

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF LIBERTY

Building a Free Society,
One Conversation at a Time



2018
ANNUAL REPORT

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2018 was an exciting year for the Center as we continued to develop meaningful and effective in-person and online programs to promote the vigorous and civil exchange of ideas. As a result of support from generous foundations and individuals, we were able to capitalize on the testing we did in 2017 and focus on three new program formats:

Our **Dinner Round Tables** have proven themselves effective forums for deep discussion among community members of diverse backgrounds. Fostering a welcoming space for respectful conversations on challenging issues, the Round Tables have

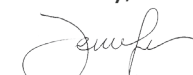
proven immensely popular with our audience.

Virtual Reading Groups have brought participants from across the nation together into a digital forum to discuss texts of political, economic, and cultural interest.

In 2019, we are adding **Ideas at Work**—online sessions that explore the application of principles that advance civility, freedom, and human flourishing. These events will expand our efforts to spark and nurture the type of civil discourse that is essential to the building and maintenance of a free and prosperous society.

As we **expand our programs and reach in 2019**, we invite you to join us in building a free society, one conversation at a time.

Sincerely,



Jennifer K. Thompson
Executive Director



DINNER ROUND TABLES

DOES CIVIL DISCOURSE
MATTER?

Atlanta, Georgia

EDUCATION AND POVERTY

Little Rock, Arkansas

IS ASKING FOR CIVILITY TOO
MUCH?

Muncie, Indiana

PHILANTHROPY IN THE AGE
OF TRUMP

Chicago, Illinois

POVERTY AND INDIVIDUAL
IMPACT

New Orleans, Louisiana

POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

San Francisco, California

REVIVING CIVIL DISCOURSE

Indianapolis, Indiana

TRADE & THE LABOR
MARKET: AN EVENING OF
CONVERSATION

Grand Rapids, Michigan

VIRTUAL READING GROUP

CONFIDENT PLURALISM:
SURVIVING AND THRIVING
THROUGH DEEP DIFFERENCE

Author, John Inazu

OTHER PROGRAMS

ELEVATING CIVIL
DISCOURSE: AN EVENING
OF CONVERSATION

Dallas, Texas

Panel Discussion

ENTREPRENEURSHIP,
PROSPERITY, AND CULTURE

Dana Point, California

Seminar

FREE SPEECH RHODES
ALUMNI ONLINE
DISCUSSION

Washington, DC | Seminar

FREE SPEECH RHODES
ALUMNI ONLINE
DISCUSSION #2

Washington, DC | Seminar

FREE SPEECH RHODES
ALUMNI SOCRATIC SEMINAR

Arlington, Virginia

In-Person Seminar

IMMIGRATION IN
AMERICA: AN EVENING OF
CONVERSATION

Nashville, Tennessee

Panel Discussion

WHAT IS FREE SPEECH
FOR? AN EVENING OF
CONVERSATION

Washington, DC

In-Person Lecture

ABOUT THE CENTER

A Case for Conversation

At the Center for the Study of Liberty, we believe that a peaceful and prosperous society requires not only the free exchange of goods and services, but the free exchange of ideas. With public discourse today too often characterized by hostility, vitriol, and lack of empathy for those with other opinions, the need is greater than ever for vigorous civil discourse around the pressing issues facing our country.

To address this problem, the Center brings together open-minded people of diverse ideological viewpoints to listen, read, question, discuss, and think about topics critical to the future of liberty and our shared quest for human flourishing.

Our events invite participants from all walks of life to listen to and humbly challenge one another in productive ways. Our attendees gain a richer understanding of the important issues affecting their communities and are better equipped with the knowledge and support they need to continue the conversation with their family, friends, and neighbors.

A Case for Support

Your support for the Center for the Study of Liberty in 2019 enables us to not only continue hosting meaningful events, but to engage more individuals in discussions about liberty, plurality, and civility.

Your donations ensure that people of diverse cultural, economic, and ideological backgrounds will join us in building a *free society*, what Nobel Prize-winning economist Friedrich Hayek called

// “...an intellectual adventure,
a deed of courage.”

