



VILLAGE OF PINECREST

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Councilmember James E. McDonald graduates from the Good Government Initiative's Leaders of Excellence Program

Pinecrest, Fla. – Councilmember James E. McDonald was among seventeen elected officials from three South Florida counties who participated in this year's Good Government Initiative's (GGI) *Leaders of Excellence* program at the University of Miami, founded by former Miami-Dade County Commissioner Katy Sorenson.

Leaders of Excellence is the GGI's cornerstone program designed to provide elected officials with skills and knowledge they can apply to their public service. It fills the gap between formal education and life experience to foster more effective decision-making. Additionally, the *Leaders of Excellence* program creates a cohort of peers who can turn to each other for shared ideas and get support.

"The GGI is extremely worthwhile for newly elected officials - especially if they are new to government and unfamiliar with the nuts and bolts of how government works. Also, the ethics component is integral to the program and is the thread that ties it altogether," said Councilmember McDonald.

By being accepted into the *Leaders of Excellence* program, elected officials participate in training over six months, including two weekend retreats. With few formal opportunities for elected officials to develop the skills they need to be effective and thoughtful officeholders, the *Leaders of Excellence* program provides a forum for elected officials to develop as leaders and to practice good governance.

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This year's curriculum educated the class in critical core areas including ethics, budget and finance, land use and natural resources, media relations, leading in a diverse community, and economic development. Presenters included a bipartisan array of community leaders, public officials and outside experts including former U.S. Senator Bob Graham, Congressman Mario Diaz Balart, Ambassador Sue Cobb, Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust Executive Director Joe Centorino, and Urban Land Institute Florida Director Carla Coleman.

"In a year that has seen some low points for some government officials, it is encouraging to see elected officials going above and beyond to learn about good government," said Sorenson, the program's founder. "They have taken the time to explore key areas of their responsibility, and are examples of dedicated community leaders working on behalf of their constituents."

About GGI

The GGI offers programs for elected officials, candidates, and interested citizens throughout the year. From community forums that delve into topical issues facing South Florida, to candidate education and the *Leaders of Excellence* program for elected officials, GGI works to promote excellence in government. GGI is independently incorporated with its own board and is housed at and supported by the University of Miami, along with valued donors and volunteers. For more information, please visit www.goodgov.net.

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