



EDUCATE HONOR CHALLENGE

Dear Chapter Presidents and Representatives,

The 2023 program season has begun, and it feels like Spring in Valley Forge. We have been lucky so far this winter. The campus has avoided snow and enjoyed early spring weather throughout the season. I know many of you including our chapters in Utah, Nebraska, Texas, and even California are experiencing unusual and nasty winter weather. Though I know many of our southern chapter sponsored students may be hoping to see some snow, the future weather trend does not look promising.

On campus now is our first Spirit of America for 2023. We have local students in attendance sponsored by the Connelly Foundation. All the students are part of the multi-year grant for Philadelphia Archdiocesan students to attend Spirit of America. Next week is our first chapter sponsored program. A huge thank you to all the chapters sending students this year. Our overall numbers are the highest since the pandemic and we are making progress in getting those numbers back to 2018-2019 levels. The first session next week will have students from our Utah, Valley Forge, and Broward County Chapters in attendance. The following week's Spirit of America program on March 9-12 will be our largest in years and will welcome students from our Chattanooga, Chase County, Greater Cincinnati, Sacramento, San Diego, Utah, and Valley Forge Chapters plus students from Hawaii. We look forward to welcoming all your students to campus over the next 2 months.

A reminder our early essay nomination deadline is on Wednesday, March 1st. We have seen a great response to the early deadline now in its second year. Not only have we had participation by our chapters, but also a few schools and individuals outside of our chapter areas. We have more than doubled the essays submitted from a year ago. Thank you!

Acceptances to our summer teacher programs will be going out this Tuesday, February 28th. We have had a good response to our programs for 2023 and look forward to officially registering teachers to attend. We will be sending chapters lists of teachers in their area who have been accepted. Please contact me or Staci Bell (sbell@ffvf.org) if you have any questions or need more details on teacher acceptances.

We have our first Presidents' Zoom call of 2023 coming up on Wednesday, March 8th at 2pm ET. I will send out a notice next week for the meeting with an agenda and link, but in the meantime, please mark your calendars and plan to join us.

Thank you all for sending in your year-end financials, president's reports, and rosters. We are updating all the information now and organizing the financials for the audit. We appreciate you getting things to us in such a timely manner.

An update on David: He continues to make steady progress on the road to recovery. He is starting to get around and even made a trip outside of the house recently for a Valentine's Dinner with his wife Elayne. He hopes to be back on campus around Easter. Thank you all for your continued prayers and well wishes.

Finally, this week's video is a sneak peak of our upcoming social media campaign celebrating **Civic Learning Week** during March 6-10. We will be posting daily features on our social media outlets featuring videos of students, teachers and chapter members plus fun trivia and a campfire huddle with the education team. Check out a sneak preview of one of our feature videos here <https://youtu.be/GrNdmMWm0R8>.

Thank you everyone for your hard work in recent weeks to organize award ceremonies and select students for Spirit of America. All of your efforts will be rewarded as the students attend the program and return engaged citizens.

Be safe, stay healthy, and take care.

Carolyn E. Santangelo

Senior Director of Chapter and Partner Relations
Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge
610-933-8825 ext. 234

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