

Healthy Democracy News



As another consequential year passes, we offer this look back at the many positive efforts Healthy Democracy has been involved with in our continued mission to help restore trust in democracy. We couldn't have done it without you!



Citizens Initiative Review

We are proud that Healthy Democracy is best known for its flagship program, the Citizens' Initiative Review (CIR). And while there were no CIRs in this odd-year election cycle in the United States, we were happy to be invited to provide assistance to pilot CIRs held in two countries in Europe.

In January, Healthy Democracy's program manager, Linn Davis, assisted the University of Turku in Finland to conduct a pilot CIR on a referendum question of combining two cities into one.



Linn with the University of Turku team at the CIR in Finland.



Panelists vote on a component of the CIR in Switzerland.

In November, Healthy Democracy took the CIR on the road again, this time to Sion in Switzerland, in the heart of the Alps and the birthplace of modern direct democracy. Linn advised a group of researchers at the University of Geneva on conducting a CIR on a complex federal initiative related to affordable housing. A special thanks for the dedication and hospitality of Professor Nenad Stojanović and the entire University of Geneva team. [Learn more](#) about the project (in French).

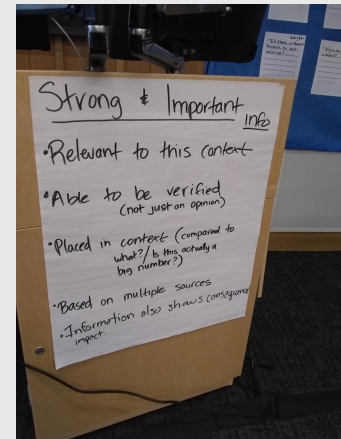
Other Programs

CITIZENS JURY IN MILWAUKIE, OREGON

In November, Healthy Democracy conducted its first [Citizens Jury](#) in partnership with the City of Milwaukie in Oregon. On the final day of the 4-day process, many panelists attended a special [Milwaukie City Council meeting](#) that evening to present their recommendations to the council.

“I really enjoyed having a tangible experience with the government – not just voting or something where you can’t really see an outcome . . . it was really cool to see what came out of our discussions, to see the outcome, and be able to have an impact into that outcome.”

– 2019 Milwaukie Citizen Panelist



Criteria used by the 2019 Milwaukie Citizens Jury Panelists to identify strong and important information.

COMMUNITY OREGON

The second cohort of [Community Oregon](#) took place from April to September, including a 3-day retreat in Central Oregon, several urban/rural community immersion exchanges, culminating with a half day Expo at Concordia University in Portland where participants shared their learnings from the program with the public.



Our 2019 Community Oregon cohort.



Ty Yazzie, one of the owners of C Bar C Ranch, sharing his thoughts at the Civic Saturday event in Powell Butte, Oregon.



CIVIC SATURDAYS

Healthy Democracy partnered with the Deliberative Dialogue Consortium and local partners to offer two [Civic Saturday](#) events.

The first one was held in September in Powell Butte, Oregon on the theme of homecoming and belonging.

Another Civic Saturday event was held at Clackamas Community College in November, which featured guest speakers and audience dialogue on the theme of what it means to be a good ancestor for future generations.

Healthy Democracy board member, Vickie Chamberlain, offered personal insights on how she could live up to the sacred responsibility of being an ancestor.

10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

We were delighted to hold **Healthy Democracy's 10th Anniversary Celebration** in April at Portland Center Stage. Former Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, John Frohnmayer, was the keynote speaker that evening, and shared his [8 suggestions for democracy](#). Friends, new and old, gathered to reflect on a decade of groundbreaking work and to honor Healthy Democracy's founders for their remarkable vision and dedication to citizen-centered democracy.



Healthy Democracy board president, Gary Swanson, welcomes guests to our 10th anniversary celebration.

Learning and Sharing Opportunities

Healthy Democracy participated in a number of conferences and gatherings this past year, both to learn from our many exceptional colleagues in the field, as well as to share what we've learned from our own experiences in delivering programs over the years.

