

Volunteer Chapter Best Practices

FOUNDING

forward

A Future Rooted in Liberty

VOLUNTEER CHAPTER

Best Practices Compilation

RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS

12 Quick Tips for Recruiting New Members

1. Ask Someone – Easy right? Sometimes people just want a special invite to join. You can even invite them to a meeting or event as a guest before the big “ask.”
2. Host an Open House or Wine and Cheese Event. Show some of the Founding Forward videos, have the chapter president speak and if possible, have student or teacher participant speak about their experience. Make sure you have information packets with membership applications already prepared.
3. Lead a service project in your area that fills a need in the community. Make sure to identify your chapter with shirts or signs.
4. Hold joint meetings with other groups. Are you a member of another organization (Rotary, DAR, Kiwanis, Optimist, Masons)? Approach the leadership of the other group about hosting a meeting together in the hopes of cross pollination of members.
5. Wear your Gear! Do you have a Founding Forward shirt or pin? Make sure to wear it out when attending events in the community or just shopping at the local grocery store. It’s a great way to get a conversation started.
6. Does your chapter have a newsletter? If so, circulate the newsletter widely. Don’t be afraid to leave a copy or two at the doctor’s office, dentist’s office, gym or public library.
7. Arrange to have a booth during neighborhood fairs, festivals, or other informational gatherings. Sometimes a local mall will hold a community day or weekend featuring local organizations and allowing them to showcase their group and recruit members. Be on the lookout for such events. There are even Department stores that combine a community day with a fundraiser. You sell a \$5 ticket and the purchaser receive 15% off store wide for one day. This gives your chapter a chance to both raise funds and get the word out about Founding Forward. Department stores with this program include: Belks and Boscov’s

8. Make good use of our Founding Forward website. National will help you build a user-friendly website. Make sure to update regularly with current events and showcase previous events with pictures and make sure to identify people in the pictures and list names. If a friend, neighbor, or co-worker sees you belong to a group they might want to belong to.
9. Have a plan in place for new members. If someone shows interest, attends an event or stops by a booth, make sure to collect contact information. Follow up with a call or email. If they decide to join, have a welcome packet and finally get them involved ASAP. You might also want to consider a new member party if you have several new members.
10. Write an article for the local paper about Founding Forward, The Medal of Honor Grove or one of our programs. End the piece with a push for members. Local papers are always looking for well written op-ed pieces. Even a mention in a local paper's "Sound Off" section is beneficial to getting your name out to the community.
11. Advertise! Place an ad in the newspaper or on cable TV. Post your meetings on community calendars. Reach out to your local chamber of commerce to see how you can promote your chapter's events and meetings to the area's businesses. Don't forget social media. Visit social media sites of your local area and make comments on them while referencing your chapter. Flyers in area businesses can still work too. Remember to use the current logo and have good contact information.
12. Reach out with mailings to past members, past award recipients, student alumni, and teacher alumni. If you are a new or newer chapter research your target audience and find public information to reach out to those individuals with letters. Examples - Social Studies Teachers, Historical Societies, Military members, etc.....

STUDENT ALUMNI AND PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Student Directors Program – Sacramento Chapter

Purpose – Keep SOA participants engaged with the Chapter during the remainder of their high school education.

What we do.

- Identify the students who have leadership skills and an interest in serving as directors or on one of our committees. We do this by surveying the students, speaking with the chaperones, and reviewing their applications.
- Two or three directors personally interview the candidates we have identified and make recommendations to the Board. We discuss their areas of interest, qualifications, etc.
- The candidates are also invited to attend a Board meeting and make a brief presentation (2 to 3 minutes) about their interest in further involvement with Founding Forward. They are given an opportunity to respond to questions from the Board.
- The candidates are selected by the Board to serve through the end of their senior year. They are presented at our May Annual Meeting and given committee assignments. We have had good success with having some serve as Student Chairs of a committee, under the mentorship of one of the more experienced directors. This has worked particularly well with our Newsletter, which has a student staff of 5 members.

