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Community Matters: Penny University Series, a community discussion program, kicks off its first discussion "What is good about philanthropy?" Wednesday, Feb. 7 at Barnes & Noble USF St. Petersburg at 6 p.m.

The four part series will focus on community leadership and is designed to educate participants about critical issues in St. Petersburg, while providing learning and networking opportunities.

Participants will interact with prominent community members and USF St. Petersburg leadership including distinguished faculty and top-level administrators on intellectually, culturally and socially relevant topics.

Featured speakers for this month's discussion are Deni Elliot, Ed.D., professor, Poynter Jamison Chair in Media Ethics and Press Policy and author of *The Kindness of Strangers: Philanthropy and Higher Education*, and Gus Stavros, USF St. Petersburg campus board member. Stavros was awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters from USF in December of 1996.

The concept for Community Matters was inspired by Enlightenment-Era European coffee houses which served as centers for scientific education, literary speculation, philosophical thought, commercial innovation and political debate. They were often called Penny Universities because patrons could have a cup of coffee for a penny and discuss current events.

"We developed the program based on a survey of alumni and young professionals that identified four areas of interest for discussion: philanthropy, St. Petersburg growth and development, education and the environment," said Stephen Ritch, Ph.D. director of the Wally and Louise Bishop Center for Ethical Leadership.

The program is sponsored by the USF Alumni Association and the USF St. Petersburg Wally and Louise Bishop Center for Ethical Leadership and will meet once a month through the end of the spring semester.

For more information contact Katie Giglio, alumni coordinator, at 727-873-4561 or kgiglio@spadmin.usf.edu.

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