Remarks
Presented by Carol Larson, Chair, Council on Foundations Board of Directors
President and CEO, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
January 24, 2011

Carol Larson- Remarks
Council on Foundations Family Philanthropy Conference
New York, NY

Thank you, Della. I’m so glad to be here, and honored to have this opportunity to welcome all of you to Day 2 of the Council’s Family Philanthropy Conference. I love New York! What a great event last evening at Lincoln Center.

I’m pleased to be here for many reasons. First, as President of a 47 year old family foundation—the David and Lucile Packard Foundation—it’s a great opportunity to join you here to listen and learn, and to do so with three of our Packard Trustees.

I’m also pleased to be here in my role as Chair of the Board of the Council on Foundations. The Council’s work is important to the entire philanthropic sector.

Of course, at this conference, we are celebrating and building on the Council’s deep commitment to family philanthropy. Over 500 family foundations are members of the Council and of course hundreds more use its services and attend its conferences.

The Council functions as a result not only of very talented and experienced staff, but also of the contribution of volunteers. I want to take a moment and recognize four of our Council Board members in particular, who have helped make this conference possible and who we are so fortunate to have. The Council’s work on family philanthropy is guided by the experience of Reginald Jones, who serves as Chair of the Family Committee, as well as fellow Board members Richard Woo and Skip Moore who serve on that committee. Likewise, with creativity and insight, Board member Sharna Goldseker has served as chair of this year’s conference and made it into the special and unique event you all are experiencing.

Looking out into this audience, I am reminded of the diversity within family philanthropy. As individuals and as organizations, we are very different from each other in what we are passionate about and how we do our grantmaking. But we share the fundamental belief that family philanthropy is one of the great engines for improving our country and our world.

Family philanthropy is an engine:

- For generating new ideas
- For supporting innovation
- For taking risks—to fail, to be wrong
- For supporting the important but unpopular
- For testing the untested
- For being long term partners with nonprofit organizations—from the new grassroots organization to large established universities
- For collaborating with others to transform entire communities and to address some of the most urgent issues of our day.

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- For taking the long term view...sometimes decades long...in efforts to strengthen communities and to address the major challenges of our day.

Undergirding these attributes are the values and passion of individuals and their families.

While we know, that our foundations and boards can be specially complex because of family, they are also particularly committed because of family. And, as Joel Fleischman points out in his book *The Foundation*, “where they work well,...family foundations are powerful testimony to the enduring values in individual families. “ And I would add: to the positive change they can create.

The Council believes in family philanthropy. And it’s no coincidence that, as we gather today on this island, that our conference has the theme of “Bridges.” We witness firsthand the beauty and strength of the Brooklyn Bridge, the George Washington Bridge, the Manhattan Bridge. And, as we gather here, we hope that you also experience the Council as a builder of bridges—bridges which also cover great distances and provide ample support. Let me mention a few.

First, the Council provides a bridge to each other. This conference is a top example of this. We like to meet each other and learn from each other and discover what we are thinking about in common—from how to best to improve early childhood education or the environment to how best to handle governance within a family foundation.

But there are many other bridges that the Council builds and maintains with the support of your membership and support for the organization:

- The bridge to connect you to philanthropic legal expertise
- The bridge to ideas and approaches for how to connect your next generation of family to philanthropy
- The bridge to best practices in governance and ethics
- The bridge to learning how other families are working on the same issues that you are, and how you can learn together and share ideas about how to view success and measure impact.

The Packard Foundation, like many of you, has benefitted from its membership in the Council for decades now. We pay our dues, but we also get involved: serving on boards and committees, and attending these conferences. We do so not only because this benefits us, but also because we want to make sure that the family foundation sector has a voice and is part of the great, big tent of philanthropy in our country.

In closing, I want to return to the list of attributes of family philanthropy. I hope that there is another one. Working together as a family, with engagement of others—board members, advisors, grantee partners—not only can bring about great change, it can also be *fun*. And I hope that amidst this conference—your side meetings and sessions—you are reminded of that joy that comes from working...
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together to make a big difference. Enjoy the rest of the conference, and thank you for your support of the Council on Foundations.