



Chapter Presidents Zoom Call

April 25, 2024 | 3 pm ET

Chapters Represented – Chase County, Chattanooga, Greater Cincinnati, New Orleans, Pensacola, Sacramento, San Diego, Tucson, and Utah

Special Guests –John Meko, President; David Harmer, National Director; Kira Foley-Tuzman, Executive VP and COO; Larry Brasher, Board Member; Sandy Cook, Board Member

Welcome

Carolyn Santangelo, Sr. Director of Chapter & Partner Relations, welcomed everyone on the call and thanked participants for taking the time to join. Carolyn was excited to see so many new faces. Carolyn did a roll call of chapters in attendance and introduced staff and board members on the call. Carolyn turned over the meeting to John Meko, President, of Founding Forward to give an organizational update.

Updates from Headquarters

John reported he was at our Dallas chapter last week. It was fantastic. It was great to see the chapter in action and he was energized upon his return. He will be in Sacramento next week and Utah in June plus a few others by the end of the year. David Harmer is still the point person for chapters, but John looks forward to many more visits.

News from Valley Forge and Philadelphia is that we are working hard to put together plans to raise money to make what we do much bigger and more impactful. The Valley Forge campus needs millions of dollars of work. To date we have secured eight charter members who have pledged a half million dollars or more. We are working hard to raise funds to be successful in our mission of civic education across the country.

John introduced Kira Foley-Tuzman. Kira is Founding Forward's Executive Vice President and COO. She has been with the organization sixteen plus years. She does all the financial reporting and campus planning. John invited Kira to give an update on campus planning.

Campus Planning Update

Kira told those on the call that we have some great work already happening on campus. We are working on lining up projects for the summer. Teacher programs are happening at Liberty Hill, and this frees up the campus for major work. We are



currently working on checklist items in the dorms, small things that can happen while groups are here. The big work will happen this summer. Work includes new carpets, painting, new roofs on three dorm buildings plus the Martha Washington building, and new windows in Franklin and Hamilton. There will also be the “Disney effect” on the entrances. We will be beautifying the entrance as you turn onto campus and at all building entrances. We will also walk through with our insurance company to make sure all safety concerns are covered in the buildings. Finally, there will be work on the office space to help make it usable for the whole team as we are a growing team. Traffic and recreation planning including major renovations to the Martha Washington Building are part of the strategic planning sessions which will be done in the fall. Overall, we are excited to get to work.

Strategic Plan

John discussed briefly that we are in the process of a strategic plan. We will have a preliminary report in June to present at our board meeting and a full plan to present in September. The plan will be big. It is a national plan to expand our reach. It will take a lot from you and a lot more of you to get it done. We will be seeking your input during the time between June to September. We are not sure how that process will look yet but expect to hear more from us about this soon.

Financial Update

The New Orleans and Pensacola Chapters had questions about making changes to their various bank accounts. They are having difficulties and are seeking answers from other chapters.

Carolyn quickly addressed everyone regarding banking issues. She emphasized that the change that occurred with the merger is not as big as you think. Each national chapter is still considered the same legal entity that you were before the merger. Your EIN is still the same. The only thing changing is the name. Anyone who donates or does business with you is still doing business with the same entity.

Sacramento Chapter mentioned to all that banks are not used to working with non-profits. Sacramento has had success, but banks do not know what they are doing, or they are not experienced in our type of setting. Keep working with them and they will eventually get it. Carolyn asked for others to share stories. Greater Cincinnati did not have any trouble. Greater Cincinnati told the bank that they are Freedoms Foundation doing business as Founding Forward. That phrase worked well for them. The New Orleans Chapter also mentioned that nothing legally is problematic with the changes. You may need to elevate to a higher authority if you are not getting satisfaction.



Carolyn noted that there is a memo available if you need it that lays out the changes and puts into writing that you are still the same legal entity. If you need resources and support headquarters has materials for you.

Founding Forward Swag Items

Carolyn will be mailing to all chapters a set of podium signs with their chapter logo. You can start using these at all your functions. All presidents should have received a small swag bag from us. A reminder to all chapters that Founding Forward general informational brochures are available. We are creating an order form for items such as pocket Constitutions, pins, pens, and tablecloths & runners. This will be available soon to all chapters. Reminder you can find the branding standards on the website under chapter resources. You can also find the Founding Forward Logo and Brandmark (Shield) there as well. If you need your chapter logo let Carolyn know and she will send it to you.

We know several chapters have been encountering issues with getting the correct colors from their printers. Please reach out to Carolyn or Sarah Rasmussen, Director of Communications, and we will be happy to work with your printer to make sure they have what they need, and we will certainly help proof anything.

Carolyn complimented everyone for making the updates on the logo for invitations and other materials.

Education Updates – Spirit of America

We just concluded our spring Spirit of America season. We ran six sessions. Congratulations to all our chapters. In 2024, the chapter sponsored 343* participants. This is a significant increase from the past two years which saw 219 in 2022 and 260 in 2023. Congratulations! Job well done by everyone. We are currently compiling data from surveys and pre and post tests that we will share with all of you. On Wednesday, May 1st I am part of a meeting to discuss the 2024 Spirit of America season. I would like to share chapter feedback in this meeting. If you are able, please send to me your thoughts on this year's programs. We are always looking to improve, and honest feedback is always appreciated.

