THE FACT THAT ECONOMIC MOBILITY IS STILL A REALITY FOR MANY IN AMERICA -- DEEP POVERTY AND ALL OF ITS ATTENDANT PAIN AND STRUGGLE PERSISTS AS A CHRONIC CONDITION FOR FAR TOO MANY MILLIONS OF AMERICANS. AND IS ESPECIALLY CONCENTRATED AND PERSISTENT IN CERTAIN COMMUNITIES.

THE PROGRAMS THAT HAVE DUG DEEPER INTO POOR COMMUNITIES HAVE BEEN COSTLY, AND THE GOVERNMENT'S FUNDING OF THOSE INITIATIVES HAS DECLINED OVER TIME.

IN FACT THE PEW REPORTS THAT OF ABOUT \$746 BILLION OF FEDERAL SPENDING ON ECONOMIC MOBILITY, ABOUT 2/3 GOES TO MIDDLE AND UPPER INCOME FAMILIES.

TODAY – WE ARE AT A CROSSROADS. THE DEBATE IN THE COUNTRY AND IN THE CONGRESS IS ALL ABOUT CUTTING BACK ON MANY OF THE PROGRAMS THAT HAVE BEEN THE BACKBONE OF THE ANTI-POVERTY EFFORT. THE ADMINISTRATION HAS PROPOSED TO SPLIT THE PROGRAM YOU ARE INVOLVED WITH TO INVEST IN INITIATIVES BRINGING FRESH, LOCAL FOOD TO ADDRESS OBESITY, DIABETES, ETC. – AS ANOTHER MAJOR CHALLENGE ARISES IN POOR COMMUNITIES.

WE MAY WELCOME THIS DEVELOPMENT – DOLLARS FLOWING TO AN IMPORTANT INITIATIVE. BUT OF COURSE IT IS NOT A NET ADD TO OTHER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION AT A TIME WHEN ARGUABLY THESE PROGRAMS ARE MORE URGENT THAN EVER.

AND IT IS A MUCH Milder SYMPTOM OF THE PROPOSED DRAMATIC CUTS TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND SO MANY OTHER PROGRAMS.

BUT THAT IS THE TIME WE ARE LIVING IN. AND I WOULD LIKE TO PUSH US – MAYBE EVEN PROUD US – NOT TO FOCUS ON THE CUTBACKS AND UNDERFUNDING AND NOT TO BE DEFENSIVE OR DISRESPECT CRITIQUES OF THE WORK WE HAVE DONE BUT INSTEAD TO FOCUS ON WHAT WE'VE LEARNED AND WHAT TO DO NOW. WE ARE NOT JUST ABOUT A PROGRAM OR ORGANIZATION, BUT SOMETHING MUCH LARGER AND MORE FUNDAMENTAL TO MAKING THE AMERICAN DREAM REAL.

THE TENSIONS AROUND GOVERNMENT FUNDING AND TAXATION IN AMERICA ARE AS OLD AS OUR COUNTRY. WE ARE BIG BELIEVERS IN FREEDOM AND LIBERTY, *A BIT AMBIVALENT ABOUT WHAT WE DO WHEN ALL PEOPLE DO NOT FIND THAT THEIR LIVES CONTINUE TO BE EQUAL AFTER WE ARE CREATED.*

MEANWHILE MOMENTS LIKE THIS – RIGHT NOW - OF DRAMATIC TENSION AND PRESSURE ARE THE TIMES WHEN WE REACH WITHIN AND SEE WHAT WE'RE REALLY MADE OF. WHAT WE REALLY ARE WILLING TO FIGHT FOR. WHAT WE REALLY THINK IS GOING ON AND WHAT SHOULD BE HAPPENING -- WHEN WE FACE THINGS HONESTLY.

MANY OF THE CRITICS THAT ARE CUTTING PROGRAMS BELIEVE IN SMALLER GOVERNMENT PERIOD – AND FUNDAMENTALLY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT GOVERNMENT-SUPPORTED INITIATIVES ARE TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS.

