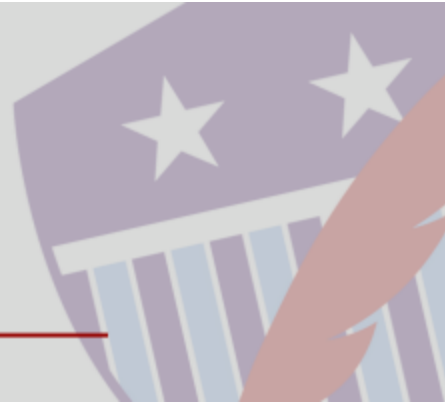


THE FORGE

NEWS FROM THE SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

February 2026



Joyce Truett

www.FoundingForward.org

February 2026



MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT Joyce Truett

As we welcome the New Year, I'm hoping that 2026 finds you healthy and happy! Also a Happy 250th Birthday to the USA! I hope you will be able to enjoy some of the birthday celebrations that will be presented during the year.

Recently the San Diego Founding Forward San Diego Chapter interviewed High School Juniors at five different local schools. Ten students were selected to attend the Valley Forge Leadership Conference at Valley Forge in April. They represent the face of all American Citizens.

On Thursday, February 12, 2026 we are honoring our National George Washington Honor Medal 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, if you have not received one. 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. They are outstanding young people.

One goal that we had for last year was to increase our membership and welcome new volunteers to join our chapter move forward. Unfortunately that goal wasn't met. Without new board members to promote both leadership programs and increase our bank account, we cannot sustain our chapter. Please contact any of the board members with names or ideas on how to save our Founding Forward San Diego Chapter. My email is jtruett44@yahoo.com. Looking forward to hearing from you. Joyce



San Diego Chapter Student Delegates to the Leadership Program at Valley Forge

Row 1: Chloe Keller - Clairemont High; Natalya Phillips – Madison High; Jyanna Gamba - Mar Vista High; Alyssa Lee - Mission Bay High; Camila Medina – Southwest High.

Row 2: Mrs. Kelly Balzer – Member; Kyan Wallien – Clairemont High; Gavin Ragusa - Mission Bay High; Lynette Garcia - Southwest High.

Not pictured. Angel Lara - Southwest High and Katherine Liang – Mission Bay High.



**2025-2026 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.

Our chapter is pleased to announce the following awardees who will be honored as Award recipients. Please plan to join us in celebrating these outstanding people in our community.



URSULA SORENSEN
“Project Linus”

Ursula Sorensen has provided her expertise as the Volunteer Coordinator of the San Diego Chapter of “Project Linus”, a service project for Altrusa International, Inc. for 28 years. Ursula’s mission is to guide her volunteers to make sure about 300 blankets monthly are gathered and distributed to young people in need. Over 45 agencies, from hospitals to domestic violence victims and “Operation Home Front” youth are the beneficiaries of this huge undertaking of love. Over the last two decades about 55,000 blankets have been distributed.

Ursula says that when young ones have had a tragedy or an upsetting experience, having a blanket to wrap them in is like a warm hug to make it through a rough patch in life.



ARDEN PALA
“Sports4Kids”

Arden Pala was an 8th grade student when he chose to begin and coach basketball clinics for low-income area middle schools in San Diego.

He then started a non-profit ‘Sports4Kids’. Through this organization, he was able to fund sports clinics, donate sports equipment and mentorships at the different schools. Over the last five years he has helped over 750 students enjoy and play in team sports. He is continuing his participation with these programs as a high school 11th grade student.



MARY JO LONGO
“Quilting for Independence”

Mary Jo Longo was an educator with the San Diego Unified School District for over forty years. During her summers she often volunteered with the Fundamaya.org in Panajachel Guatemala. There she helped provide water systems and wood burning stoves to these Indigenous people. Recently she took a few weeks to help teach the women how to sew quilts to sell for additional income.

