

THE FORGE

NEWS FROM THE SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

February 2025

Joyce Truett

www.FoundingForward.org

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MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT

Joyce Truett

As we welcome the New Year, I'm hoping that 2025 finds you healthy and happy! The 2024 year was an exciting one for Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge as it merged with The Union Legacy League Foundation to form Founding Forward. One goal Founding Forward has is to increase chapter membership. Our San Diego Chapter needs to recruit new board members who will help our programs to thrive and continue. If you, or anyone you know is interested please contact any board member.

This fall we interviewed 40 students who had applied to attend the "Spirit of America" Leadership Program held at Valley Forge in April. It was a difficult task to pare down to the 15 who were chosen. The committee selected an outstanding group of individuals from several San Diego County Schools.

On Thursday, February 13, 2025 we are honoring our National George Washington Honor Medal National awardees with a luncheon at the Admiral Baker Clubhouse at 11:30 a.m. I hope you can attend and learn about their contributions to their communities. Please email Paula Day at phday@cox.net for an invitation. The Leadership Program Delegates will also be attending and you'll have a chance to meet them and see why they are our future leaders.

I wish you the best year ever.



San Diego Chapter Student Delegates selected for the Leadership Program at Valley Forge

Front Row L to R: Sam Massman – Clairemont High; Kaya Franscisco – Mission Bay High; Chloe Taylor – Julian High; Jaelyn Rodriguez – Southwest High; Sarah Alley - Madison High; Ella Peters – Madison High and Jeremy Hurd – Madison High
Back Row: Alex Flores – Mission Bay High; Asher Cook – Mission Bay High; Nathan Soto – Southwest High; William Vu – Madison High; Madison Goldade – Mar Vista High and Marcela Fernandez – Julian High. Missing: Abby Carpinteyra – Clairemont High and Matilda Meyer-Mission Bay High.

2024-2025

NATIONAL AWARD RECIPIENTS
SAN DIEGO COUNTY CHAPTER

Founding forward recognizes citizens and organizations as community leaders through the National Awards Program. The recipients exemplify civic responsibility through their committed efforts to improve our community and country.

Brenda Ferich V.P. Awards is pleased to announce the following who will be honored as Medal Award recipients. Please plan to join us in celebrating these outstanding people in our community.



Roosevelt Brown

“Mr. Bookman” San Diego

For over 40 years San Diego native Roosevelt Brown has worked tirelessly to ensure that children in the area would have books to read. Brown recognized the importance of education and literacy as a college student. He eventually established book giveaway parties which grew from classroom-sized to huge events at Balboa Park. He heads a large group of volunteers including teachers, parents, community volunteers and his family to collect new juvenile books to distribute. Brown often works with local teachers to update classroom libraries throughout the year, not just at a one-time event.



Steve Cassarino

“Cooking for a Cause”

Steve "Chef Roc" Cassarino is well known in the International World of cooking. Besides having his own cooking show for over 20 years, he shares his culinary skills with many charity organizations. In April 2022 he volunteered with the World Central Kitchen in Przemysl, Poland to help Ukrainian refugees.

Based on this experience he produced a video titled "Shattered Dreams". It's available on YouTube. Money raised is donated to a Polish Orphanage that cares for the Ukrainian Orphans.

DONORS

Many thanks to the members and friends who support our chapter's activities and goals.

- Valorie Anderson
- Kelly Balzer
- Marilyn Balzer
- Wilma Cadice
- Nancy Campbell
- Paula and Chuck Day
- Francine Dobbins
- Dorothy Dyck
- Brenda Ferich
- Alice Freeh
- Monica Gutierrez
- Charla Hannon
- Sandy and Tom Helmantoler
- Roberta Henry
- Sharon and Brian Henry
- Ernestine Herman
- Jonnie Johnson
- Adele and Tom Lancaster
- Joan Liddell
- Virginia Lloyd
- Monica Gutierrez
- Fern Murphy
- Becky and Jim Reid
- Linda Rosicky
- Ruth Runge
- Sally and Jim Syren
- Eric Syverson
- Virginia Syverson
- Joyce and Henry Truett
- Larry Zeiger



**FAREWELL
DEAR FRIEND**



Virginia A. Syverson

**August 16, 1946
January 19, 2025**

**Executive Board Member
Vice President-Youth
Patron**



Tony Teravainen

“A STeP Up”

Ranked #30 nationally among charities that support military, Veterans, and their families.

Support the Enlisted Project (STEP) was founded in 2012 with the mission of providing financial relief and support services to active-duty and recently discharged military and their families in times of crisis. STEP aims to help alleviate financial stress and provide resources to help service members and their families overcome challenges and build resiliency. Through partnerships with military installations and community organizations, STEP works to ensure that military families have the support they need to thrive.



Dr. Julie Cowan Novak

“Woman of Distinction”

Julie’s early involvement in San Diego philanthropy began in the Junior League of San Diego, youth sports, Cub Scouts, and church activities. Throughout her career as a nurse practitioner, academician, researcher and administrator, she has been a champion for providing resources, care and support for children, families and communities who need it most through the development of 14 NP-led clinics in three states. After an academic tour at UVA, Purdue and the University of Texas Health System, she was recruited back home to San Diego to create, design, fundraise and launch the Inaugural Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Follow-Up Program at Sharp Mary Birch. Julie recently received the prestigious Edge Runner Award sponsored by the American Academy of Nursing.