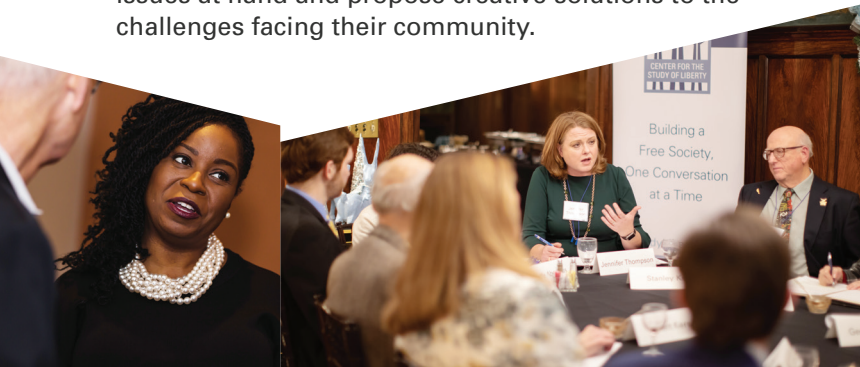


// I appreciate the opportunity to talk about an important and difficult policy issue in a civil manner.”

— STACI, San Francisco

The Center’s 2018 success was assisted immensely by a generous grant from the **John Templeton Foundation**. The Templeton Grant allows us to quickly expand our Dinner Round Table program and will extend into 2019.

With the support of the **Atlas Network**, we offered a unique series of programs focused on the issue of poverty. Through events such as our “Poverty and Education” Dinner Round Table held in Little Rock, we provided a space for business leaders, teachers, and community members to discuss the issues at hand and propose creative solutions to the challenges facing their community.



2018 BY THE NUMBERS



16 EVENTS



251 ATTENDEES

TOTAL SINCE 2016



33 EVENTS



691 ATTENDEES

DINNER ROUND TABLES

Our Dinner Round Tables are salon-style dinners for approximately 15 guests that encourage open-ended, respectful conversation about ideas and their application to real-world issues.

In 2018, the Center partnered with 11 co-hosts to organize 8 dinners across the country. Co-hosts, which included both individuals and organizations, invited guests from their networks while the Center designed the curriculum, selected a faculty moderator, and oversaw event logistics.

Each dinner brought together diverse community members to discuss a topic from different ideological perspectives outlined by a set of brief readings. After the event, the Center provided resources for further learning to allow participants to continue the conversation with friends, colleagues, and neighbors.



“I really enjoyed the thoughtful discussion on these issues and appreciate the effort to bring people of different perspectives.”

— TONYA, San Francisco

“I enjoyed the ‘queue’ format and guidance from the moderator. It created a safe space to talk and an orderly way to contribute to an important conversation.”

— MARLO, Little Rock



VIRTUAL READING GROUPS

The Center's Virtual Reading Groups draw participants from all over the country to discuss authors' ideas in an open online forum.

Committed to preserving the best aspects of a face-to-face discussion, we are careful to keep the group size small and leverage video conference technology to allow for dynamic and participatory conversation.

Our first Virtual Reading Group, launched in December 2018, covered John Inazu's book *Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving Through Deep Difference*. Participants joined four 75-minute sessions to discuss Professor Inazu's analysis of the Constitutional checks and societal aspirations that will allow us to live peacefully together, despite deep differences among individuals and groups.

// The articles provided a wonderful range of opinions and the discussion was one of the best of its kind I've seen."

— BRENDAN, Muncie

// A great combination of people and very good moderating. I'm grateful for the Center's focus on conversation. My thinking has been advanced as a result of the dialogue."

