



Dear Chapter Presidents and Representatives,

The year 2024 is coming to a close, and what a year it has been for all of us. On January 1, as we ring in the new year, we also celebrate the completion of the first year of Founding Forward. I want to thank all of you for embracing Founding Forward. I know that change can be difficult and scary at times. The transition was not always smooth, just ask any treasurer or president who went to the bank to update your name. Throughout it you remained patient, supportive, and engaged. We did a lot in our first year of Founding Forward and much of it could not have been accomplished without you.

In 2024, we had incredible impact:

- 2,310 students were exposed to our founding documents and civic engagement thanks to our Spirit of America, Good Citizen Day, and History Encounter Programs.
- 314 teachers returned engaged to their classrooms after attending one of our 7 graduate teacher programs with a ripple effect impacting 31,400 students.
- Nearly 10,000 people were enriched through our speaker programs, Valley Forge campus events, and tours, just to name a few.

The Valley Forge campus has just begun to transform. The dorms have new roofs, windows, mattresses, and other cosmetic improvements. The classroom and lobby areas are in the process of being upgraded now. The property has a brand-new grand entrance and improved landscaping throughout.

Our website was transformed with the launch of the new Founding Forward website that beautifully brings all our amazing programs together and highlights our great assets, which include our chapters. The website is an ever-changing tool that will serve our constituents for many years.

On the chapter level in 2024, you continue to be our number one sponsor of students to Spirit of America and largest supporter of the National Awards program. You sponsored 347 participants to Spirit of America which was up by nearly 100 participants from 2023. You submitted 243 award nominations including essays of which 111 were honored with the George Washington Honor Medal. You conducted extremely successful events, from award ceremonies to golf tournaments and gala fundraisers, to student and veteran recognition events, and community service projects. Thank you for all your hard work in making Founding Forward's impact national. *You are making an enormous difference.*

Capping off these great accomplishments was the approval of a seven-year strategic plan. The plan is ambitious, but I know, with your help, it will be achievable. Thank you to all who attended the presentation of the strategic plan last month. We continue to share with our key constituents and will be sharing with the public in February 2025.

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As we look to 2025, you are already helping us work towards our goals to grow the programs. Our goal is 1,800 student attendees in 2025 and your reservation numbers for Spirit of America alone sit at four hundred. You continue to spread the word about our teacher programs. Our goal is 650 teachers served in 2025. Essay submissions to the 2025 award program are already coming in and great local events are taking shape including our Good Citizen Day-on-the-road pilot program being hosted by our Sacramento Chapter. President John Meko and National Director David Harmer will once again be on the road visiting with you. They covered a lot of territory in 2024 but want to do more in 2025 and visit those chapters that they couldn't get to this year. Make sure to send us your events and meetings so we can plan the visits. We are also planning for America 250 and the 2026 Chapter and Partners Conference. I cannot wait to see all we accomplish in the new year.

As we celebrate all our success in our first full year of Founding Forward and look to our bright future, we need to acknowledge and thank one of our leaders, Sandy Cook, board member and chair of our Chapters and Partners Committee. Many of you have spoken to Sandy on the phone over the years and she asked about the work of your chapter but also about you, our volunteers and your passions. Sandy, after many years of service, has decided to step down at the end of the year. We cannot thank her enough for her support and encouragement through the years. Thank you, Sandy!

The biggest thanks go to you, our volunteer chapter leaders and members. Thank you for your continued support during the last year. Your devotion to our mission is steadfast and means the world to the entire staff. I look forward to working with each and every one of you in the new year. Wishing you and yours a wonderful holiday season. – Carolyn



Thank You and Happy Holidays from the Staff at Founding Forward

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