

CHANGING THE GAME

Forge's Growth



Fall 2023



TOP 5 BLESSINGS OF 2023



Expanding The Farm Team

This summer marked the first time that Forge held not one, but TWO Forge Leadership Summits. Thanks to your generosity as a Forge Champion and the Heritage Innovation Prize, we expanded and doubled our offerings to new students and held a Forge Summit June 12-16 in Nashville, Tennessee.

Training 50% More Students

Double the Summits meant that we were able to train 50% more students than any previous year. Almost 120 students from across the country were accepted to the Forge Leadership Summits in Nashville and Columbus and were trained for a week in conservative principles, practical skills, and the legislative process.



Doubling The Academy

Two Forge Summits and this many students means that for the first time we chose TWO cohorts of standout attendees for the year-long Mentorship Academy. Academy students reunite and learn national policy and international affairs from leaders in Washington D.C. and Israel, are paired with a handpicked mentor who is making the impact they aspire to, and accelerate their careers through professional development and placement into top internships and first jobs.



Thriving Network

When this year's Mentorship Academy cohorts graduate, they will join over 300 Academy graduates who comprise a growing Forge Alumni Network. After September's Alumni Reunion in Boston, we have had 200 alumni engagements this year between attending Forge events, alumni reunions, volunteering, mentoring younger students, and giving financially. The long term impact of Forge is seen in the alumni network collaborating together to comprise farm teams.



Banding Together

Forge Champions came together to celebrate and further the mission of Forge to raise up a pipeline of faithful conservative leaders in politics and culture. We had a fantastic lineup of headliners at our events: Kevin Roberts, President of the Heritage Foundation spoke at a banquet; five Forge alumni comprised a panel highlighting their work surrounding the overturn of Roe v. Wade; and best-selling author and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy headlined the Showcase Reception in July.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

If there is one theme threaded through 2023, it is **growth**.

When we started looking ahead to this year, we knew it would challenge us and put to the test the work we had done to expand Forge and take it on the road.

As a Forge champion, you saw the crucial work that needed to be done and why we needed to mentor more young conservatives. Forge supporters provided record financial support in 2022 and 2023! The Heritage Foundation joined you in recognizing that more young conservatives needed to be introduced to Forge and gave us their largest-ever Innovation Prize Award to help fuel this expansion.

Looking back at the 2023 Summits, I am grateful for:

Expanding our Summits into Tennessee and hosting TWO Summits. This is the launching point for these young leaders and a major milestone in accelerating their careers and growing their networks.

Inducting not one but TWO Forge Mentorship Academies for

2023-2024. These Academy fellows will be connected digitally and reunite in D.C. and Israel (God willing) to expand their knowledge, deepen their faith, build lasting friendships and connections, and be paired with a handpicked mentor.

Doubling the number of applications for the Forge Summits, marking a record-setting year.

Forge's year of growth didn't end with the Summits. We are committed to ensuring that Forge delivers on our mission to accelerate student's careers, deepen their relationship with God, and foster friendships and mentorships that encourage and uplift them.

As our network grows to over 630 alumni, our desire is to connect and invest in our alumni in a way that continues the Forge mission into their life post-graduation. One of the most impactful ways Forge alumni reconnected this year was through our second annual Forge alumni reunion. This year, over 50 alumni gathered in Boston for a weekend of deep conversations, networking, and applying founding principles from the "City On The Hill." In total this year, we have



had 200 alumni engagements, including attending Forge events, alumni reunions, volunteering, mentoring younger students, and giving financially.

As we come to the end of our year of growth and plan for more in 2024, I am so grateful for you, our Forge Champions, who are raising up the next generation of conservative leaders.


ADAM JOSEFCZYK

PRESIDENT & CO-FOUNDER
FORGE LEADERSHIP NETWORK

OUR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Center FOR
Christian
Virtue

Public Policy. Engagement. Education.



ALLIANCE DEFENDING
FREEDOM
FOR FAITH. FOR JUSTICE.



THE BUCKEYE
INSTITUTE



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

CHANGING THE *Games*



What conservatives need today is more baseball.

Not just because baseball is a symbol of national pride and – let's face it – nowhere does a hotdog taste better than in a hard plastic seat overlooking the diamond. We need baseball because America's future conservative leadership could learn lessons from "America's pastime."

100 years ago, America became obsessed with baseball. While the nation was speeding through the Roaring Twenties, a man named Branch Rickey was revolutionizing the way the game is played. You may know Rickey as the visionary who brought the legendary Jackie Robinson to the Dodgers. What few people know is that Rickey invented the "farm team" system that is used as a talent pipeline by all major league teams today.