AND I WOULD HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE SOME OF THIS IS TRUE.

WHAT'S INTRIGUING THOUGH IS THAT EVERY TIME A BUSINESS FAILS WE DO NOT SAY – WELL THE BUSINESS MODEL OF CAPITALISM IS A FAILURE. WE CHANGE THE TYPE OF BUSINESS WE'RE IN, OR THE BUSINESS MODEL. VENTURE CAPITALISTS EXPECT A PERCENTAGE OF THEIR INVESTMENT TO FAIL AND ONLY SOME TO SUCCEED. IT IS HARD TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS! BUT IT IS STILL WORTHWHILE TO INVEST!

WHEN ON A TEAM AND WE DON'T WIN THE TOP PRIZE WE DO NOT DECIDE TO ABANDON SPORTS. WE LEARN, CHANGE OUR WORKOUT, OUR TRAINING, OUR STANCE, THE WAY WE HOLD THE BAT.

AND I WOULD ARGUE THAT'S WHAT WE NEED TO DO. LEARN FROM THE PAST WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T. IMPROVE OUR RESULTS, AND BUILD CONFIDENCE IN OUR EFFORTS.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO BUILD SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE POOREST COMMUNITIES SO THEY ARE MORE VIBRANT AND THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THEM ARE NOT DISPLACED – AND SO THAT PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN LIVING IN THESE COMMUNITIES BUT ARE EDUCATED, WORKING AND THRIVING.

WHO DO WE NEED TO MAKE THE CASE TO? FOR GOVERNMENT AND FOUNDATIONS – WE HAVE TO SHOW RESULTS FOR PEOPLE AND COST EFFECTIVENESS. THEY HAVE TO MAKE THE CASE TO OTHERS AND KNOW HOW TO TELL THE STORY. AND WE HAVE TO BUILD CONFIDENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES THAT WE ARE ACHIEIVING RESULTS AND USING PUBLIC MONEY WISELY AND WELL.

I WOULD LIKE TO FOCUS ON 3 THINGS: RESULTS, RESILIENCE AND RENDEZVOUS.

FIRST ON RESULTS. WE HAVE TO ROLL UP OUR SLEEVES AND IMPLEMENT WELL. IT'S NOT GLAMOROUS BUT IT IS NECESSARY. I'D LIKE TO MAKE A FORCEFUL CASE FOR DATA – NOT THE DRY DATA CASE – BUT WHY IT IS ACTUALLY ENERGIZING AND OF CENTRAL IMPORTANCE. THIS IS NOT ABOUT RIDICULOUSLY BOILING DOWN INTANGIBLE RESULTS TO NUMBERS.

IT IS ABOUT GETTING CLEAR ON WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH, ASSESSING HOW WELL WE'RE DOING, AND USING THAT INFORMATION TO SPEND THE SCARCE RESOURCES WE HAVE AS WISELY AND WELL AS POSSIBLE. IT IS ABOUT THOSE POWERFUL MOMENTS WHEN WE LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T. THINKING THROUGH THE FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL OBJECTIVES WE HAVE AND PICKING THE RIGHT BUSINESS MODELS TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS. WE NEED TO KEEP OUR EAR TO THE GROUND AND MEASURE OURSELVES SO THAT WE FIND OUT WHAT REALLY WORKS AND MAKE SURE FRONT LINE STAFF HAS ACCESS TO DATA.

WHEN WE LEARN THAT WHAT WORKS IS DIFFERENT THAN WHAT OUR PROGRAM DOES WE HAVE TO PUSH TO CHANGE AND ADAPT AND DO WHAT WORKS. IT'S ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY – AND RESPECT FOR THE PEOPLE PAYING US TO GET THE WORK DONE, AND RESPECT FOR THE TIME AND ATTENTION OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.

