



Chapter Presidents Zoom Call

July 25, 2024 | 3 pm ET

Chapters Represented –Chattanooga, Greater Cincinnati, Monterey Bay Area, Oklahoma City, Pensacola, Sacramento, San Diego, Utah, and Valley Forge

Special Guests –John Meko, President; David Harmer, National Director; Larry Brasher, Board Member; Sandy Cook, Board Member; Col. Michael Wertz, National Sojourners and Chapters & Partners Committee Member; and Woody Woodmansee, Union League and Chapter & Partners Committee Member.

Welcome

Carolyn Santangelo, Sr. Director of Chapter & Partner Relations, welcomed everyone on the call and thanked participants for jumping on a call in the middle of summer. Carolyn introduced special guests on the call and did a roll call of chapters in attendance.

Carolyn turned over the meeting to John Meko, President, of Founding Forward to give an organizational update.

Updates from National

John Meko gave an update to attendees on the strategic planning process. He emphasized that the chapters and partners are a big part of the plan. There will be major discussions this fall on the plan and input from our chapters and partners will be vital to help develop the plan. Right now, there are six tenets or goals to the plan. Two of those tenets involve chapters and partners as they are key to making those happen. Details will be given in the fall, but one piece that John was able to share is the desire to have a conference/summit in 2026 similar to the old chapter and partners conferences. This will help roll out our new initiatives and will coincide with the 250th anniversary of our country. John wrapped up his updates with a report on campus improvements. Three of the roofs have been completed on Hamilton, Franklin and MacArthur and significant landscaping has been completed at the entrance to campus and in front of the Martha Washington Building.

John departed the meeting and Carolyn continued with updates.

Spring Spirit of America

Reservations for the 2025 Spirit of America program are coming in nicely. Thank you to all who have reserved their spots. As a reminder the dates for 2025 are



March 6-9, March 13-16, April 3-6, April 10-13, April 24-27 and July 10-13. The July date is an experiment to see if there is interest in a summer program date. It will be open to all partners as well as chapters. Please note that the April 3-6 program is close to being full.

We are pleased to announce the 2025 Essay Topics. The topic for K-6 grade is "Who is your favorite founding father/mother and why?" and the Grades 7-12 topic is "There was much debate at the Constitutional Convention in 1787 leading to significant compromises reflected in the ratified US Constitution. Reflecting on all the ideas brought forth and the compromises made, what do you believe should have been included, that was not and why?" Carolyn will send an email immediately following the meeting with the topics.

The Spirit of America brochures will be available as a PDF hopefully by Monday and Carolyn will send those out via email immediately. The printed copies will be mailed out in early August.

Teacher program updates

Summer programs are almost a wrap. We have held four successful seminars at Liberty Hill with one more starting next week. We ran two traveling workshops, the second wrapping up tomorrow. The feedback on the new location at Liberty Hill has been very positive. Carolyn turned to Pam Fields of the Chattanooga Chapter to give her feedback as a teacher who attended a program this summer. Pam was very complimentary of the new location at Liberty Hill and has also heard good reports from fellow teachers.

To date we have had 207 teachers join the Joshua Chamberlain League and we raised over \$31,000 that will go back for teacher scholarships next year. Our goal is \$40,000 and we think we will be able to reach that with our last two programs.

Award updates

Thank you to everyone who submitted nominees for the National Awards. They are currently being reviewed and you will be notified prior to Labor Day about your recipients.

Campus Updates

In addition to the campus updates reported by John Meko, the Martha Washington Classroom is currently under construction. The classroom has a new ceiling with new lighting and the technology properly wired. The room will be getting new carpeting, windows and window treatments, and paint as well. We just had a major



2-day campus clean-out. All staff participated. We got rid of all the old mattresses so students and chaperones will have much more comfortable beds. Some office renovations will start on August 1st. We will be building a few more offices and creating a conference room. The generator for MacArthur Building is here and will be hooked up next week.

New Website

The new website is taking shape. The launch date will be late August/early September. Carolyn thinks chapters will all be pleased with the updated look to their chapter pages. Please send Carolyn all updates you want to see on your pages including new photos, new text, new forms for membership and applications to Spirit of America will be added to your new pages.

Financial Updates

Thank you to everyone especially the treasurers working to update all the banking information. We had no idea some of this would be so complicated. We appreciate all your hard work.

Staffing Updates

Founding Forward just welcomed Corey Stubanas to the team. He is our Program Coordinator. He will be handling the speaker series and the docent program at the League House. He is part of the education team so you will see him at Spirit of America. We have also hired a Director of Development who will serve as a major gifts officer. This individual will be starting on August 19th. Founding Forward is also looking to add to the education and communications departments.

Questions were asked about the speaker series and if chapter will be able to view remotely. The answer is yes, but we are still working on the details. We need to find the best platform to broadcast out to our constituents who are unable to attend in person. There have been recordings made of all previous speakers. Carolyn will ask about accessing those recordings.

Fundraising Best Practices

Carolyn introduced the concept of the next part of our meeting to share information and best practices in fundraising. Thank you to everyone who was able to submit their questionnaires. Through meetings with the chapters and partners committee and your direct feedback we have presented a 1st draft of the fundraising best practices. A copy was sent in advance of today's meeting.

Carolyn turned the meeting over to Larry Brasher to start the conversation. Larry referenced the first draft of the fundraising best practices and reviewed with those on the call beginning with membership development.



All items discussed during the call will be added to the 2nd draft of the fundraising best practices document.

Additional points discussed during the call include:

- Monterey Bay Area Chapter is conducting a Chicken BBQ fundraiser with David Harmer as the keynote speaker and draw attendance. The chapter has a flyer to promote and will be reaching out to community groups such as the Elks, American Legion, SAR, DAR, and others. This is to attract new members and raise funds.
- David Harmer mentioned to all on the call that he is always happy to assist chapters by attending fundraising events and being the keynote speaker if needed.
- The National Office will create a step-by-step guide to help chapters set up a planned giving program.
- San Diego Chapter's Day at the Races was discussed. This fundraising program has been going strong for decades. Members and guests can buy tickets to a day of races at the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club. Funds are raised through ticket sales and an opportunity drawing with items donated or given by Chapter members.

All updates will be included in the next draft of the best practices document. Please be on the lookout for that soon. There is also still time to submit your questionnaires to be included in the document.

Carolyn thanked everyone for joining.

Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 10th at 3pm ET. The topic will be membership.