Chase County Chapter mentioned the changing role of the chaperones to a more active role. Please advise chapters of those new role responsibilities ahead of time.

Greater Cincinnati and Sacramento will debrief with the chaperones and students and report prior to the Wednesday meeting.

Good Citizen Day Recap

On March 20th Founding Forward conducted Good Citizen Day at the Union League with 244 student participants from around the Greater Philadelphia area. This is the first time the former Freedoms Foundation took part in this day long civics



program. Good Citizen Day started in 1946 and is focused on creating leaders of tomorrow to be engaged and responsible citizens. Students participate in a full day of civic education beginning with small group debates on the current issues of the day including gun restrictions, race-based college admission, hate speech and social media censorship. In the afternoon they visit the National Constitution Center, and the day is capped off with an award ceremony and banquet. It was a great experience. Larry Brasher, Founding Forward Board Member was introduced to give his report on Good Citizen Day. He attended this year's event to observe and see how our chapters could learn and benefit from an event like this.

Larry began by mentioning the one-day program Greater Cincinnati annually conducts, the Young Patriots program. Greater Cincinnati Chapter talked about their program which emphasizes the Constitution. It is held at the War Bird Museum and students tour the museum after their presentations in the morning. One big takeaway that Larry believes will benefit all of us is the way students are recruited for Good Citizen Day. The former Legacy Foundation has developed relationships with youth service organizations and these organizations nominate students. Some of the forty-six agencies they work with are the Boy and Girl Scouts, Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, Boys and Girls Club of Philadelphia and various sport associations. Our chapters could look at similar organizations to find students and perhaps secure additional funding for students. We are also looking at how we can create on a smaller scale something like Good Citizen Day in chapters and provide a toolkit to accomplish it.

Graduate Programs

We are running five seminars and two traveling workshops. All programs are at full capacity except for World War I which has fourteen openings remaining and Reconstruction at has eight openings. All others have a waitlist. This is one of our best years for teacher registrations and program numbers.

The New Orleans Chapter asked if the themes are the same each year. Our topics change each year based on current events and teacher suggestions.

Award Updates

Just a reminder the National Awards Deadline is June 1st. You can submit your nominations online. If you are having problems with the online submissions, we do have a paper nomination form that we can send. Submission may be made via email or mail to csantangelo@ffvf.org. Extensions will be granted if needed. Nominations will be reviewed over the summer and notification sent out in late August.

We had a great response to the youth essay March deadline. We had 149 submissions and selected forty-one recipients. Letters will be going out next week



to the recipients followed by certificates and medals to chapters who participated. Remember essays can still be submitted for the June 1st deadline.

Updates from National Director and Meeting Format

David Harmer, National Director, addressed the group. He expressed his thanks to all our chapter members. He knows you are dealing with a lot right now with challenges in the merger, selecting students, and raising funds. We appreciate all you do and are mindful of your sacrifices. None of this would happen without you. David went on to discuss his new role as National Director. John Meko is the President of Founding Forward and Kira Foley-Tuzman is the COO and second in command. John is now doing the work David did and Kira is taking on the role previously held by Jason Raia. Jason is now Chief Learning Officer in charge of all education programs including the ones we have run plus programs like Good Citizen Day and the speaker series. David is primary ambassador for Founding Forward. He is also focusing on thought leadership and fundraising. David will be traveling around to meet with everyone. He has attended several chapter events already in 2024 but would like to visit all chapters this year. If you have an event or opportunity that you think would be appropriate to have David attend, please let Carolyn know so that we can get it on his calendar and make all necessary arrangements.

The interaction on this call has been great. We are looking to increase the cross pollination among chapters. Moving forward we are looking to help chapters in a variety of ways, and we think one way is to facilitate dialogue between the chapters. Starting with our next quarterly meeting the format will be more interactive and a way for chapters to share best practices with one another. We already saw that today and we want to foster more of that interaction. We will designate a topic for each meeting. Next meeting will focus on fundraising best practices. Our Chief Development Officer, Christyn Moran, will join us to help lead the discussion.

Open Floor Q&A

Utah asked about how chapters sponsor individual students. Utah has the students pay a set amount towards their trip and the chapter pays the rest. It is usually \$400 from the students and \$1100 from the chapter. What do others do? Chattanooga has them put down good faith money which is about \$200. Sacramento, Pensacola, Greater Cincinnati, and New Orleans pay 100 percent. Chase County has 80 percent and 40 percent scholarships that also include an extra trip to Washington DC.

Chapters also discussed the extra trips to the beginning or end of the Spirit of America program.



Scheduling of Spirit of America was discussed. We always run Spirit of America in the Spring. We are looking to perhaps start more summer Spirit of America programs. Chapter students are always welcome to participate in non-chapter sponsored Spirit of America programs.

Another chapter concern is recruiting adult members to help and keep the chapter going. Will be a future topic for a meeting.

Carolyn closed the meeting and gave appreciation to the exchange of information already taking place. She will send the newest staff listing with the minutes. Please note that staff information will be updated shortly with new email addresses for all.

Thank you!

Next Meeting Tentatively Scheduled For: Thursday, July 25th at 3pm ET.

*The number given on the call was the 2019 number of 379.

Link to branding guide and logo -

<https://www.freedomsfoundation.org/chapters/chapter-resources/chapter-forms-guides-logos/>