



Chapter Presidents Zoom Call March 8, 2023 | 2 pm ET

Video Recording of Meeting - <https://youtu.be/SxlwObVxiOo>

Chapters Represented – Dallas, Greater Cincinnati, Mary Ball Washington, Pensacola, Sacramento, San Diego, South Central Montana, Tucson, and Utah

Welcome

Carolyn welcomed everyone on the meeting and thanked all for taking the time to join us for the Zoom call today. She understands everyone has been very busy with tons of events in February and preparing the students for Spirit of America so appreciate your time.

Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge Updates from Headquarters

Ongoing campus projects and programs

The sewer project is still ongoing. We are waiting for a final permit to be approved by the DEP. Once that is completed we will be able to connect and start the process of dismantling the old pump station on campus.

We have several big improvement projects getting ready to start. Our MacArthur building is getting new windows and a fresh coat of paint. The windows have been ordered and should arrive in early May and be installed later that month. The students will not have a new MacArthur, but the teachers will.

We are also getting new lighting on the campus. The lights have been ordered. We currently have 6 foot light posts. The new ones will be 8 foot and will have LED lights. Our campus will be light up like a runway. This is perfect for our participants moving from building to building. This project will start immediately once we get the lights.

Our next project is a generator in MacArthur. We are seeking bids now for a gas generator. This will keep the kitchen operational during a power failure as well as the classroom and several sleeping rooms.

All the improvement projects are thanks to the AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary. The next project they are looking to support is raising funds for new linens in the dorms including sheets, blankets, and comforters.

Recent postcard mailing and social media campaign.

Carolyn asked about a recent mailing that went out to all of our chapters, partners, donors, and really anyone we have a mailing address for on file. The mailing was a postcard with the Bill of Responsibilities in a new updated graphic. Carolyn was looking for everyone's thoughts. Some comments that came back were great size postcard and I have placed my in a prominent place. There were a few who have not gotten their cards to date. This is the first of a series of mailings Freedoms Foundation will be doing with the theme around the Bill of Responsibilities. We are also using that same theme in a social media campaign running this week for "Civic Learning Week". We are running posts with trivia, video clips, and highlighting participants and award recipients. Carolyn sought feedback from those on the call who have seen the posts. Comments included: like the change in the wallpaper for Facebook. The videos are fun. Carolyn suggested everyone look into Facebook to see the posts and check out all we are doing.

Tolar from Mary Ball Washington commented on the QR code that takes you to the donation page, but from there you are not able to return to the main page of the website. Suggested we have a link back to the main page.

Phil from Dallas asked for ideas on getting the younger generation involved. Amy from Montana offered the idea of making the groups more social. Meet in a general area like a restaurant so that others see you meeting and think wow who are they. Do not have meetings in private settings, but public settings. Chrissi from Tucson recommended pairing with another club that has younger people. Emily from Sacramento suggested targeting the parents of the students and inviting them to give back. Sacramento has had success in that area. Amy from Montana mentioned civic or US History teachers in your area for possible members. Tolar from Mary Ball Washington commented that events should be fun. Marty from Utah mentioned having youth board members. Students who were part of board meetings changed the dynamic of the board meetings and taught members things about attracting both students and parents. Utah took the idea from Sacramento. The Utah Chapter gave the student board members tasks like revamping the student application for Spirit of America and creating a good database of past participants.

Education Updates

Spirit of America Update – We had our first Chapter Spirit of America last week with students from Broward, Utah, Valley Forge, and Oklahoma City. This week we have our second Spirit of America with 100 participants with chapters from Utah, Sacramento, Greater Cincinnati, Chase County, San Diego, Valley Forge, and students from Hawaii. This is the largest since the pandemic.

As Spirit of America concludes this week, we have a history encounters program with St. Therese in San Diego coming followed by another group of fifth graders from Paradise Canyon, CA. Its non-stop this spring, but we love it.