AND THE DATA WE COLLECT HAS TO INVOLVE THE PEOPLE WE WORK WITH. ULTIMATELY AS IN ANY BUSINESS WE HAVE TO LISTEN TO AND UNDERSTAND THE CUSTOMERS OF OUR PROGRAMS TO DELIVER WHAT THEY NEED. NO DIFFERENT FOR THE WORK WE DO THAN ANY BUSINESS. AND WE NEED TO CONNECT THE DOTS FOR POLICYMAKERS SO THEY UNDERSTAND THAT WHAT WE DO DOESN'T DUPLICATE SIMILAR WORK OF OTHERS – BUT MAGNIFIES THE IMPACT. AND IF THAT'S NOT TRUE – WE NEED TO STOP THE DUPLICATION!

THE SECOND POINT IS THAT JUST AS WE SUPPORT THE PEOPLE WE SERVE TO BE RESILIENT IN THE FACE OF SETBACKS AND CHALLENGES, WE NEED RESILIENCE IN OUR PROGRAMS. WHEN WE LEARN WHAT WORKS, OR WHO SHOULD BE TARGETED, WE SHOULD ADJUST. IF A FEW GRANTS DON'T WORK OR A VENTURE DOESN'T WORK – LEARN AND TRY AGAIN.

WE LEARNED THAT TRAINING SHOULD FOCUS ON THE SECTORS PROJECTING FUTURE GROWTH – AND WE MUST TIE THE TRAINING TO JOB PLACEMENT AND RETENTION SUPPORTS.

AND IF PEOPLE ARE TO BE RESILIENT AND BE ABLE TO LOSE A JOB AND GET ANOTHER JOB -- WE HAVE GOT TO TAKE ACTION SO THAT THEY HAVE INCENTIVES TO GO TO WORK. INCENTIVES ARE LINED UP FOR MIDDLE CLASS PEOPLE TO WORK – IT'S THE OPPOSITE IF YOU'RE POOR!

AND IT'S CRITICAL THAT PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO BUILD UP SOME MODEST ASSETS TO MAKE IT THROUGH THE TOUGHEST TIMES. TO BUILD ON THE POSITIVE ELEMENTS OF THEIR NATURAL SUPPORT NETWORKS SO THAT THEY THRIVE IN THE WORKFORCE.

WE NEED TO MAKE OUR PROGRAMS MORE RESILIENT AND LONGLASTING BY NOT DUPLICATING PROGRAMS – BUT DOING THINGS TO OPEN UP THE DOORS TO MAINSTREAM PROGRAMS TO PEOPLE WHO MIGHT BE EXCLUDED. MAKE TRAINING AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND IN THE WORKPLACE MORE WIDELY AVAILABLE TO LOW WAGE WORKERS AND PEOPLE WHO FACE 'BARRIERS' THROUGH COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS, LEGAL ADVOCACY TO FIGHT DISCRIMINATION, EMPLOYER/LABOR PARTNERSHIPS TO MAKE MORE TRAINING AVAILABLE TO THEIR LOW-WAGE WORKFORCE. OPEN DOORS FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS WHO STILL FACE DISCRIMINATION AND DISPROPORTIONATELY LIMITED MOBILITY.

AND RESILIENCE MEANS WE NEED OUR PROGRAMS TO FIND WAYS TO EARN AS MUCH INCOME AS POSSIBLE AND LEVERAGE OTHER SUPPORT -- TO REDUCE DEPENDENCE ON PUBLIC AND PHILANTHROPIC FUNDING – NOT TO PRETEND WE CAN COVER ALL COSTS THAT WAY, BUT TO MAXIMIZE PRIVATE RESOURCES. THAT WAS AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MOVEMENT WHEN IT STARTED.

