

# Funders Forum on Sustainable Gulf Coast Transformation

November 9th, 2008

Dear Colleague:

Welcome! We are very happy that you were able to come to Mobile to learn about and commit to the needs of the Gulf Coast region. The next few years are going to be important in demonstrating how government, philanthropy, and the private sector can work jointly to support those in civil society working to promote economic equity and balanced, sustainable development.

The first Funders Forum was a significant step in encouraging collaborative thinking on recovery and transformation. Among the many achievements from the 2007 event was the desire to continue the dialogue, enhance the understanding of what is happening on the ground, and collaborate with other funders on various projects.

The 2008 Funders Forum will explore the **themes of sustainability and innovation**. Both have different meanings to various constituencies, but we can all agree that the goal of philanthropy must be to encourage environmentally and economically sound communities that enable and assist those with creative ideas to help transform the Gulf Coast region for the good of future generations.

The Forum will work toward the following goals:

1. Examine current accomplishments, promote learning, and build wider collaboration as well as involvement among funders working with and in the region for the next five to ten years.
2. Establish methods and value for funders to stay connected to and learn from the Gulf Coast work.
3. Consider ways that pooled philanthropic investments could be more efficient and effective.

We have put together an agenda that will allow us to explore various dimensions of innovation and sustainability through the work of those actually using inventive strategies in their efforts.

But there is another dimension to sustainability: securing the investment for those courageous individuals and groups on the ground to continue their work in the Gulf Coast region. We have just witnessed an important moment in our nation's history. Our democratic traditions have held steady and we are about to embark on a new road under new leadership at the federal level. We need to make sure that the story of the region, challenging and uplifting, gets on the new policy agenda for the nation – especially in such difficult times.

We look forward to stimulating discussions and learning what we can do to support innovation and sustainability in the Gulf Coast. Most of all, however, we look forward to seeing you: the people who are going to help make these changes a reality. Welcome to the Funders Forum.

Best regards,

Ivy Allen Foundation for the Mid South	Samantha Bickham Gulf Coast Funders for Equity	Flozell Daniels Jr. Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation	Tom Davis Community Foundation of South Alabama	Ellen Lee Greater New Orleans Foundation
Gretchen Bonfert McKnight Foundation	Ashleigh Gilbert Gardere JPMorgan Chase Foundation	Linetta Gilbert Ford Foundation	Erlin Ibreck Open Society Institute	Adele Lyons John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
Nick Turner Rockefeller Foundation	Rev. John Vaughn 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Foundation	Alandra Washington W.K. Kellogg Foundation	Roger Williams Annie E. Casey Foundation	