Major league teams used to bid on specific players from independent minor league teams, a process that proved to be expensive and ineffective. Not only did it prompt costly

bidding wars, more crucially there was no way to guarantee that these minor league teams would produce the kind of talent

"What sets Forge apart is that we not only equip students with the hands-on training that they need to be excellent in their craft, we also introduce them to the leaders who are 10, 20, or 30 years down the road who will mentor them with practical life lessons."

needed by the major leagues.

Rickey had the solution. By purchasing

controlling interest in minor league teams, his team the St. Louis Cardinals not only had their pick of the players, they could also finely mold the players and ensure they were ready for the big leagues. His plan worked; the Cardinals avoided overpaying for players through costly bidding wars and the talent of the recruits went through the roof. By 1939 the team owned 32 minor league teams and played in seven World Series between 1930 and 1946.

The farm team system took over the league and today all 30 major league teams recruit talent directly from their minor league teams.

So, what do conservatives need to learn from baseball? We will never reap what we do not sow. We all want principled, intelligent, and effective leaders in our

Top Left: St. Louis Cardinals in the 1930's

Bottom Left: Branch Rickey and Jackie Robinson when Robinson signed with the Brooklyn Dodgers

Bottom: Branch Rickey



THE FORGE LAUNCHPAD

states and nation. Go to any political science department at any university and you will find plenty of young people who want to make a difference in the nation. Internships in D.C. and state capitals are competitively sought after. We don't suffer from a lack of ambition.

The problem is that many have a knowledge gap that prevents them from getting ahead and those that know how to leverage the system often fall prey to that very system, repeating a cycle of self-serving leadership. Conservatives need a farm team to train, mentor, and launch these young people to be the leaders America needs.

Forge is creating that farm team. Our network of over 630 alumni represent some of the top young talent in America today. Through hands-on training, in-depth mentoring, and career-accelerating networks, we are forging a leadership pipeline for America for years to come.

What sets Forge apart is that we not only equip students with the hands-on training that they need to be excellent in their craft, we also introduce them to the leaders who are 10, 20, or 30 years down the road who will mentor them with practical life lessons.

At the core of all we do is a commitment to character and camaraderie. Whenever we ask our alumni what has been most personally impactful about their experience with Forge, they say it's the relationships they have made with their mentors and fellow alumni.

100 years ago Branch Rickey revolutionized the way the game was played. He saw that what baseball really needed was players who were trained and equipped to take on the challenge of the major leagues.

Today, conservatives need their own farm teams – a network throughout the country of young leaders passionately working in their communities, states, and nation to protect American values and ensure that our best days are still ahead of us. We have built that farm team in our nation's capital and the Midwest, and now in our year of growth we have started to branch out to create a farm team in the Southeast. Our states will reap the reward of this investment for years to come.

Images and historical information courtesy of:

www.wsj.com/articles/book-review-rickey-robinson-by-roger-kahn-1411156628
www.mlb.com/news/1930-world-series-recap
www.invention.si.edu/branch-rickey-baseball-innovator



Forge Leadership Summit

At the Summit, attendees are taught timeless principles, public policy, and practical skills in dynamic workshops while participating in a full simulation of the legislative process.

Forge Mentorship Academy

Designed to supplement full-time studies or employment, the Academy admits standout Summit graduates. Forge facilitates the Academy through digital platforms, mentorships, and trips to D.C. and Israel.



National Policy

As part of the Academy, students spend five days in D.C. to interact with the political process from 360 degrees, meeting with legislators, advocacy groups, cultural leaders, think tank scholars, pastors, and journalists.

International Policy

To gain an understanding of the geopolitical world, Academy students travel internationally. In past years, students have traveled to Israel to interact with the foundations of the Western world.



1-on-1 Mentorship

During the Academy, students are matched with a mentor of strong character and professional achievement. Every match is crafted to ensure student and mentor share vocational interests and aspirations.

Clarified calling, accelerated success

During the Academy, students are exposed to many career paths. Forge leverages an extensive network to connect students with top internships and jobs.



The Network

Our community of over 630 alumni form the foundation of a national network who strategize together, encourage one another, and comprise the future of the conservative movement.

The Forge Impact

630

Students
Trained

320

Students
Mentored

190

Campuses

42

States

"God gave me a voice; Forge has been instrumental in teaching me how to use it."

