

2008 Think Tank on Fundraising

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Introduction by David A. Odahowski, President

Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation

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On behalf of Jerry Hilbrich, Chairman of the Board of the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation, and the entire Board and staff of the Foundation, I want to welcome you to Orlando, Florida, where we put imagination to work, we put imagination to work!

Everyone here knows the Orlando business brand of putting imagination to work; Walt Disney World, Universal Studios, and Sea World. This is a place where dreams come true; where the movies come to life; and where you can have a whale of a good time, 50 miles from the Atlantic Ocean!

Our city and county government is also known for putting imagination to work by creating a 21st century “medical city” poised to rival Rochester, Cleveland, and Los Angeles. A new VA hospital, a new University of Central Florida Medical School, a new Nemours Children’s Hospital, and the new east coast headquarters of the Burnham Institute, will all be located within walking distance of each other, 15 minutes from Orlando International Airport, and in the # 1 tourist destination in the world. Health, wellness, disease prevention and bio-medical research will become part of Orlando’s world-wide brand.

Our nonprofit sector also puts imagination to work with over 2,000 Central Florida nonprofits generating over 7 billion dollars of revenue and holding 10 billion dollars of assets. We are home to Campus Crusade for Christ; Give Kids the World; the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States; and dear old Rollins College, the # 1 College in the South, the #1 Business School in Florida, ranking in the top 40 of all business schools in the nation, and the #1 nonprofit sector resource in the state of Florida – the Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership Center.

None of this would be possible without putting imagination to work or without the topic of your two day inquiry – Leadership, Governance and Giving!

In my almost three decades of work in philanthropy, the issues of Leadership, Governance and Giving could not be more important and I am grateful that AFP has assembled us here these two days. I began my work in philanthropy running the Wasie Family Office and Foundation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Marie Wasie, the Wasie Foundation founder, was the AFP Minnesota Chapter’s first Outstanding Philanthropist.

In a state known for its commitment to Leadership, Governance and Giving, with the likes of names such as Dayton, McKnight, Bush, and Carlson, it was the most meaningful recognition she received. I mentored under AFP luminaries Bea Capriotti, CFRE; Donald L. Albertson, CFRE; Karla Williams, CFRE; and the late Tim Burchill, CFRE. I quickly came to learn that Leadership, Governance, and Giving, and most of all ethics, could be summed up in four simple but well earned letters: CFRE! I have been truly blessed to have been mentored and welcomed into the work of philanthropy by Minnesota philanthropists, by AFP, and all of you. I am indebted to you all and it's a debt I will never be able to fully repay.

Have a great conference and put your imagination to work on Leadership, Governance and Giving!