



# CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF LIBERTY

Building a Free Society,  
One Conversation at a Time



## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Can you think of a time, in the past year, when you've wanted to discuss a difficult subject—maybe immigration or trade or healthcare—with a friend, colleague, or neighbor and you didn't, either because you lacked confidence in your knowledge of the subject matter or because you were worried it would cause conflict?

If so, you are not alone. The individuals who attend our programs, whether in-person or online, want to talk about these issues and they want to do so in a thoughtful way. They want to apply the ideas from these discussions and improve their own lives and the lives of those around them.

In 2019, we asked our audience how we could do a better job of meeting their needs. We learned that our audience of busy professionals:

- seek sources of trusted information
- welcome new perspectives about the issues that affect their communities
- want content that is more frequently and conveniently available

In 2020, the Center will embark on a major expansion of our efforts. We will launch a podcast, expand our partnerships, and post new online content in order to help our audience gain the confidence to apply the ideas of freedom to their communities' challenges.



I invite you to read through our 2019 annual report and see why the last year has made us so excited about the Center's prospects in 2020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Jennifer".

Jennifer K. Thompson  
Executive Director

## OUR AUDIENCE SAYS:

"The Center is taking content and making it accessible to people from varied backgrounds, without watering it down."



## WE HEARD:

*Intellectual enrichment, content, and confidence about their knowledge of the issues that affect their communities*



## WE WILL:

More curation of articles and media from partners who share our commitment to dialogue and individual freedom

"I wish I had more time. I listen to a lot of podcasts. There has to be a more efficient way of consuming content."



*Opportunities to enjoy the Center's programs on their own schedules*



The Center's new podcast, Ideas At Work. Listen to programs anywhere, anytime

"My experience with the Center gave me confidence and hope that there really are reasonable people out there."



*A safe, open forum where ideas can be shared, debated, and discussed*



Expansion of the Center's expertise in moderating and facilitating discussions to new formats

## OUR PROGRAMS

The Center for the Study of Liberty was founded to engage individuals in the private sector in the “intellectual adventure of building a free society” that Friedrich Hayek described. With more opportunities to have in-depth discussions about ideas and to step back from day-to-day politics, participants gain the inspiration that fuels their efforts to improve their communities. Our programs engender trust, mutual respect, and an appreciation for thoughtful discussion of the ideas that support a free society.

The Center hosts online and in-person events. These events include:

### VIRTUAL READING GROUPS

Videoconference forums for in-depth discussions around books and articles.

### IDEAS AT WORK

Video interviews with interesting people in an “ask-me-anything” style setting.

### DINNER ROUND TABLES

Live events held around the country bringing diverse voices together over a meal.

## 2019 BY THE NUMBERS



17 EVENTS



232 ATTENDEES

## TOTAL SINCE 2016



50 EVENTS



996 ATTENDEES

## Dinner Round Table

RESPONSIBLE GIVING: CHOICES  
IN CHARITY

New York, NY | January 2019

HOW DO WE REBUILD A CIVIL  
SOCIETY?

Phoenix, AZ | February 2019

DOES CIVILITY MATTER?

Indianapolis, IN | March 2019

EDUCATION, POVERTY, AND  
COMMUNITY

Chicago, IL | May 2019

WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE:  
EQUALITY, SOCIETY, AND  
POLICY

New York, NY | June 2019

TRADE AND THE CONSEQUENCES  
FOR AGRICULTURE

Indianapolis, IN | June 2019

COMMUNITY DISCOURSE:  
IS CIVILITY IMPORTANT?

Telluride, CO | June 2019

IS ASKING FOR CIVILITY TOO MUCH?