Sharing:

- Democracy as Community" workshop at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon on March 12
- Ford Family Foundation "Bridging Oregon" Conference in Eugene, Oregon on May 3-4
- "A Different Kind of Democracy: Reimagining Civic Participation" presentation at the Washington County Mayors Association Luncheon in Hillsboro, Oregon on September 13
- [Presentation](#) at the International Congress on Urbanism, Mobility & Citizen Participation in Buenos Aires, Argentina on September 14-17
- [America in One Room](#) in Dallas, TX on September 19-22
- Panelist for the City Club of Portland Friday Forum "[From Big Cities to Small Towns: Can Urban/Rural Oregon Work Together?](#)" in Portland, Oregon on October 4
- "Restoring Trust in Democracy: How You Can Make a Difference" community gathering at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, Oregon on October 18
- [GovLove podcast](#) for XRAY FM radio on October 18
- Eugene Planning Commission [public meeting](#) in Eugene, Oregon on December 16

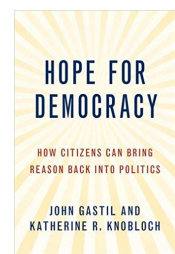
Learning:

- Democracy R&D Conference in Paris, France on January 17-18
- Bridge Alliance Summit in Washington DC on October 29
- Deliberative Democracy Consortium in Washington DC on October 31



During our visit to Washington DC to attend the above conferences, we were also fortunate to be able to connect with several members of Oregon's Congressional Delegation to tell them about the work of Healthy Democracy. Pictured to the left is Robin Teater (Healthy Democracy Executive Director), Oregon's Senator Jeff Merkley, and Mike McArthur (Healthy Democracy volunteer).

Speaking of learning, we are excited for the impending release of the book **Hope for Democracy: How Citizens Can Bring Reason Back Into Politics** on January 21, 2020. CIR researchers John Gastil of Penn State and Katie Knobloch of Colorado State have completed their long anticipated work chronicling the decade long story of the groundbreaking CIR program. [Learn more](#) about the book and what the authors have to say about how putting citizens at the center of the democratic process.



Gratitude

The work of Healthy Democracy would not be possible without the tireless efforts of many volunteers, starting with our [board of directors](#). Their leadership, vision, and devotion to Healthy Democracy's uniquely vital mission at this time in our history has been a testament to the power of a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens to truly change the world.

In addition, we would like to thank four exceptional volunteers who donated their time as assistant moderators at the Milwaukie Citizens Jury: **Sarah Beth Brichel, Amanda Hudson, Alex Renirie, and Mike Wright**. We are so grateful for your professional skills, collaborative spirit, and truly extraordinary commitment to the long hours of this project.

We are also incredibly grateful to **Clackamas Community College** for donating their beautiful Community Room on the Harmony campus, which served as the perfect space for this important first-ever program in Oregon.

Speaking of gracious space, we are also indebted to **Concordia University** for the use of their auditorium for the Community Oregon Exposition in September. We are so gratified by the partnership and civic sensibilities of these exceptional local educational institutions – we couldn't do this kind of community work without you.

There are many, many other people who have worked tirelessly – giving of their time and talent freely and with characteristic graciousness – that deserve recognition. They are too many to mention in a newsletter – people like **Mike McArthur of Frontier Advocates** who has worked on securing public funding for the CIR in Oregon; or the many friends and colleagues in the deliberative democracy field (many of them associated with [Democracy R&D](#) – an international consortium to which we belong) who contributed their invaluable advice to the design of our first Citizens Jury model. We are profoundly grateful for your expertise and sage advice.

Healthy Democracy Calendar

- Wilsonville City Council Presentation - Wilsonville, Oregon - January 6
- "Democracy as Community" talk - W'yeast United Univesalist Church in Portland, Oregon - January 12
- Democracy R&D Conference - Manchester, United Kingdom - January 30
- King County Bar Association Forum on Initiative Reform - Seattle, Washington - January 27
- Oregon Nonprofit Leadership Conference - Ashland, Oregon - April 20-21

Please Support Our Work

If you are on this email list, chances are that you are getting dozens (hundreds?) of these kinds of donation requests at this time of year – because you care about the vital work that our colleagues in the nonprofit sector does.

We are reminded of the words from Farres Alkhaiyer, our Community

Solutions Fellow from Syria, about how important the work of Healthy Democracy is: "I hope you can take time to really appreciate the great work that you do, making the free conditions that you have now even better for the next generations. Just as I hope that I can be some inspiration to you as I continue my struggle for freedom, reform, and justice in my country of Syria, I want you to know that your work is an inspiration for people like me in repressive countries around the world."



We hope you will take into account how Healthy Democracy serves as an inspiration for so many people here in the U.S. and around the world as you consider your [year-end contributions](#).

Healthy Democracy conducts financial audits each year and also boasts a Gold Standard rating on Guidestar as evidence of our careful stewardship of your donations. Each and every gift is important and deeply appreciated. [Donate today!](#)

May you strengthen your voice in our democracy in the coming year . . . Happy 2020!

**Last year's words belong
to last year's language.**

**And next year's words
await another voice.**

**And to make an end
is to make a beginning.**

-T.S. Eliot



Healthy Democracy's mission is to elevate the voice of citizens and improve public discourse for the benefit of all voters.

[Donate Now](#)

Connect with us!

