

Congressman Allen West Headlines Reagan 100 Luncheon

By Kate Obenshain, Vice President

Throughout 2011, Young America's Foundation is hosting events to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Ronald Reagan's birth. One such

The Reagan 100 program featured Congressman Allen West as the keynote speaker at a briefing for Foundation supporters in Palm Beach, Florida.

The program included a screening of the Reagan 100 Student Film Project, *Still Point in a Turning World:*

Ronald Reagan and his Ranch, which uses current context and President Reagan's own words to bring him to life for the next generation.

Foundation President Ron Robinson welcomed guests, saying that President Reagan, through his involvement with Young America's Foundation, set the precedent for the importance of reaching young people. Robinson noted, "Reagan's steady involvement in our programs was not because of his relationship with me, or with any of the Foundation's leaders, but because he knew the importance of reaching young people with his message and ideas."

Congressman West, who has quickly become a leading champion of conservatism in Congress, gave an inspirational speech about the importance of reaching young people with our ideas. He exhorted the audience to support the Foundation and the Reagan Ranch, saying, "What you are doing here is the most important thing we need to be doing."

He doesn't just believe in the Foundation's mission. He lives it, especially when he is home in his district. Congressman West said, "I go talk to these 17- and 18-year-olds in their history classes. They need to understand that government has put so many people out of work. It is responsible for the foreclosures—that's what happens when government gets involved. Then, these young people begin to understand."



Florida Congressman Allen West delivers a rousing address to local Foundation supporters during a special Reagan 100 luncheon in Palm Beach.

He continued, "That's what we must do: take Ronald Reagan's mission forward for the next generation. His message of freedom and liberty—we need to carry his ideals on to the next generation or we will lose them.... The other side thinks we're afraid to go in to the college campuses and the schools; this is territory they control.

We need to be willing to jump in behind enemy lines. Don't do what is easy. Do the thing that is hard."

Relying on wisdom from his 20 years in the military, Congressman West said conservatives need to be smarter about their strategy. "When you make a frontal assault, you get mowed down. We need to change the way we view leadership. Not this 'who's next' theory of [who the next leader should be]. We need to be bold and aggressive. They know what we're going to do. They see us coming. We have to adjust our tactics."

"We need to have a different image with young people," stated the Congressman. "We need to highlight the diversity in our movement—telling [young people] 'Come and be a part of this.' We need to be lifting up the governors of New Mexico, South Carolina, and Louisiana, and the Senator from Florida. We need to take the dishonest, emotional, and tyrannical arguments of the Left and turn them against them. We need to show them that their policies go against the individual and make victims of people."

Congressman West concluded, saying, "The most important thing we need to do is develop the next generation of leaders. If we don't get the next generation to the mecca of conservative thought [the Reagan Ranch], ... then we lose not just the young people, but the country. No one wants to be part of a generation that left freedom less intact."