



Top L-R: Johnette Isham, Morgan Bettes, Judy Sedgeman
Bottom L-R: Beth Doyle, Judy Sedgeman, Debra Jacobs, Bill Little

New Things Are Popping Up In Bradenton

Johnette Isham, Executive Director of [Realize Bradenton](#), could not contain her excitement any longer.

"In our first four years we have connected a diversity of people to promote livability, coolness, and economic development in downtown Bradenton. Tonight we welcome: Poets – Politicians; Developers – Dancers; Accountants – Artists; Moms – Musicians; Retirees – Realtors; CEOs – Chefs; Car dealers – Ceramists; Farmers – Film Makers; Philanthropists – Photographers; Techies – Teachers; Bankers – Bar owners; Hoteliers – Hospital administrators; Lawyers – Librarians; Dentists – Dog walkers; Framers – Foodies; Editors – Entrepreneurs. Yes, we believe that Downtown is everyone's Neighborhood!"

Applause erupted from the crowd gathered outside Soma Creekside Restaurant on March 31st and this kicked off the big announcement: Realize Bradenton was one of 32 winners -- selected from a total pool of 7,000 entries competing for \$5 million in grants -- by [the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation as part of its Knight Cities Challenge](#).

Realize Bradenton was awarded \$90,140 for the ReuseReCONNECT project that engages millennials through a series of "Pop-Ups for a Purpose" events that will activate residents 18-38 years old to connect for a cause.

Johnette credited [The Patterson Foundation's Aspirations to Actions](#) initiative in partnership with [The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation](#) with helping them identify what the community wanted.

"We held numerous community conversations with millennials spanning economic, professional, creative and educational backgrounds to find out what they desire in their Bradenton community," she said. "Multiple conversations revealed that the most desired change was more diverse opportunities for social gatherings that are outside of the typical bar scene. Millennials also express interest to engage in experiences that they can shape, as well as influence topics such as housing, transportation, jobs, public spaces and technology. ReuseReCONNECT will do exactly that."

Morgan Bettes serves as Realize Bradenton's creative associate and was a key designer of the project. She convened fellow millennials to get their feedback.

"Too often millennials are underrepresented in civic conversations," she said. "The focus is to bring young people together, including entrepreneurs, professionals, college students, artists, performers and community residents in downtown Bradenton."

Congratulations to Realize Bradenton for this outstanding example of turning outward, listening to the community, and discovering new resources to achieve success. We can't wait to see what pops up next!

WORD!

The first act in the Cycle of Public Innovation ...

Intentionality --

Developing a mindset and ongoing practice of making decisions grounded in three foundational concepts:

1. Turning Outward – Make the community the main point of reference for your work.
2. Aspirations – Start with people's shared aspirations, rooted in reality, rather than "problems" or "visions."
3. 3 A's of Public Life – Authority, Accountability, Authenticity – Build these touchstones into your daily work to increase your credibility and trust in the community.

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Off the Wall @ TPF

A special quote as seen on the wall at The Patterson Foundation...

"Coming together is a beginning. Staying together is a process, and working together is a success."

Blogosphere

In case you missed these, the Aspirations to Actions team has been reflecting on what we are learning.

Bill Little's [Community Begins With Conversations](#)

Bill Little's [Reading Is The Window to the World](#)

Judy Sedgeman's [The Harwood Effect](#)

Beth Doyle's [The Aspirations to Action Journey Continues](#)

Alex Chavez's [The Power of Listening to Community Aspirations](#)



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