

Central Florida NSFRE Speech December, 2000 Meeting

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Good afternoon everyone and welcome to the final monthly meeting of NSFRE for the Millennium Year 2000! You remember the Millennium Year 2000. Remember Y2K and how your donor records were supposed to disappear at the stroke of midnight? The Good News was we got some new computer equipment from those foundation grants we wrote. The Bad News is grant opportunities like that only come by once in a 1000 years.

Some dire predictions about the year 2000 had the end of the world occurring bad news for Central Florida tourism and civilization as we knew it, good news for our sophisticated and beneficent planned giving officers, providing their donors with just another motivational factor besides death and taxes to update their estate plans.

It was also a great year for the nonprofit sector. Governor Jeb Bush endorsed a statewide conference called Engaging a Civil Society, a statewide conference devoted to building strong partnerships of government, business and the nonprofit sector to address Florida's needs in the 21st Century. Central Florida was well represented and positioned to follow through on the report and recommendations. Mayor Hood would certainly be an ally in this effort. She has always been in the forefront of **progressive ideas**, a new 200 million dollar arena, a new 200 million dollar art center, a new 2 billion dollar light rail project. The slogan for the Mayor's re-election Campaign 2000 was KUMBA MATATA, NO WORRIES! Who would vote a local dentist anyway?

Or how about our other great civic minded political leaders? Congresswoman Chapin and Senator McCollum would surely position Central Florida well in an on going dialog about philanthropy, nonprofits and the role of the civil society, vis-a-vis, Washington DC. Hey! We might be able to get some additional grant dollars out of Washington with enlightened elected public officials like them.

Of course, the predicted landslide victory of the compassionate, conservative, George W. Bush, in the State of Florida would strengthen the role of our charismatic Governor Jeb Bush even more. Florida would be the center of philanthropy and voluntary attention, you could count on it, or was it re-count on it? Or should I say you could re-count the recount on it! Who knew that the philanthropic and voluntary attention we would receive would be from 1000's of lawyers volunteering their time and talent here in Florida... for 36 days!

2000 will also be known as the year we mapped out the entire human genetic code. This has such profound impact on the future health and longevity of mankind that we all should be rejoicing! The good news is we will eventually eliminate the terrible diseases that have plagued mankind and our life-span will reach 125 years! The bad news is that a lot of disease specific fundraisers

will be unemployed! Another unintentional consequence will be that people drawing up their estate plans will want to deal with someone who has had a little more experience with life, than the average 70 to 80 year old planned giving officer!

Good News about that human genetic code project! They have isolated *genus philanthropicus*, the gene that gives human-kind its philanthropic characteristics. Scientists have found out that *genus philanthropicus* is the scientific differentiation between man and all other life forms. It is what gives people the human dimension of philanthropy and volunteerism; giving of oneself or one's resources without the expectation of return.

It is interesting to note that the North American Homo Sapiens have a much more dominant *genus philanthropicus* than the other Homo Sapiens groupings from around the world. This *genus philanthropicus* in the North American Homo Sapiens is active throughout the year as little Girl Scouts extract the gross national product out of our wallets in exchange for caloric, sugary cookies. Other displays of this genetic trait can be seen in the Homo Sapiens ritual of transforming used clothing, appliances and furniture, by depositing them into a large box, thus producing "good will" to the donor, self respect and employment to others, and a good deal and bargain to everyone in the community.

Further displays of the gene can be seen and heard during the frequent and increasing time periods known as pledge drives. Without commercial interruption these pledge drives are broadcast into the Homo Sapiens' stationary and mobile habitat. Try as the Homo Sapiens might to flee the pledge drive appeal, it follows them as they travel to and from work and recreational activities through air waves, analog and soon to be digital! So effective are these "public" pledge drives, that Homo Sapiens have acquired an unquenching desire for tote bags, umbrellas, coupon dining books; or the ultimate deluxe package including all of the above and the "Best of Lawrence Welk" video tape or CD.

Of course the *genus philanthropicus* is most active in the last two months of each calendar year. This most active period begins with a huge urge to feast on ham, turkey, sausage, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkin pie, apple pie and pecan pie. This is followed by a ritual of watching football. This sloth-like activity triggers the *genus philanthropicus response* that produces a frenzied period of toy collection, food drives and the ultimate manifestation of *genus philanthropicus* - red kettles appearing on street corners across the community and throughout our country. Homo Sapiens empty their pockets into the red kettles for the collective good. The jingle of coins, checks, credit cards, appreciated stock and long term capital assets in the red kettles soothes the *genus philanthropicus response* as we take time to be with family, friends and donors to consider the Reason for the Season.

I want to thank you for another outstanding year of providing the necessary resources for education, healthcare, civic engagement, arts and culture, and human service, all across Central Florida! Without you, the stockings that are hung by the chimneys with care would be **empty**. Without you, there would not be the Christmas goose (along with plenty of canned goods) on tables across our community; without you, Herb, Gary, Sherry, there would be no Santa Clause for the able bodied and the physically challenged; for the young and the young at heart, for the tourist, for the new arrivals to Central Florida or for the long time resident. Central Florida is still

a place where a great deal can be accomplished with a reasonable amount of human and financial resources. Together we can make Central Florida an even better place for everyone. All it takes is leadership, ideas and resources. You make it happen!