



# The Forge

**The Freedoms Foundation Mission**  
*We educate about American rights and responsibilities  
Honor acts of civic virtue, and  
Challenge all to reject apathy and get involved.*



Joyce Truett, President

<https://www.freedomsfoundation.org/chapter/san-diego-ca/>

February 2024

## **JOYCE TRUETT ELECTED PRESIDENT 2024 -2026**



*Hello, I am looking forward to my term as your President of the San Diego County Chapter of Freedoms Foundation.*

*Welcome to our annual Awards Luncheon. We are celebrating five local honorees who will receive the George Washington Honor medal for their outstanding service to our community and two essay recipients.*

*This is also an opportunity to meet the fifteen 11<sup>th</sup> grade students who we are sending to the "Spirit of America" Leadership Program in April, on the campus at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. After the conference the students will extend their trip and will travel on to Washington D.C.*

*During my tenure as President I would like to see our membership grow. Our board is also seeking to have new members join us in supporting our mission of "educating about American Rights and Responsibilities."*

## **SAN DIEGO COUNTY CHAPTER WELCOMES DAVID HARMER,**

### **FREEDOMS FOUNDATION AT VALLEY FORGE CEO**



*Freedoms Foundation is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and we are honored to welcome Mr. David Harmer, our National CEO to our chapter.*

*He will present a video informing us about the plans for the celebration as well as how Freedoms Foundation is moving*

*forward.*

*"We believe that America is a stronger and better country today because of the impact Freedoms Foundation has had on so many lives, careers, and futures—an impact measured and multiplied in countless ways and in countless places across this broad land," David wrote in his message.*

*Please stop and introduce yourselves to him and the young people selected to attend the "Spirit of America" Leadership Program at Valley Forge in the spring. These outstanding students are our leaders of tomorrow.*



*2024 Student Delegates*

Front row: Julia Farschon – Mission Bay High and  
Byanca Ocegueda – Mar Vista High

2<sup>nd</sup> Row: Chaperone Monica Gutierrez; Blanca Plascencia –Southwest High; Jason Coleman – Madison High; Nuhamin Woldeyes – Mission Bay High; Ryan Jackson – Madison High; Joshua Kozak – Mission Bay High; Katherine Foulks - Mission Bay High; BrehSyria Nodd – Madison High; Vanessa Limon – Madison High; Erika Preciado – Mar Vista High and Alison Hernandez —Julian High School.

Not pictured: Melissa Barrera Medina – Clairemont High, Diego Duenas and Iris Romero-Reyes – Southwest High.

## 2023-24 NATIONAL AWARD RECIPIENTS SAN DIEGO COUNTY CHAPTER

Freedoms Foundation recognizes citizens and organizations as community leaders through the National Awards Program. The recipients all exemplify civic responsibility through their committed efforts to improve our community.



**Charlotte K. Perry**  
"Joy of Giving"

Charlotte Perry was given a solid foundation of the satisfaction and rewards of volunteerism by her family.

After a 40-year career as an educator and librarian in this country as well as Germany, she retired from school life and began a whole new phase as a "volunteer extraordinaire."

Charlotte volunteered in a myriad of activities, her favorite of which is working with children. Known for her consummate leadership and fund-raising activities, she has chaired or presided over several charitable organizations. She has co-chaired the "Light One Little Candle Foundation" for 20 years, providing books for the Children's Library at Moores Cancer Center. With the military she was instrumental in helping to develop the Veterans Memorial Center and serves as a trustee.

Honored by many organizations for her accomplishments, Charlotte feels the "joy of giving." She is a hero of citizenship and a patriot who is caring and compassionate.



**Magnolia Project:  
Regina and James  
Gamboa**

For many years Regina and James Gamboa distributed food to South San Diego families in need, sometimes from a garage, but a dream came true when they opened their Magnolia "Store" in Imperial Beach. This unique food pantry allows folks to pick out healthy, often fresh, food. In addition, there is a fully equipped kitchen where they provide cooking lessons to the community. "Our primary emphasis is on healthy nutrition for underserved families," Regina explained.

They wanted a welcoming place which would allow folks of differing ethnicities to find food appropriate to their cultures, and to learn how to use food that is new to them. This project is funded by grants from Aetna, UCSD Medical, and the district attorney's office as well as individual donations and money from the Gamboas themselves. Magnolia continues its practice of providing food, but perhaps more importantly; it nurtures individuals and families with ideas for better nutrition and a healthier future.

## Our Cherished Donors



*We are appreciative of the generosity and are grateful for the support of our many friends and contributors.*

*Kelly Balzer  
Wilma Cadice  
Nancy Campbell  
Paula Day  
Francine Dobbins  
Dorothy Dyck  
Madelyn Fenick  
Brenda Ferich  
Alice Freeh  
Zita Gardner  
Phyllis Graff  
Monica Gutierrez  
Charla Hannon  
Sandy Helmantoler  
Tom Helmantoler  
Roberta Henry  
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Fern Murphy  
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Becky Reid  
Ruth Runge  
Sally Syren  
Virginia Syverson  
Janet Tierney  
Joyce Truett  
Larry Zeiger*

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**FAREWELL,  
DEAR FRIEND**



**MARTHA BRAY**

**NOVEMBER 8, 1921  
APRIL 13, 2023**

**LONG-TIME MEMBER**



## Operation Dress Code

Operation Dress Code is a collaborative program designed to empower women currently serving in the military and those who previously served by providing them with the professional clothing needed to transition to the civilian workforce.