DONORS



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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Valorie Anderson</i> | <i>Ernestine Herman</i> |
| <i>Alice Babbit</i> | <i>Roberta Henry</i> |
| <i>Kelly Balzer</i> | <i>Cathy Ingrassia</i> |
| <i>Marilyn Balzer</i> | <i>Adele Lancaster</i> |
| <i>Barbara Brown</i> | <i>Virginia Lloyd</i> |
| <i>Paula and Chuck Day</i> | <i>Marcy McCann</i> |
| <i>David Dickson</i> | <i>Fern Murphy</i> |
| <i>Francine Dobbin</i> | <i>Ted Parsons</i> |
| <i>Dorothy Dyck</i> | <i>Rose Perkins</i> |
| <i>Susan Ellisor</i> | <i>Charlotte Perry</i> |
| <i>Alice Freeh</i> | <i>Kristi Pieper</i> |
| <i>Zita Gardner</i> | <i>Kelli Ann Politoske</i> |
| <i>Marcia Gill</i> | <i>Becky and Jim Reid</i> |
| <i>Bill Glover</i> | <i>Ruth Runge</i> |
| <i>Monica Gutierrez</i> | <i>Sally and Jim Syren</i> |
| <i>Charla Hannon</i> | <i>Eric Syverson</i> |
| <i>Sandy and Tom Helmantoler</i> | <i>Joyce and Henry Truett</i> |
| <i>Joan Henkleman</i> | <i>Larry Zeiger</i> |

Presenting the 2026 San Diego Chapter Founding Forward Student Representatives

*Jayanna Gamba
Lynette Garcia
Chloe Keller
Angel Lara
Alyssa Lee*

*Mar Vista High
Southwest High
Clairemont High
Southwest High
Mission Bay High*

*Katherine Liang
Camila Medina
Natalya Philips
Gavin Ragusa
Kyan Wallien*

*Mission Bay High
Southwest High
Madison High
Mission Bay High
Clairemont High*

The students went through a lengthy selection process. They attended an informational meeting at their respective high schools, completed an application, wrote an essay and were interviewed by Founding Forward members of the San Diego Chapter.

In April these outstanding representatives will fly on the “red eye” to Philadelphia and on to the Founding Forward campus at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania for 3½ days of interactive, fully-packed seminars. They then travel on to Philadelphia and Washington D.C. to complete their week.



Dad and Jyanna Gamba
Mar Vista High



Mom and Alyssa Lee
Mission Bay High



Mom and Kyan Wallien
Clairemont High



Natalya Phillips and Mom
Clairemont High



Katherine Liang
Mission Bay High



Lynette Garcia and Family
Southwest High



Angel Lara
Southwest High



Chloe Keller and Mom
Clairemont High



Mom and Gavin Ragusa
Mission Bay High



Mom and Camila Medina
Southwest High



**JOIN THE SAN DIEGO CHAPTER OF
FOUNDING FORWARD!
You Can Make a Difference!**

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

AND

Please consider making a donation to help
send our students to Valley Forge

REMEMBRANCE and YOUTH FUND

In memory of _____
In honor of _____
Another special reason _____

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

**INTERESTED IN BECOMING A
SAN DIEGO CHAPTER BOARD
MEMBER?**

Volunteer is a nine letter word
and not hard to say,
To offer one's self and one's own free will
To even go out of one's way.
It's not what I will get out of this,
Nor what will it benefit me?
It's doing the things that count most in life
And helping in the community.
I volunteer is to say to the word
I've still got some living to do,
Or doing the task for some who have asked,
Can bring new meaning to you.
The task may seem small and not hard at
all,
Who knows, we might even succeed.
But we give it a try when we utter---
I volunteer to help a need.
If you would like to become a Board Member
of the San Diego County Chapter please
contact:
Joyce Truett, president – jtruett44@yahoo.com



Presidents' Day, officially Washington's Birthday at the federal governmental level, is a holiday in the United States celebrated on the third Monday of February. This year it will be February 16th. It is often celebrated to honor all those who served as presidents of the United States and, since 1879, has been the federal holiday honoring Founding Father George Washington, who led the Continental Army to victory in the American Revolutionary War and presided at the Constitutional Convention.

Fun facts about Presidents' Day...

- ★ Presidents Day is celebrated on the third Monday in February, thanks to the 1968 Uniform Monday Holiday Act.
- ★ It was established in 1885 in honor of President George Washington's birthday.
- ★ Washington's birthday was actually on February 22, 1732.

Question of the Day???? How old would George Washington be today if he were living?