

Enhancing Civic Participation: Engaging New Partners

Hispanic Summit - Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce

By David A. Odahowski, President
Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation, Inc.
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Good Afternoon. On behalf of the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation Board of Directors and our panelists, I am pleased to welcome you to “Enhancing Civic Participation: Engaging New Partners.”

Earlier you heard about political capital and economic capital. This breakout session is about social capital and about civic participation and engagement. Before you can do business with someone, before you can enter into important governmental agreements, you need to know people, you need Social Capital!

Many of you are familiar with the work of Robert Putnam, the author of BOWLING ALONE and many of you are aware that Robert Putnam has addressed our community on the topic of social capital.

Social capital refers to the connections between individuals – the social networks, the norms of reciprocity, and trustworthiness that arise from the connections between people. It lowers the cost of doing business and it decreases the demands placed upon our government! In a sense, social capital is civic participation.

Putnam says that there are two kinds of social capital; bonding social capital and bridging social capital. In other words, bonding social capital is like super glue and bridging social capital is like WD-40!

Now, Xavier de Souza Briggs, the urban sociologist, says that bonding social capital is good for “getting by” but bridging social capital is critical for “getting ahead.” This is what this Hispanic Summit is all about, about Central Florida “getting ahead” in terms of business, government, and our nonprofit sector.

Today’s presentation will cover the following:

1. Dispel the myth that Hispanics are not philanthropic, not volunteers, not board members of our faith-based and community organizations.
2. What are some current best practices and examples of Hispanic philanthropic giving, volunteering and board leadership?
3. What strategies can be developed in Central Florida for effective engagement of Hispanics and of the larger community to enhance civic participation and engaging new partners, in culturally appropriate ways.

The Hispanic Summit is all about building the political, economic, and social capital of a dynamic and diverse Central Florida region. For over 32 years, the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation has provided the financial resources and leadership to our faith-based and community based organizations to intersect with our political and economic sectors to strengthen the fabric of our community. The Hispanic Summit will create the common space for the leadership of our political, economic, and social sector to embrace a community tapestry.