FINAL POINT. RENDEZVOUS. WE NEED TO FULLY ENGAGE ALL SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY. NOT ONLY LOOK TO GOVERNMENT BUT ALSO LOOK TO THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, GOVERNMENT AND PHILANTHROPY. LOOK TO CITIZENS. VOLUNTEERS. LOOK TO THE PEOPLE IN POOR COMMUNITIES AND OTHERS IN THE NONPROFIT COMMUNITY – PEOPLE FROM OTHER SECTORS WHO HAVE NETERED THROUGH OTHER DOORS – SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP – PEOPLE WITH DISABILITES, INCARCERATION. OUR GREAT STRENGTH IS THAT WE ARE CROSS-CUTTING. IT WILL TAKE US ALL TO SCALE UP!

HOW DO WE BUILD ON THE NATURAL NETWORKS AND COMMUNITIES OF SUPPORT IN LOW INCOME COMMUNITIES THAT HELP PEOPLE MAKE IT NOW. THE INTERACTIONS THAT BUILD TRUST.

ONE NEIGHBORHOOD IN SAN FRANCISCO IS INSTRUCTIVE. THE PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY ISOLATED, ALTHOUGH THEY LIVE NEAR AN ADJOINING MIDDLE CLASS COMMUNITY. A COMMUNITY ORGANIZING EFFORT IS RESULTING IN THOSE GROUPS MEETING ONE ON ONE – GOING TO ONE ANOTHER’S HOMES. CHANGING THE WHOLE DYNAMIC WITH PEOPLE DRIVING THROUGH NEIGHBORHOODS THEY ONCE WERE FEARFUL OF AND GREETING NEIGHBORS THEY NOW KNOW.

FOUR MEN WERE IN MY OFFICE THE OTHER DAY WHO HAD DEALT THEMSELVES WITH MANY OF THE TOUGHEST ISSUES IN THEIR COMMUNITY. ONE OF THE FOUR IS WITH A PROGRAM CALLED ‘LIVE IN PEACE’ – A CONTRAST TO THE PREDOMINANT NEIGHBORHOOD THEME ‘REST IN PEACE’. I TOOK AWAY TWO HUGE POINTS FROM THEM. FIRST – ONE OF THEM WAS SAYING THAT NOTHING THEY WERE DOING TO ENGAGE YOUNG GANGBANGERS IN THE WORKFORCE WAS EASY. BUT FROM HIS PERSPECTIVE, “IF I HAVE TO WORK MY BUTT OFF TO GET SOMETHING DONE – THAT’S WHEN IT HAS VALUE”.

AND THE OTHER LEFT ME WITH THIS METAPHOR. HE SAID THAT THEY WERE HELPING THE PEOPLE THEY WORKED WITH TO SHED THEIR OLD CLOTHES – THE VIOLENCE AND ALIENATION. NOW – HE SAID – THEY FOUND THEMSELVES FIGURATIVELY NAKED. THE JOB HE HAS – AND THE JOB HE WAS CHALLENGING ME TO HELP WITH – IS TO HELP PEOPLE INTO NEW CLOTHES – A NEW WAY OF WORKING SIDE BY SIDE WITH COLLEAGUES AND NEIGHBORS OF ALL KINDS – AND LIVING IN PEACE.

SO LET US NOT BE DEFENSIVE BUT EAGER TO LEARN AND PROGRESS. FULL OF HOPE. LET US NOT FAIL TO ACT AT THIS MOMENT. NOW IS THE TIME TO RISE. NOW IS THE TIME FOR TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION. NOW WE CAN MIRROR THE PEOPLE WE WORK WITH AND SERVE – PEOPLE WHO OVERCOME THE GREATEST OF DIFFICULTIES TO PROSPER AND THRIVE. IT IS THE LEAST WE CAN DO. IT IS THE BEST WE CAN EVER ASPIRE TO DO. JOIN WITH ME. JOIN WITH ONE ANOTHER. JOIN WITH THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE. EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO WORK SHOULD HAVE A JOB IN THIS LAND OF THE FREE. AND IF WE TRULY ARE THE HOME OF THE BRAVE -- TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE THAT POSSIBLE.