Savanna Deretich



65

Grads have worked
on Capitol Hill and in
state legislatures

12

Grads have worked on
presidential campaigns

8

Grads serving in
elected office



"Without the policy and hands-on training, the amazing experiences, and incredible friendships I received from Forge Leadership Network, I can confidently say I would have never run for office. If you want to be in conservative politics, the Forge experience is essential."

State Rep. Jena Powell (Ohio)



NASHVILLE

FORGE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



A few Nashville Summit attendees pose with Tennessee Governor Bill Lee following his address to the students.

Music City is famous for launching the careers of some of the most notable names in the music industry.

Hank Williams sang about “this town that’s made of dreams” for good reason -- Nashville is the epicenter of country music’s ethos. But the dreams of those who move to Music City are often crushed in the harsh reality of being drowned out amidst the competition.

The experience of these hopeful stars is not unlike many young conservatives who dream of making our country a better place, only to confront obstacles that seem insurmountable. That’s why Forge is committed to training and equipping these aspiring young leaders and providing them with a pathway to accelerated success.

This summer, Nashville met a new group of young stars who have a different dream: to promote and protect American values.

Over the last nine years, Forge has refined the Forge Summit curriculum and structure and tested its long-term success amongst the alumni. This year it was time to take this hands-on training on the road in a brand new region so that Forge can start building farm teams and talent pipelines in more states throughout the country.

This summer marked the first time that Forge held not one, but TWO Forge Leadership Summits.

Over 50 young conservative leaders attended the Nashville Summit for five days of hands-on training including media training from District Media Group, a campaign simulation with our friends at American Majority, and a full legislative simulation where they wrote their own legislation, took it through committee, and presented it to



At the Summit, attendees hone their media communication skills with workshops from District Media Group

THE ROAD TO NASHVILLE

The process of choosing a location for the first expansion Forge Leadership Summit posed a new challenge for the Forge team.

Finding Good Soil

It wasn't just the southern hospitality, spicy fried chicken, or world-class music that stood out about Nashville. As Forge creates a hub for the Southeast, it was crucial to help find a location that would nurture the Forge mission and directly benefit from a farm team of equipped and capable young conservatives who are ready to serve.

Local Champions

By far one of the most impactful factors in Forge's Nashville Summit was the several deeply invested and passionate Forge champions who went to great efforts to help spread the word, find local support, and provide logistical and practical help as "boots on the ground."

It's the Little Things

Sometimes it all comes down to the fine details. Accessible to the broader Southeast region, Nashville was a central location for many of our attendees, and a large airport hub made for easy travel for those coming from farther away. Nashville serves as an exciting and vibrant backdrop for a week that lives up to its location.

the Forge legislature.

True to its reputation for southern hospitality, Tennessee welcomed Forge warmly. The prospect of planning and executing a Summit away from Forge's home base posed many challenges, all of which were overcome by supporters who championed Forge's presence in the Southeast.

Nowhere was the welcome more resounding than from the Governor's office. Governor Bill Lee spoke to the students about faith and public life, offering an encouraging example of servant leadership.

One student, Bridget M. attended the Forge Summit in Nashville and said, "I had a life changing experience at Forge; I witnessed incredible virtue, received mentorship, learned practical skills, and was challenged as a student, Christian, and servant

"I had a life changing experience at Forge; I witnessed incredible virtue, received mentorship, learned practical skills, and was challenged as a student, Christian, and servant leader."

leader."

What Bridget found at Forge is what many of our supporters, alumni, and students find: hope. "Most importantly, the Summit gave me hope for the future. There ARE ways to love Christ and work in the political sphere, and there are incredible, capable people fighting the good fight. My peers and I hope to carry on the torch!"

Bridget and almost 30 other top attendees from the Nashville Summit have now entered one of two Forge Academy classes this year. These Academy fellows will be connected digitally and reunite in D.C. and Israel (Lord willing) to expand their knowledge, deepen their faith, build lasting friendships and connections, and be paired with a handpicked mentor.

As Forge expands and builds new farm teams throughout different regions in the United States, the presence that exists in the Midwest and now the growing presence in the Southeast will continue to grow, which will strengthen key states year after year.

Forge is so grateful for our champions' partnership to raise up the next generation of faithful conservative leaders together.



