

WASHINGTON Regional Association of GRANTMAKERS

Civic Reflection Series 2006

This year, each civic reflection session will have one or two facilitators. All of the facilitators have completed the facilitator training on civic reflection discussions with Amy Kass, senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. The facilitator(s) will choose two short readings that have common themes around some aspect of giving. Each person who registers for the program will be e-mailed the readings in advance. The facilitator will come to the program prepared to give an overview of the readings and have questions that will spark conversation. At the end, the participants will have learned from the shared stories and opinions of their colleagues and use that knowledge to grow philanthropy.

Each discussion will be structured around short readings that deal with giving, philanthropic service, and leadership. The facilitator(s) will have full responsibility to assign readings, develop curriculum, and design questions. Some questions raised in the past include:

- Accountability: To whom and for what are we responsible? (The question was posed in reference to the story “The Applicant” by Ambrose Bierce).
- Effectiveness: Can we measure success? (The question was posed in reference to the story “The Spur of the Moment” by Sarah Orne Jewett).
- Can Giving Be Taught? (The question was posed in reference to a story called “The Bishop’s Beggar” by Stephen Vincent Benet).

Each session will be held at a different restaurant in Washington, DC. We plan to limit the sessions to no more than 12-15 participants. We have planned four civic reflection sessions for 2006, and we will advertise these sessions as a series of four conversations. The idea is to get the participants committed at the beginning and to have continued participation through the end of the series.

Additionally, these discussions provide a forum through which our members build new relationships. These relationships will be made through our members coming together to contemplate philosophical ideas and self-reflect. The readings and questions create discussions that promote deeper self-understanding. The civic reflection luncheons allow our members to talk more comfortably about their values, think more deeply about their choices, and respond more imaginatively to the needs of their communities.