Graduate Program Update – Acceptances are going out to teachers. We still have open spaces in all of our seminars, but the traveling workshop is full and there is an extensive wait list. If you know of any interested teachers, please direct them to our website to apply.

Amy from Montana asked those on the call if they do anything before or after the kids attend Spirit of America. Its her first year and looking for ideas. Becky from San Diego talked about their Fly Away Breakfast with the Optimist. They do the breakfast several weeks before departure. When the students return, San Diego has an event with them. Chrissi from Tucson loves the pictures and letters we give chapters from the students in Spirit of America. Tucson shares with donors to make them see the impact their donations have on the students. Carolyn noted to Amy that we give chapters the thank you notes and pictures to share with donors and members. Utah has 2 board members go to the airport to send off the kids. Dallas has a meeting with the kids and parents after they attend to talk about their experience. Mary Ball Washington Chapter does the same thing with the kids after their trip at a luncheon.

Awards Update

Youth Essays – We had an amazing response to the March 1st deadline this year. The number of submissions has quadrupled. The essays are being reviewed now and notices will get out on or before April 15th.

National Awards – The deadline for our awards program is June 1st. We are still accepting youth essays for the June 1st deadline as well. Please seek out great things happening in your community and nominate individuals or organizations today for a National Award.

Participants on the Zoom called discussed different types of honorees and who to look for to be recognized. Marty from Utah asked about when other chapters make their award

presentations. Carolyn commented that most are honored during 2 times of the year – November and February. When the awards programs started, they were presented on George Washington's Birthday. Chrissi from Tucson asked for ideas on who chapters honored. San Diego gives to those serving their country or community. Carolyn commented that it doesn't need to be patriotic or military related, it could be those working to make a social impact. San Diego commented that if one of their nominees does not receive an award from national, they will honor them with a chapter award. Marty from Utah commented that the Utah chapter nominates a school who is doing a Veterans Day Assembly and have been very successful with that approach. Helps the chapter to continue to engage with students and parents. National Awards are a great way to bring awareness and new members to the chapter.

75th Anniversary Planning

Freedoms Foundation is celebrating its 75th Anniversary in 2024. Plans for the celebration are under way including the formation of a committee to discuss ways to honor and celebrate this occasion. Some of the ideas rising to the top of consideration include a Gala celebration in September 2024 in Los Angeles. This will allow all our West Coast chapters and partners the opportunity to attend and get involved. We are also talking about doing a video celebrating our past and looking to the future. We would like to feature the chapters in the video. Please be thinking about things you have that you can share to be part of the video. Another idea moving forward is 7,500 acts of civic virtue or civic responsibility. We would have our chapters, partners, students, teachers all participate by doing something in their community over the course of the year. We would keep track of all the acts and run a tally on our website. You do not need to be a member to be counted/involved. Does not have to be a long-term thing. It could be a one-time event.

Small ideas also in the works included having student while on campus pose for an aerial picture lined up in the shape of 75 and having students plant 75 trees. Timeline is to have formal list of activities and to give people certain tasks in the next couple of months. I encourage everyone to reach out if they have ideas.

We are strongly encouraging all chapters to form their own 75th anniversary committees to plan for special events through the year.

Other News and Notes

Carolyn gave an update on David Harmer's condition. He continues to improve and hopefully will be back on campus in May. He thanks everyone for the well wishes.

Carolyn also asked for pictures and write ups about recent chapter events. There has been a lot of good stuff taking place in the chapters and will be highlighting the activities in an upcoming e-newsletter and on the chapter websites.

Chapter Input – Open Floor

Phil from Dallas asked those in attendance for their suggestions on dealing with airlines. The input from the participants was if you work with American or United and have a group of 10 or more they will allow you to change names once. Southwest Airlines has more flexibility with name changes, but they have a limited flight schedule to most areas.

Carolyn thanked everyone for joining. The discussion amongst participants today has been amazing and what we had hoped this call would always be about. Thank you!

The next Zoom meeting will be on Wednesday, June 14th at 2PM EST.