

November 5, 2007

**Message of the Chair Emeritus—Richard Johanson**

I think that one of the greatest challenges of community improvement organizations is the temptation to become so caught up in the work of today that they lose sight of their mission as the transformation agents of tomorrow. Last week a number of members of this Business Council had the privilege of participating in a session sponsored by the California State University system designed to develop an action plan to chart a course for the future. Three of these strategy meetings were held throughout the state. The assembly included representatives from across the Valley, many of them graduates of one of the 23 schools in the CSU system. Like other transformational work, the focus included issues that would impact every school in the network and areas that need to be customized based upon local demographics and economies. The challenge to balance the needs and responsibilities of individuals with those of their communities is a key challenge across many issues.

**National Business Incubation Association & Pacific Incubation Network in Fresno 11.30.07**

Fresno State and the Central Valley Business Incubator are hosting a one day meeting on November 30 to discuss business incubation issues in the Pacific region of the United States, Mexico and Canada. The wonderful thing about the culture of business incubation and entrepreneurship is it ripples throughout the community bringing the spirit of innovation, excellence and life long learning to all the other sectors. For more information contact [rmorris@nbia.org](mailto:rmorris@nbia.org). To register go to [http://www.nbia.org/nbia\\_events/PIN07/](http://www.nbia.org/nbia_events/PIN07/)

**Venture Philanthropy Gaining Traction (Wells Fargo—Your Legacy)**

As more people with resources have embraced a root cause, investment oriented and entrepreneurial approach to social issues, transformational change is underway. Last year individual philanthropists accounted for 76% of all estimated giving, an amount reaching \$222 billion. New strategies rely more on business acumen, entrepreneurial thinking and community based solutions. As our increasingly effective collaborative culture links the sectors behind shared strategies, concentrated poverty and its many social ills will succumb. Think vertical integration—aligning policies & funding behind strategies that work at ground zero.

**Youth Violence—Causes, Symptoms, Solutions**

Kudos to *Fresno Citizens for Good Government* for hosting a session last week to take a look at the challenges of youth violence. A sergeant from the *Fresno Police Department* explained the impact of violence on children and how it affects brain function. 80% of domestic violence happens in front of kids, the media is full of graphic violence and video games offer daily practice in combat. Children exposed to violence become numb to the suffering of others, are more fearful, more aggressive and they have decreased cognitive ability.

**Judge Denise Whitehead**, Presiding Judge of Juvenile Dependency Court, explained that less than 6% of juveniles she sees commit violent crimes. Most are charged with property crimes and behavior related to drugs, alcohol and mental illness. Together with Chief Probation Officer **Linda Penner**, she developed a Behavioral Health Court to meet the underlying needs of these children by better using resources already available. Those stepping up to help include Fresno State, Alliant University, University of California, SF, and Stanford. The results have been impressive.

*Focus Forward* has secured a wide array of resources to provide programs at the Juvenile Justice Center. When asked what they want, juveniles said relationship skills, mental health services,

help with addictions, and a pathway to a real job. An experiment in meditation, offered to the pod with the toughest kids, was so successful all the pods want it.

**Maggie Navarro**, coordinator of the Mayor's Gang Prevention Initiative, has involved 98 service providers in an effective, triaged based effort to provide gang members, wannabes and family members with the services and action plans to become contributing citizens.