



## SPIRIT OF AMERICA YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

On March 10, five students and one chaperone left for Philadelphia and Valley Forge for the Spirit of America Youth Leadership Conference.

Each of the five students wrote an essay, participated in an interview and was selected to receive a scholarship to attend the conference. The scholarship, given in commemoration of a Medal of Honor recipient, covered the tuition, board and room and airfare.

There was a small number of students at the conference with groups from Texas and Nebraska. The students got to know each other well and made some good friends.

The conference was a full four days of activities and opportunities to learn about our American history and the principles of the founding of our American republic. The students heard from Thomas Jefferson and John Adams (historical interpreters) to learn about issues confronted in the founding of the country. The students participated in a mock session of Congress as they applied the Bill of Rights and the continuum between liberty and security to proposed bills.

The students heard a speaker about free enterprise and then participated in a free enterprise challenge in which groups developed a product to present to a panel of judges.

The students learned about the qualities and criteria for awarding the Medal of Honor and applied what they learned to leadership.

A snowstorm kept the group from visiting Valley Forge (how ironic), yet the group did get to travel the next day to Philadelphia to visit Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell.

The Saturday evening ended with a banquet, a guest speaker on the Cold War, and a signing ceremony in which the students were able to sign their names to a copy of the Declaration of Independence.



*Sarah Beck, Sebastian Castilla, Vinaya Sivakumar, Brianna Birkle, Theresa Bradley, Aaron Altman and Bob Stevens at the airport getting ready to leave.*

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# SCENES FROM VALLEY FORGE



*Visiting the Ohio obelisk in the Medal of Honor Grove.*



*Freedom Summit – working on an amendment to a bill.*



*Listening to Thomas Jefferson*



*The News Committee sharing local and national news with the group.*



*Trip to Philadelphia*



*The signing ceremony*

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# AWARDS AND RECOGNITION DINNER

On March 27, the students gathered together again with parents and chapter members for a dinner, and a presentation about the Spirit of America Conference. Several national awards were also presented at the dinner.



Four of the five students presented what they did and what they learned at the conference.



*Sarah Beck, Vinaya Sivakumar, Brianna Birkle, Sebastian Castilla. Aaron Altman was unable to attend.*



*Erica Shah, first place winner in local contest and national award winner with Theresa Bradley.*

In 2021, the Chapter sponsored an essay contest when the Spirit of America Conferences were cancelled. The winners' essays were submitted to the national youth essay contest and both girls received George Washington Medals for winning the national youth essay contest.



Judge Heather S. Russell won a national Freedoms Foundation Award for Community Service for her work with CHANGE Court, a specialty docket for victims of sex trafficking.



118 Tremont Avenue  
Fort Thomas, KY 41075

## CHAPTER REPORT

The Greater Cincinnati Chapter of Freedoms Foundation held a brief business meeting at the end of the dinner on March 27. The main purpose was to elect Board Members for the coming year.

The following are the Board Members of our Chapter:

Theresa Bradley - *President*

Keith Cottrell

Brady Eyer

Bob Goering - *Treasurer*

Ted Kalsbeek

Jenny Kilgore

Bob Stevens - *Vice-President*

*The most serious danger Americans now face – greater than terrorism – is that our country's future may not end up in the hands of a citizenry capable of sustaining the liberty that has been America's most precious legacy.*

Professor William Damon,  
Stanford University