Freedom Foundation Service Club – Sacramento Chapter

Ask all SOA alumni to support a Founding Forward Service Club in their school. We focus on sending juniors to the SOA program and then work to keep them engaged thereafter. Service clubs can be involved in the following:

- A faculty member will be invited to serve as advisor to the Club.
- A parent will be invited to assist the club leadership with program development.
- Service clubs can be involved in the following:
 - Recruit younger students to be involved in our chapter programs - Constitution Bowl, Mock Article V Convention, Essay Contest
 - Recruit Juniors to apply for the SOA program.
 - Plan and perform service projects at their school or in their community.
 - Host or sponsor constitutional scholarship events at their schools, or in elementary or primary schools in their community.

TEACHER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Teacher Testimonials

The Greater Cincinnati Chapters involved their teachers in a session given at the Southwest Social Studies Conference. The teachers gave personal testimonies as to the strength and effectiveness of the summer teacher programs at Founding Forward

Teacher Involvement

The Sacramento Chapter requires Spirit of America applicants to provide an academic referral. The academic referral form gives the chapter contact information about teachers and asks about their interest in Founding Forward programs. The chapter then follows-up on the responses to provide additional information to the teacher. The Sacramento Chapter invites teachers and administrators to apply as chaperones for the Spirit of America groups and also has students recruit teachers to be advisers to Service Clubs or to teams participating in their Constitution Bowl and Mock Article V Convention.

SUCCESSFUL NATIONAL AWARDS PROGRAM

Utah Awards Luncheon

Each year the Utah Chapter participates in the National Awards Program and honors recipients at its annual Heroes Luncheon held in February on, or close to, President's Day. The Chapter recognizes National Awards winners along with local heroes and they invite all of the student scholarship winners to attend with their parents. Attendance averages around 300. It's a great event and the Chapter is able to receive media exposure to help our public relations efforts. This event is used as an opportunity to introduce potential donors to Founding Forward. Potential donors develop an understanding of the Founding Forward mission and are more willing to donate once they attend a luncheon, observe our students, and are inspired by the National Award Winners and our local Heroes.

SUCCESSFUL SPECIAL EVENTS, PROGRAMS and/or FUND RAISERS

Collecting Spare Change Fundraisers

1. Collection Jars at Local Businesses – Mary Ball Washington Chapter
Place collection jars in local businesses for cash donations. The jars also serve as an advertisement for the Spirit of America Program and the chapter.
2. Change = Change Program – Broward County Chapter
The change in your pocket goes in a piggy bank. Chapter members all have their piggies and share with friends and family. After a period of time the chapter collects the change. The change is then tallied and the money goes toward scholarships for students to attend Spirit of America.

Day Out Activity Fundraisers

1. Day at the Races – San Diego Chapter

The San Diego Chapter holds a “Day at the Races” each July at the Del Mar Racetrack. One of the races is in honor of the San Diego Chapter. The Chapter uses this event to invite a large number of people. Funds are raised through ticket sales and an opportunity drawing with items donated or given by Chapter members.

2. Golf Tournament – Sacramento Chapter

A key factor in the success of a golf tournament is sponsors. The Chapter gets hole sponsors, tournament sponsors, etc. Each Chapter board member is required to get one sponsor. To attract players, each board member is required to bring four players to the tournament. We select a popular golf course and one where the course professional provides a good rate. For example, this year and last year, the golf course charged us \$35 per person for golf; \$15 per person for a barbeque dinner; and \$5 per person for a sack lunch. The total cost per person was \$50. The Sacramento Chapter charged \$125 per person to play.

At registration the Chapter has a mulligan package available for participants. The package costs \$40 and includes 3 mulligans, 25 raffle tickets and 3 putts in the putting contest. Each golfer is also given a gift bag containing all donated materials such as a hat, golf balls, car wash certificate, etc. The Chapter also has a raffle consisting of donated prizes. The students sponsored by the Chapter to attend the Spirit of America Program help with the tournament and conduct their own fundraising activities. For example, two of the students went on one of the holes and held a marshmallow drive. Each player got a marshmallow for \$5 and got to hit it with their golf club. In the end, the person that hit the marshmallow the farthest got a free round of golf at one of the area’s premier golf courses.