**TO SEE MORE FROM THE 2023 SUMMITS SCAN
THE QR CODE TO SEE OUR RECAP VIDEO**

BUILDING THE

The conservative movement will never reap what it does not sow. Through its minor leagues, you can help build the state-by-state

Identify

principled, talented young
conservatives nationwide

Train

leaders at five-day Forge Leadership
Summits in regional hubs every summer



FARM TEAM

ot sow. Just as Major League Baseball cultivates talent
based farm system for the conservative movement.

Mentor

top Summit students who will
travel to D.C. & Israel

Launch

young people's careers through
influential internships and jobs





DOUBLING THE TEAM

In the world of baseball, the farm system is a crucial element of success. It is where young players are nurtured and developed, preparing them for the rigors of major league competition. Similarly, the Forge Leadership Academy is playing a vital role in the conservative movement, providing essential training and mentorship to aspiring young leaders.

Significantly expanding its efforts to cultivate and mentor promising young conservatives, the Forge Leadership Academy has doubled in size for the 2023-2024 Academy year. Instead of the single class of students that has been the norm in previous years, the Academy will now support two concurrent classes, enabling Forge to reach and train a wider pool of talented individuals to create farm teams in more regions.

The Forge Leadership Academy provides participants with a unique blend of intellectual formation, practical skills development, and networking opportunities. Over the course of the year, participants will meet virtually with experts in various fields, work through the Forge Leadership Network's civil society curriculum, and travel to Washington, D.C., for an immersive experience. Additionally,

each participant is paired with a hand-picked mentor who provides guidance and support to help accelerate participants' careers and offer practical wisdom in their chosen field.

The Academy classes began their year together at the Forge Leadership Summits in Nashville and Columbus and the Academies were launched in August.

Jacob Kersey, who currently serves as the Operations Coordinator for Family Research Council Action in Washington, D.C. attended

the Nashville Summit and is now a member of the Nashville Academy. "After attending the Summit in Nashville," Jacob said, "I was impressed by the caliber of Forge attendees, the value of the curriculum taught, and the relevance of the conversations being held." Jacob's experience at the Summit convinced him to join the Academy, "In addition to a desire to remain connected to the spectacular network of Forge alumni, I wanted to continue to grow in knowledge



Jacob Kersey with his winning Campaign-In-A-Day teammates during the 2023 Nashville Forge Leadership Summit



During the Summit, attendees participate in networking opportunities.



Libby Krieder speaking on the House Floor at the Ohio Statehouse during the 2023 Columbus Forge Leadership Summit

and sharpen skills necessary to serve in the Christian conservative movement.”

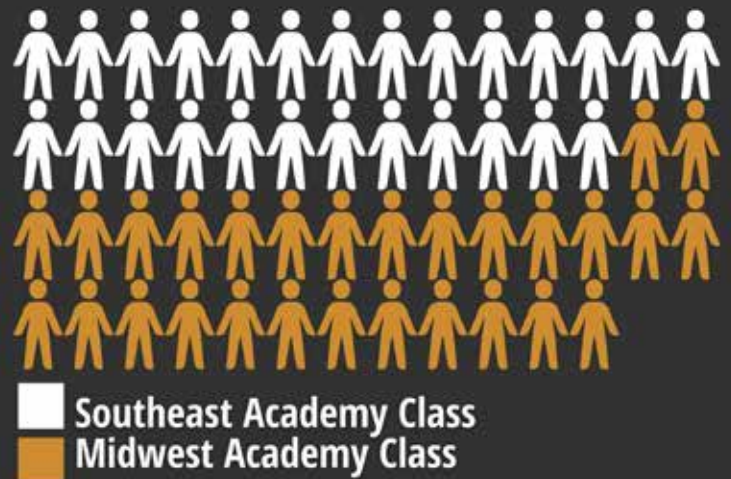
Another Academy Fellow, Libby Krieger, was drawn to the Academy’s emphasis on both philosophical understanding and practical skills. She notes that the Academy has helped her to develop relationships with like-minded individuals across the country and has provided her with the tools to be a more effective “servant of the Kingdom.”

“The Forge Academy reconciles the need for young leaders to grow in not only our philosophical understanding of the issues of our age but also the practical skills — time

“The Forge Academy reconciles the need for young leaders to grow in not only our philosophical understanding of the issues of our age but also the practical skills to make us truly excellent.”

management, networking, etc. —to make us truly excellent,” Libby said. “I look forward to seeing how the program develops me both personally and professionally to make me a more effective servant of the Kingdom.”

The Forge Leadership Academy’s expansion is a testament to the program’s success and the growing need for well-trained and principled conservative leaders. The 2023-2024 Academies will graduate in July and join a network of over 250 Academy graduates who are engaged in significant work across the country and in the nation’s capital.