— CHRISTY, Indianapolis

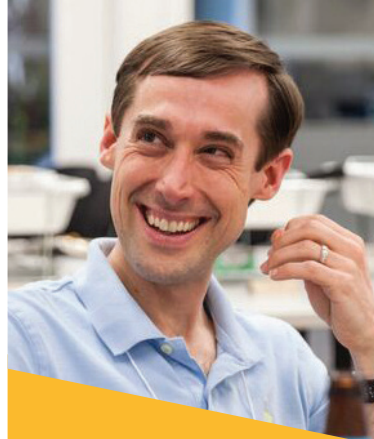
IDEAS AT WORK

Beginning in 2019, the Center will launch Ideas at Work—online events consisting of interviews and “ask me anything” sessions with academics, non-profit leaders, private-sector entrepreneurs, and thinkers from a range of backgrounds.

Designed to introduce the principles of civility and ideas of liberty to an even wider audience, Ideas at Work will also encourage participants to consider the application of these ideas through innovative and community-changing solutions with experts.

THE CENTER ONLINE

The enthusiastic response to the Center’s mission of creating space for civil discussion demands that the Center continue to build and scale our online presence. While reinforcing the core values we discuss in our other programming, expanded online resources will allow us to engage a wider audience. With much of the social media landscape in disarray, an environment where fact-based, intellectually honest, and empathetic dialogue can flourish is a natural extension to the Center’s programs.



“ I believe there is a growing hunger for this type of event.”

— STEVE,
Indianapolis

PARTNERSHIPS

Since our founding in 2015, the Center for the Study of Liberty has partnered with individuals and organizations across the country that share our commitment to civil discourse as a cornerstone of a free society.

These collaborations connect us with networks of people dedicated to practicing civility and discovering the ideas of liberty and human flourishing. In turn, we are able to provide quality programming, educational resources, and issue expertise to our partners' personal and professional circles, sparking important conversations that can change lives and communities.

In early 2018, the Center continued to experiment with several formats for our in-person and online partnership events. Through work with Dr. Daniel Cullen and Rhodes College Alumni, we held a lecture, online discussions of Timothy Garton Ash's book *Free Speech: Ten Principles for a*

Connected World, and a capstone Socratic seminar to engage young professionals in the private and public sectors on the important and timely issue of free speech.

This series prompted us to launch our Virtual Reading Group format, learn more about our audience's interests and scheduling needs, and focus our program types to better foster sustained civil discourse among participants and understand the long-term effects of Center engagement.

“The conversation was thought-provoking and beneficial. I will share this experience with other school officials in hopes of copying this structure. There are a lot of serious conversations we are not having in the schools that we need to have.”

— ANGELA, Little Rock Guest



CENTER LEADERSHIP

Center Staff

JENNIFER K. THOMPSON
Executive Director

JAFFE ABESHAUS
Director of Operations

MIKE CRAIG
Director of Development

BETH ERBER
Director of Programs

LINDSEY GRUDNICKI
Programs Assistant

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President, Chairman,
and Director
President and CEO, Liberty
Fund, Inc.

DOUGLAS J. DEN UYL
Director
Vice President of Education,
Liberty Fund, Inc.

JO KWONG
Director (through
December 2018)
Director of Economic
Opportunity Programs,
Philanthropy Roundtable

STEFANI SMITH
Director (as of
December 2018)
Partner, Tensegrity Law
Group, LLP



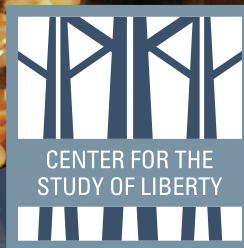
2018 (actual)

■ Program	\$335,480
■ Operations	\$123,435
■ Fundraising	\$201,670
TOTAL	\$660,585

2019 (projected)

■ Program	\$555,000
■ Operations	\$125,000
■ Fundraising	\$175,000
TOTAL	\$855,000

“I came because I feel I rarely get to hear different viewpoints and I keep saying we need more salons where people can discuss.”
— ANNIQUE, Atlanta



OUR MISSION

At the Center for the Study of Liberty, we support the building of a free society by creating spaces for civil conversations among independent thinkers.

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ONLINE DONATIONS AT
StudyLiberty.org

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