Susan Ellisor

“Making a Difference”

Susan Ellisor is making a difference at Solutions for Change, a full-service leadership development residential program for the homeless in Vista, California. She inspires hope and resilience beyond her invaluable gifts of time and financial support. What sets Sue apart is her genuine heart for the families. She connects, is always asking thoughtful questions, and cares deeply about their journey toward independence. Sue is always open to learning why or how a family can be better understood or served and often supports the program by developing new opportunities for the children and families to connect with each other or learn.



Sandra Lemkuhler

“Warrrior Foundation Freedom Station”

Sandra was nominated by the Founding Forward Monterrey Chapter and was awarded the George Washington Honor Medal earlier in the year for her outstanding work with the Warrior Foundation Freedom Station. As co-founder of the Foundation Sandy is committed and has the conviction that we can do better as a country for those members of our military who suffer critical injuries while serving their country.

The Warrior Foundation has opened cottage developments to provide transitional housing options for Warriors preparing to leave the military.

Membership – Join us today!

Individual Membership	\$35.00
Couple’s Membership	\$50.00
Patron Membership	\$100.00

Send check to Paula Day, Treasurer

4717 Corte Mariposa – Bonita CA 91902-1532

Or to pay with credit card contact Paula, at

phday@cox.net



Jim “Fletch” Fletcher

“Museum of the American Presidency”

It’s not always easy to make history come alive for students, but Jim “Fletch” Fletcher has managed to do so. As a young man he collected presidential memorabilia which he later used to teach history and government at Clairemont High School. He organized and now directs the Museum of the American Presidency. The museum houses one of the largest authentic collections of its kind anywhere in the U.S., with over 40,000 items representing all of our presidents.

Students find themselves immersed in “Living History.” Mr. Fletcher demonstrates his ability to share with his students an appreciation of our nation’s history and the benefits and obligations of freedom.

Presenting the 2025 San Diego Chapter Founding Forward Student Representatives

<i>Sarah Alley</i>	<i>Madison High</i>	<i>Jeremy Hurd</i>	<i>Madison High</i>
<i>Abigail Carpinteyro</i>	<i>Clairemont High</i>	<i>Samuel Massman</i>	<i>Clairemont High</i>
<i>Asher Cook</i>	<i>Mission Bay High</i>	<i>Matilda Meyer</i>	<i>Mission Bay High</i>
<i>Marcela Fernandez</i>	<i>Julian High</i>	<i>Ella Peters</i>	<i>Madison High</i>
<i>Alexander Ron Flores</i>	<i>Mission Bay High</i>	<i>Jaelyn Rodriguez</i>	<i>Southwest High</i>
<i>Kaya Francisco</i>	<i>Mission Bay High</i>	<i>Nathan Soto</i>	<i>Southwest High</i>
<i>Madison Goldade</i>	<i>Mar Vista High</i>	<i>Chloe Taylor</i>	<i>Julian High</i>
	<i>William Vu</i>	<i>Madison High</i>	

How are students selected to go to Valley Forge?

Students go through a lengthy selection process. They attend an informational meeting at their respective high schools, complete an application, write an essay and are interviewed by Founding Forward members of the San Diego County Chapter.

As selected delegates they attend a Student Orientation Meeting, our Annual Awards Luncheon to meet members of the Chapter, attend the Fly Away Breakfast sponsored by the Allied Gardens Optimist Club and then take off on the “Red Eye” to the Founding Forward campus at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania where they attend have an interactive 3 ½ day seminar followed by a trip to Washington D.C.

Thanks to the interview team - Kelly Balzar, Sandy and Tom Helmantoler, Sally Syren Joyce Truett, Eric Syverson and Virginia Syverson.

Meet Ms. Monica Gutierrez – Student Chaperone for the trip



Did you know Ms. Gutierrez was a student representative to the Leadership Program at Valley Forge when she was an 11th grade student?

Ms. Gutierrez who teaches history and government at Southwest High School has accompanied our students for several years.

Student Orientation Meeting – December 14, 2024

Parents attended to learn about the upcoming trip to Valley Forge. Some pictures from the Orientation meeting:



Sarah Alley and Mom
Madison High School



Dad and Nathan Soto
Southwest High School



Marcela Fernandez and Mom
Julian High School



Asher Cook and Mom
Mission Bay High School

Celebrating Presidents' Day, officially Washington's Birthday - February 17, 2025

Celebration of Washington's Birthday has a history as old as our country. It was celebrated publicly for the first time in the late 18th century, while Washington was still president. The celebration became official in 1885, when President Chester Arthur signed a bill making his birthday a federal holiday. In 1968, Congress passed the Monday Holiday Act which moved the observance from February 22 to the third Monday of the month.

Today, the federal holiday not only honors George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, whose birthday is also celebrated in February, but honors all those who served as presidents of the United States.