“There is **nothing** on this earth more to be prized than **true friendship**.”

THOMAS AQUINAS

*Dr. Kevin Roberts,
President of The Heritage
Foundation presents
the Innovation Prize to
Forge President Adam
Josefczyk and Forge Board
Chairman Jonathan
Jakubowski*



HERITAGE INNOVATION PRIZE

Beginning in 2023, Forge received an Innovation Prize from the Heritage Foundation, which includes both a financial grant and organizational support, to expand its programs to new states and double the number of young leaders trained and mentored. Heritage launched the Innovation Prize in 2022 to provide financial support to organizations executing bold ideas and providing innovative solutions to the most pressing issues facing America. Heritage President Kevin Roberts released a statement on Forge being selected for the Innovation Prize:

"The conservative movement can't truly remain on offense without a farm team. We must train young patriots to take up the mantle of freedom and engage with the culture and fight for what's so good in America. I am so excited by the work Forge Leadership Network is doing to identify, prepare, and equip the next generations of conservative leaders, and I look forward to seeing their efforts expand in the years ahead."

"The next generation has to be equipped to fight policy battles in the states and around the country. Forge is doing work that no other organization is doing through the depth of the discipleship and the preparation for young people to take those policy battles to state capitals and around the country to make America a better place."

~Derrick Morgan, Executive Vice President, The Heritage Foundation



To watch Derrick Morgan speak to Forge at the 2023 Nashville Forge Leadership Summit, scan the QR code with the camera on your mobile device.





HIS FAITHFULNESS IS MY QUALIFICATION

Emma Blair
2020-2021 Academy

Unless someone had experienced a religious conversion, I never believed anyone who said they had a life changing experience; then I went to Forge.

My Forge story began in February of 2020 in Washington D.C. with a simple question: If you lived in the late 1780s, would you have been a Federalist or an Anti-Federalist? Little did I know Jonathan Jakubowski, the gentleman asking me this question, was the Forge Board Chairman. My answer must have sufficed because when I finished talking he said he disagreed with me, but I should go to the Forge Leadership Summit.

Although flattered, I was not going to apply

and I thought I had a good list of reasons. At 19, I was young and completely unqualified. Policy was a fun hobby for me, but I knew almost nothing about state politics. Finally, I did not want to pursue the political realm because frankly, I was afraid the glamor of politics would overcome my love for the Lord.

My fear triumphed and although I had completed most of the application, I did not submit it. When I went back to Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona, I had a random conversation with my RA about her Israel trip. My RA was Megan Rodgers who, unbeknownst to me at the time, was a Forge Class of 2019 alumnus who had gone to Israel through Forge the summer prior. Within a month, I heard of Forge twice from two different sides of the country. I believe

God speaks to us and this message was clear: “go to the Forge Leadership Summit.”

I listened and it was life changing. God answered immediately and provided opportunities to continue walking in obedience. His immediate answer came through Adam Josefczyk’s presentation on the seven principles young Christians can learn from William Wilberforce when entering the public square. Even though Adam did not realize it, he was vocalizing all my fears, but countered each with the example of Wilberforce who became a follower of Christ while in Parliament and continued to walk faithfully with the Lord the rest of his 55-year career.

Christians are not only able but are called to engage through our words and our

example advocating for counter cultural policies, loving our enemies -- even our political ones -- living above reproach, and planting our vineyards and building our homes.

The Lord had answered my doubts, but I was still young and unqualified, lacking a practical skill set to navigate this new sphere. The Lord knew this and so did Forge. Friends and mentors through Forge and partnering organizations took the time to invest in me or point me to other opportunities where I was able to work, intern, or volunteer in advocacy, campaigns, development, government relations, outreach, journalism, policy, and research. I tried everything Forge and their partnering organizations provided. Some of them I loved and others I knew were not for me long-term.

Through the Lord continuing to open doors and being faithful to nudge (or push) me through them, only three years later, almost to the date, I am now the Majority Staff Education Policy Advisor in the Arizona State Senate. Arizona is the first state to passed universal education savings accounts and is ranked number one in school choice in the nation.

Once again, I am young and unqualified by resume standards. However, through my experience with Forge, I know I have no need to be afraid because the Lord has gone before me. Forge has not only been life changing, but faith transforming. His command and His instructions are my qualifications.