Of note, one of the easiest things to pick up when running a golf tournament is golf at other clubs. The pros, very easily, give a free round of golf for four people. We solicit these in-kind gifts from golf courses and use them as prizes for longest drive, putting champion, etc... Tournament winners get good prizes. Prizes are donated but some are also purchased by the Chapter.

3. Car Show – Valley Forge Chapter

Like the golf tournament the key to the car show is finding sponsors. There are levels of sponsorship, offering more advertising as the amount per level goes up. Chapter sends out a sponsorship form to potential sponsors. Valley Forge has a red level at \$1,000 and a blue level at \$700.

The Valley Forge Chapter does day of show only registrations at \$20 per car entry. Spectators are free. Pre-registration is a good idea, but you would not offer a refund if it gets cancelled. Have a rain date. The chapter's show is from 9am through 3pm with registration closing at noon. Hire a local car club to provide professional car show judges to judge the show.

Trophies are what the car show people want. The more unique or the larger the better. The chapter offers Top 50, 16 specialties, 1 Best of Show. The best of Show trophy is 5 ft. tall. The specialty trophies are unique. Different than the Top 50 Trophies.

Getting vendors is a great idea. The chapter charges \$25 per vendor. Food vendors are great. Try not to have the same vendors serve the same food. For Example: Have a food truck that does Breakfast as well as burgers, hot dogs and steak sandwiches. Another who sells tacos, etc. If in the summer get an ice cream vendor and or Italian ice vendor. Soft Pretzel or popcorn vendors are great too. Charge a \$25 vendor fee and they keep the profits for the day.

Raffle items and 50/50. Valley Forge sells the raffle tickets and 50/50 at the registration table and has someone walk around selling throughout the day.

A DJ to MC the event and play music makes for a fun day and keeps everyone on track. The chapter also has a JROTC attend the event to present the colors.

The chapter blasts the event over social media as well as putting the event on car club websites. Members also visit local car shows and put flyers in the show cars to advertise the event as well. People will remember the show if you have good trophies, and it is run well. You need quality judging. Do NOT do a spectator judging that does not work.

Holiday Events

1. Christmas Tour of Homes – Chattanooga Chapter

Chattanooga's number one fundraiser is the Christmas Tour of Homes. Each year, the Chapter selects five beautiful homes to include on the tour and tickets are sold. The Chapter also sells fruit cakes and pecans for the holidays.

2. Veterans Day Service – Greater Cincinnati Chapter

The service is held at a local church. Veterans are invited to attend to hear a speaker. Typically, there is a student color guard to present the colors and a high school choir to provide special music. The chapter has partnered with the Young Marines to serve as ushers. The chapter has also involved the local sewing group to present veterans with Quilts of Valor.

Speaker Series

1. Patriot Forum Speaker Series – Dallas Chapter

One program each month with topics relevant or associative to Founding Forward's mission.

Virtual programs via Zoom until further notice.

Series can be sponsored or unsponsored. Offer speakers an honorarium.

Always consider collaboration with other organizations for a joint speaker.

The purpose is to broaden the audience beyond Dallas Chapter Members, increase opportunities to gain new members and provide a "national" audience for the speakers which heightens our ability to recruit other speakers.

Luncheon, Dinners and Galas

1. New Orleans – Themed fundraiser event

The New Orleans Chapter conducts one major fundraising event each year. Each year has a theme, and the event is annually conducted in March. Themes have included Fais Do Do and Hawaiian Luau. Part of the festivities for the evening include a White Elephant Sale where members are encouraged to bring auction items that they no longer need.

2. Pensacola - POW/MIA Luncheon

The Pensacola chapter partners with the Pensacola Navy League each year for its annual POW/MIA luncheon. The luncheon is held each September. They honor a specific POW from the area and a child or children of an MIA. The event results in a lot of positive feedback from the community, as well as extensive media coverage.



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