

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**7th Annual Guiding Lights Weekend
Sparks National Movement to Reimagine Citizenship
March 8-10, Seattle**

Learn How To “Live Like A Citizen” from Van Jones, Annie Leonard, Jose Antonio Vargas, Lawrence Lessig, Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, Ai-jen Poo and dozens more

Seattle, WA – January 19, 2012 – On March 8-10 in Seattle, hundreds of leaders and changemakers from across America will participate in The Guiding Lights Weekend conference on the art of great citizenship. Founded in 2005 by former White House speechwriter and author Eric Liu (*The Gardens of Democracy*), The Weekend has become the nation’s most creative, cross-sectoral convening for civic activists, educators and entrepreneurs.

“This is the moment for Americans to reclaim what it means to be a citizen,” said Liu. “At Guiding Lights Weekend, we teach with a playful spirit – and we are sparking a serious movement to reimagine citizenship. It is all about taking seriously how we make an *unum* from the *pluribus*. It’s about committing again to the American creed, and sharpening the skills that we need to live up to it.”

Now in its seventh year, Guiding Lights Weekend brings together leading luminaries from across the world who exemplify creative citizenship. This year’s conference speakers include:

- Van Jones, green energy activist, founder of Rebuild The Dream
- Annie Leonard, co-director of The Story of Stuff Project
- Jose Antonio Vargas, journalist and cofounder of Define American
- Mary Gordon, founder/president of Roots of Empathy
- Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, cofounder/director of MomsRising.org
- Ai-jen Poo, founder/director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance
- Lawrence Lessig, Harvard Law professor and campaign finance reform activist and Tea Party Patriots co-founder Mark Meckler will discuss building left-right alliances to reclaim politics for everyday Americans

- Gerda W. Klein, celebrated author, Holocaust Survivor and proud Naturalized Citizen

Additionally, dozens of other luminaries will lead hands-on workshops on the hard skills of citizenship, from storytelling and organizing to building movements. Acclaimed NYC performance group Elevator Repair Service will premier an adaption of Supreme Court oral arguments for the stage. The Weekend will host a Naturalization Ceremony for new Americans citizens and will premier The Sworn-Again American Ceremony, a recommitment for long-standing citizens.

Thanks to the generous support of national and regional sponsors, registration fees start at only \$100. Information on scholarships, reduced rates, volunteering and registration is at www.guidinglightsweekend.com

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About The Guiding Lights Weekend

Founded in 2005 by author and civic entrepreneur Eric Liu, The Guiding Lights Weekend is inspiring a movement to reimagine American citizenship and reclaim our democracy. Four hundred attendees from across America are expected to attend this year. The Weekend is sponsored by Seattle Center, Swedish, Starbucks, Boeing and The Seattle Foundation with in-kind services by King-5 TV and Nyhus Communications.

Conference Agenda:

- Opening Night: Thursday, March 8th, 6:30pm at SIFF Cinema
Journalism and Citizenship panel discussion with featured speaker journalist and citizenship activist Jose Antonio Vargas
- Pre-conference Friday, March 9th, 7:30am Seattle Center. The National Conference on Citizenship hosts an informational breakfast: “Civic Health and Unemployment: Can Engagement Strengthen the Economy?”
- Main conference. Friday, March 9th, Noon. Keynote Annie Leonard, co-director of The Story of Stuff. Power of Movements panel with Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, MomsRising; Marc Freedman, Civic Ventures; and Aijen Poo, founder/director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance. Afternoon workshops. Next Generation Voices panel with a group of

- activated young people. The day ends with a Naturalization Ceremony and guest speaker, Holocaust survivor and author Gerda W. Klein.
- Saturday, March 10th, 8:30, Fisher Pavilion at Seattle Center. Lawrence Lessig, Harvard Law professor and campaign finance reform activist and Tea Party Patriots co-founder Mark Meckler will discuss building left-right alliances to reclaim politics for everyday Americans
 - Over two dozen hands-on workshops occur on Saturday (four on Friday) on how to be a better citizen and become more civically engaged -- from how to start a movement to how to tell a better story.
 - Saturday's lunchtime performance by celebrated NYC theatre company Elevator Repair Service. Keynote Van Jones, green energy activist, author and founder Rebuild The Dream. Sworn-Again American ceremony for long-standing Americans to recommit to citizenship.
 - The Weekend will also feature live music, visual and performing arts, civics group exhibits and an opportunity for excellent networking.

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