He desires obedience, not a resume. In His faithfulness, He has provided friends to pray for me, mentors to encourage me, and most importantly constant reminders that it's not about me. I serve a God who changes times and seasons; removes and sets up kings; gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. Soli Deo Gloria.



Emma and members of the 2020-2021 Academy met with newly elected Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson, during Forge D.C.



Emma being sworn in to the Forge legislature during the 2020 Forge Leadership Summit.

SHAPING TOMORROW

FORGE LEADERSHIP NETWORK RECEPTIONS

Spread The Word

At Forge Receptions, you'll meet Forge alumni, hear from Forge staff, and be encouraged in the direction of our nation and the passion Forge alumni bring to our communities, states, and nation. We have designed Forge Receptions to be an evening where friends can celebrate their shared passion for our nation.

Each Forge Reception is planned with the hosts and tailored to their vision for the event. Whether it's a dinner, a dessert reception, or a structured schedule of speakers, Forge Receptions are a great way to spread the word and tell people more about the work Forge is doing to train, equip, and mentor the next generation of conservative leaders in the public square and the marketplace.





Become A Host

Forge Receptions are an opportunity for individuals like you, who are championing the next generation of conservative leaders, to expand the Forge network and introduce your friends to the farm team system that is ensuring America's best days are still ahead.

As a host, you'll have the opportunity to invite your friends and colleagues to a special reception where they can learn

about the incredible work Forge does and how they can be a part of this movement.

To learn more about becoming a host, contact Laura Martin at Laura@ForgeLeadership.org





KNOW SOMEONE WHO SHOULD ATTEND THE

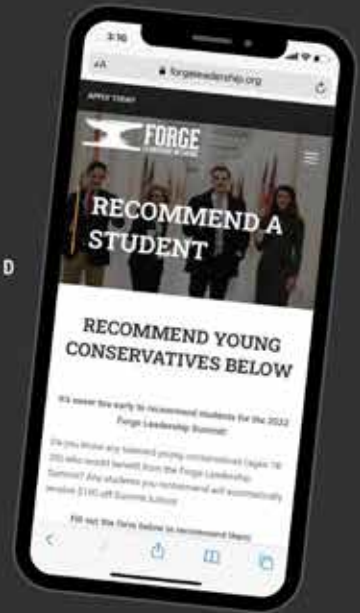
FORGE SUMMIT?

50% OFF

TUITION FOR STUDENTS YOU RECOMMEND

NOMINATE A STUDENT

SCAN BELOW OR VISIT
[FORGELEADERSHIP.ORG/RECOMMEND](https://forgeleadership.org/recommend)



Foster the Next Generation of Conservative Leaders

Forge Leadership Network mentors, trains, and connects young conservatives ages 18-25, equipping them to lead in politics, culture, and business. You can join with an emerging organization that is tackling the need for a long-term, formal way to raise up, steward, and deploy talented, principled young conservatives in the states.

100% INCREASE

The number of students who were very likely to be actively engaged in politics and culture MORE THAN DOUBLED after attending Forge.

NOMINATE STUDENTS HERE
[FORGELEADERSHIP.ORG/NOMINATE](https://forgeleadership.org/nominate)





BOSTON

FORGE ALUMNI REUNION

Two of the greatest experiences of the Academy year are our trips to D.C. and Israel. Those trips are more than just sightseeing — they are the picturesque foundation for the adventures and late night conversations that turn fellow students into life-long friends and colleagues.

It was great to see old friends in a new place. The vision for the second annual Forge Alumni Reunion was to create a weekend where we could facilitate a place to reconnect, make new friendships across Academy years, and foster platoons of alumni who encourage, challenge, and inspire each other in communities across the nation. The Forge Alumni Reunion in Boston was an opportunity for young leaders to continue their education in founding principles and connect with old and new friends.

Why Boston? Boston is where America was born. The cultural and political heart of the early colonies, there is no more fitting place to reconnect than in America's birthplace.

THE CITY ON THE HILL

Forge Alumni had the opportunity to engage in the principles and history of the American founding through a weekend **trip to Boston, Massachusetts Sept. 22 - 24, 2023**. This retreat not only captured the spirit of the America, it strengthened the spirit of comradery among Forge alumni.

“Throughout the weekend, I had a wonderful time connecting and re-connecting with Forge Fellows in a city enveloped in American history. I also loved having meaningful cultural, political, and spiritual conversations inspired by Joseph Backholm’s lectures. It’s all these things that make being a part of the Forge community more than worth it.”

~Dolphin Sharma





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