The boutique is the focal point, but Operation Dress Code is about more than a new business jacket or pair of shoes; it's about an experience. It's about creating a safe space where women help women, where our female veterans can recover, recharge and reimagine their post-military lives.

The pop-up boutique is created in ONE day, which means a small army is needed to transition an empty conference center into a beautiful boutique.

Volunteers assist in hanging clothes, unpacking accessories and arranging the room to provide a high-quality shopping experience. Women veterans deserve the best and Operation Dress Code works hard to provide them with the most nurturing, supportive and empowering environment possible.



## Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial Honoring Veterans by Preserving Their Legacy



Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial is one of the most unique Veterans memorials in America which honors Veterans, living and deceased, from the Revolutionary War to the current "Global War on Terror." The walls list more than names; they are made up of black granite plaques featuring the stories, pictures and accomplishments of the brave men and women who have served our country and our allied forces.

Honorees include presidents and twelve Medal of Honor recipients, Generals, celebrity veterans and many other veterans with names of which are not familiar, but who proudly served our country

helping to preserve the freedoms we enjoy as Americans.

Mt. Soledad Association owns and operates the Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial solely through the purchase of plaques, with zero federal funding.

The Association believes that service members should know how grateful their nation is for their sacrifice as well as their service.



## Alyssa Huckleberry

Alyssa Huckleberry is a 5<sup>th</sup> Grade teacher at Willow Grove Elementary in Poway Unified School District in San Diego, CA. She is also the author of eight young adult and children's books. Ms. Huckleberry is a phenomenal teacher in all subjects at the elementary level. However, Ms. Huckleberry truly makes history come *alive* for her students. Through the interactive "Colonial Day" students take on the role of a fictionalized character who might have lived in Williamsburg, Virginia. Throughout the experience, students visit the schoolhouse, ballroom, tavern, and field to learn colonial crafts, participation in a 1700's school, learn colonial dances, play colonial games, and enjoy colonial treats – all leaving a lasting impression on her students.

Ms. Huckleberry recently wrote, "History is often taught through textbooks and the memorization of dates and facts...but memorable, impressionable experiences come when students *experience history*."



## STUDENT ESSAYS

Youth Public Communications  
**Christian Bernabe** –Montgomery High School  
"Being Born Mexican"

Essay Entry  
**Bianca Romero**  
Montgomery High School



## San Diego will send 15 Students to the FFVF Leadership Program!

Due to great “recruiting” by counselors, teachers, and FFVF volunteers, the San Diego Chapter received nearly three times the usual number of applicants for the “Spirit of America” Youth Leadership Conference, April 4-7, 2024 followed by a three-day visit to Washington, D.C. This made selecting the best delegates more difficult than ever. “I think we could have taken every student from one of our schools,” interviewer Sally Syren explained, “They were all excellent. The interview team decided to choose 15 students instead of the recent 10 or 12 who will attend. They will be chaperoned by the dynamic Monica Gutierrez, current teacher and former delegate to the FFVF Conference.

Thanks to interviewers Kelly Balzer, Tom and Sandy Helmantoler, Sally Syren, and Virginia Syverson who carefully chose the final group. It’s a diverse group, representing six schools with interests ranging from athletics, student government, music, and NJROTC. All of course have excellent grades with many involved in community service projects.

### Student Orientation - December 16, 2023



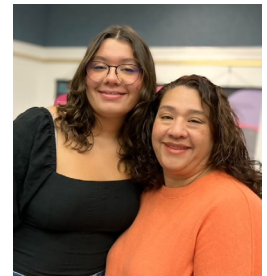
Joshua Kozak and Mom



Alison Hernandez and Family



Ryan Jackson with Mom and Dad



Erika Preciado with Mom



V.P. Youth Virginia Syverson and  
Chaperone Monica Gutierrez



Past President Becky Reid, Virginia Syverson  
and President Joyce Truett

### PLEASE JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Your membership supports our San Diego Chapter’s efforts to honor patriotism and involved citizenship through the education of our youth, recognition of outstanding civic achievements and support of summer programs for teachers.



### Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge - San Diego County Membership Form

Yes! I want to support FFVF! Membership Level: Single - \$35; Couple - \$50; Patron - \$100; Life - \$1000

Yes! I would be happy to make an additional donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to further support the San Diego Chapter goals!

Name and Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Send check written to FFVF San Diego County Chapter to:

Paula Day, Treasurer - 4717 Corte Mariposa, Bonita, CA 91902-1532 or call 619 -475-5020 to pay by credit card.