



Los Angeles Founding Chapter

Founding Forward

Editor – Tanya Caligiuri

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## Across The President's Desk

Dear Los Angeles Founding Chapter Members,

We inspire and impact thousands of our nation's finest and brightest individuals every year, always finishing stronger than we started. In more than one way, the Los Angeles County Chapter cultivates an atmosphere of hope for the future, educates the next generation of leaders, and elevates students' potential to be the best version of themselves.



We are the catalyst to a brighter future by providing motivated students with our various programs such as Spirit of America and extended scholarship opportunities, thus giving the students the chance to excel.

You all are the reason why the Freedom Foundation has thrived, so thank you for making this possible through our generous members and member volunteers.

2023 was a year of growth and change, building new partnerships, implementing new programs for student success, and our new brand title, "Founding Forward." Diane Deshong was instrumental, as National Board Member, in facilitating our merger into Founding Forward. We may have a new name - but our ideals and respect for our Founding Fathers remain unwavering.

We began with the lovely New Members High Tea event hosted by Wendy Dio, Chair of Ways and Means, and her committee at her lovely home in Ojai. It was followed by the delightful Noel Luncheon expertly organized by Program Chairs Rosemary Licata and Bea Restifo.

Gloria Dahl and Shirley Bradley, Awards Chairs, proudly announced our two George Washington Medal of Honor recipients: Carlos Rodriquez, for his service and bravery in Vietnam, and Ilise Dixon, Founder of the JR Dixon Foundation.

Every year we aspire to send off a new group of excited high school students to Valley Forge by kicking it off with an annual Student Orientation which was hosted by Rosie Castro, Co-Chair of Education, and Educational Chair David Gibson. This orientation prepares the students for their trip to Valley Forge where students' lives are transformed.

This year John Dinome, our new Communication Chair and Liaison for Founding Forward, joined our students at the Valley Forge Campus. We followed up the inspirational Valley Forge trip with the Student Recognition Luncheon at the American Legion in the Pacific Palisades, where we presented multiple awards for outstanding achievement.

Our next upcoming event will be the Greek Luncheon on Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> at Elli Banquet Hall In Pasadena chaired by Wendy Dio, Ways and Means - more information to follow.

Freedom is an achievement of civilization and not a natural law. Freedom always comes with a requisite, the necessity of maintenance. The achievement must be protected, as it is fragile. We must endeavor to educate each generation to maintain that state of freedom we know and love.

2024 will be transformative, as we engage the next group of talented students in their journey to develop national pride. Now more than ever, we are responsible for breeding the next generation to not only lead by example, but through their actions become leaders. Our nation symbolizes strength, bravery, and freedom; and although we are going through challenging times now, we must be more committed and selfless than ever before.

Los Angeles Freedoms Foundation Chapter has encouraged young students to educate themselves on historical principles, inspiring them to preserve and advance our freedom that will lead to a just and brighter future.

Here's to another year of being great, and thank you deeply for all your support.

Trish Bowe  
President



Our New Logo

**FOUNDING**  
*forward*



**A Future Rooted in Liberty**  
Uniting Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge  
& The Union League Legacy Foundation



**Welcome  
New Members**

**John Dinome**

**Annette Goodman**

**Gerry Kimbrough**

**Larry Link**

**Donna Tohidi**

# Our Students

This year our chapter sponsored 26 high school juniors to the March 7-10, 2024, Spirit of America Session at the Founding Forward Valley Forge campus. Prior to departing for Philadelphia, we hosted an Orientation Luncheon at the Ocean House in Santa Monica for all students and parents.

Upon arrival at the Valley Forge campus, the students participated in a variety of enriching activities such as Leadership Workshops, Mock Congressional Debates and a Free Enterprise Challenge. Site visits included Old Town Philadelphia – Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, Congressional Hall and the Betsy Ross House. The students also visited historic Valley Forge – Washington’s Headquarters and the Continental Army Barracks.

Most interesting was the opportunity students had to step back into the past by hearing from and engaging with characters from our Nation’s Founding such as Thomas Jefferson, Abigail Adams and Ned Hector. Overall, it was a tremendous experience for all participants, including our 6 chaperones.

Students were recruited from five different high schools: James Monroe High, Abraham Lincoln High, Immaculate Heart High, La Reina Catholic High, and Saint Monica Preparatory High. Each student was required to apply for the program by outlining their involvement in school and community service activities; leadership roles they have had both on and off campus; and their college and career aspirations.

In addition, each student was required to participate in Founding Forward’s National Youth Essay Contest. This year’s prompt was:

*Why are responsible citizens important to our system of government? What can I do to develop the necessary traits to become one and encourage others to do so as well?*

We recently learned that of the 149 essays submitted nationwide, nine of our students were selected to receive the George Washington Honor Medal and Certificate. This is quite an accomplishment and speaks well about the potential of our future leaders of America.

Our chapter recognized these students at our Student Luncheon on April 24, 2024, with an award of \$300 each. Participation at the luncheon was well attended and the students shared their experiences with the chapter members in attendance. The student luncheon was held at The American Legion Ronald Reagan-Palisades Post 283 in Pacific Palisades.

We are looking forward to sponsoring another group of high school students to the Spirit of America program in 2024 and hope to increase the number of participants.

David Gibson  
VP Education

# Student Recognition Luncheon



# New Members' High Tea in Ojai



# Noel Luncheon and Awards at the Peninsula Hotel