Carmel, IN | September 2019

## Ideas at Work

PROFESSOR DR. JOHN INAZU

*Author of Confident Pluralism*

February 2019

NAN ALEXANDER DOYAL

*Author of Dig Where You Are*

June 2019

JOHN MOZENA

*Founder and President of the  
Center for Economic Accountability*

July 2019

KATHERINE MANGU WARD

*Editor-In-Chief, Reason*

September 2019

SARAH STEWART HOLLAND AND  
BETH SILVERS

*Hosts of Pantsuit Politics podcast  
and authors of I Think You're  
Wrong (But I'm Listening)*

October 2019

## Virtual Reading Group

DIG WHERE YOU ARE

*Author, Nan Alexander Doyal*

March 2019

CONFIDENT PLURALISM:  
SURVIVING AND THRIVING  
THROUGH DEEP DIFFERENCE

*Author, John Inazu*

April 2019

EXPLORING SOCIALISM IN  
AMERICA

*Moderator, Brandon Turner*

August 2019

## Pop-up Discussion

CAPITALISM IS A BLESSING

*Intelligence<sup>2</sup> Debate*

November 2019

## BRINGING UN-LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE TOGETHER

Imagine two individuals, a progressive and a conservative, with completely different backgrounds and political beliefs, coming together to discuss a difficult current issue...and enjoying it.

That is exactly what happened with Ofelia and Jeremy at our Virtual Reading Group, "Exploring Socialism in America."

Jeremy is a Millennial who considers himself a "confused progressive." He's concerned about the aftermath of the 2008 recession and his economic prospects.

Ofelia's parents left Cuba to escape Castro. Ofelia describes herself as a "moderate Republican," and her family history means she has very strong feelings about the dangers of socialism.

What happened when we brought these two people with such different backgrounds together to discuss this controversial topic?

// I thought we were both super respectful of each other and we enjoyed each other. So much so that after the first session he messaged me and said, 'You better be on the other calls.'

— OFELIA

// Ofelia coming from a communist country . . . having perspectives from people who I literally would never have interacted with face-to-face in my own circles. It was nice and I don't feel like I get enough of that."

— JEREMY



Ofelia and Jeremy didn't always agree. But instead of arguing and attacking each other, Jeremy and Ofelia discovered a lot of common ground. They shared concerns about cronyism; they discussed monopolies in a capitalistic system; and they talked about what role the government should play in the economy.

**Every day, this is the experience the Center creates—meaningful discussions about personal freedom.**

Through the Center's programs two people from very different backgrounds shared a thoughtful discussion about the challenges socialism poses to individual liberty.

// I walked away with more clarity and I felt like the readings were pretty on point in terms of introducing new perspectives."

— JEREMY

// Keep out there and fighting the good fight. Keep asking the questions and keep that dialogue open."

— OFELIA



We live in a time when what used to be taken for granted—open discussion and dialogue—is threatened. Supporting the Center for the Study of Liberty does more than create spaces for civil conversation: your support is rebuilding civil society. Your donation to the Center brings individuals together to discuss ideas about liberty and human flourishing.

The Center is growing a community of people who understand and celebrate the importance of talking about ideas, *one conversation at a time.*

Elvis  
Babila



## GRANTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

2019 saw the Center create or extend partnerships with multiple grant makers, including:

- LIBERTY FUND, INC.
- LILLY ENDOWMENT, INC.
- THE LYNDE AND HARRY BRADLEY FOUNDATION
- PIERRE F. AND ENID GOODRICH FOUNDATION
- RICHARD E. FOX FOUNDATION
- THE SUMNERS FOUNDATION



## CENTER LEADERSHIP

### Center Staff

JENNIFER K. THOMPSON  
Executive Director

JAFFE ABESHAUS  
Director of Operations

MIKE CRAIG  
Director of Development

BETH ERBER  
Director of Outreach

LINDSEY GRUDNICKI  
Content Manager



### Center Board

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JENNIFER D. ZAMBONE  
Director  
Vice President for Operations, Mercatus Center  
at George Mason University

## 2019 (actual)

■ Program	\$472,032
■ Operations	\$ 61,480
■ Fundraising	\$224,105
TOTAL	\$757,617

## 2020 (projected)

■ Program	\$645,654
■ Operations	\$ 79,950
■ Fundraising	\$147,520
TOTAL	\$873,124





11301 N. Meridian Street  
Carmel, Indiana 46032-4564  
[info@studyliberty.org](mailto:info@studyliberty.org)  
317-348-4679

ONLINE DONATIONS  
[StudyLiberty.org](https://StudyLiberty.org)

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## 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.