Ashbrook has had great success over the years through our educational programs for students, teachers, and citizens. Now, I am pleased to announce Ashbrook’s latest initiative, which is our largest undertaking to date. It’s called Rediscovering America. Without a significant gift, we would not have been able to make this possible. This newsletter details our plan to change the way that American history and civics are taught in America’s classrooms by putting an Ashbrook Teacher in every one of the nation’s 35,000 secondary schools. We know that education in our country is failing our young people. It’s not the fault of teachers but in how teachers are trained. Ashbrook hopes to have a tremendous impact in changing how teachers teach, shifting from biased textbooks to using primary source documents that let students engage with the voices of our history. This initiative is bigger than anything Ashbrook has ever done before, and we cannot do this alone. I hope that you will join us in Rediscovering America. Thank you for your continued support of Ashbrook.

Roger L. Beckett, Executive Director

50 Core American Documents Required Reading for Students, Teachers, and Citizens

This collection serves as an introduction to aspects of American thought and history that are deeply interesting – even surprising – and that will entice readers to want to read and learn more. The documents were selected to reveal both sides of the major issues of American history and government and are meant to provide a kind of American political dialogue to readers, an ongoing conversation about the meaning of freedom and self-government.

In addition to reinforcing the value and usefulness of reading original documents, the collection is meant to tell America’s story from the American Founding to the 20th Century. Each document introduces something unique about the American mind and reveals a certain turn of thought about the basic principles of economic, religious, and political liberty. These documents are essential reading for those who are to sustain and administer our republic in the future.

We have distributed over 7,500 copies of this book, both print and e-book versions.

Get the Book
Purchase on Amazon or download for free on iTunes.
The Ashbrook Scholar Program

Ashbrook Scholars are not subjected to shifting academic trends. Reading the actual words of the greatest thinkers, they discover the questions human beings have always faced in political life. Scholars learn to read attentively, listen respectfully, and debate tenaciously. They arrive at a clear understanding of the principles underlying America’s constitutional self-government.

Democracy in America

One of the primary goals of the class, Democracy in America, is for students to sit down with someone else and explain the meaning of the Declaration of Independence, word-for-word. Ashbrook Scholars take this class in the spring semester of their freshman year. Dr. Jeff Sikkenga approaches the great texts just as his students do: “The thinkers we read, the statesmen we study—they are our teachers.”

Class of 2013 Alumni

Danielle Sunnucks and Daniel Mitchell joined Ashbrook’s team in January 2014 as our Foundation Development Coordinator and our Communications Coordinator.

“The Ashbrook Scholar program helped me learn to read carefully, think critically, and write precisely. We studied important things and voices of the past, and nothing prepared me more for a Ph.D. program in political philosophy than being an Ashbrook Scholar.”

Joseph Griffith, who graduated in 2014, earned the James Madison Award as the Outstanding Senior Ashbrook Scholar. He started his Ph.D. at Baylor this fall in political philosophy.

“I was able to apply the critical thinking skills and unique knowledge of our Founding principles which only Ashbrook could provide.”
– Kate Brickner, interned with Ohio Representative Bob Gibbs

“Ashbrook’s foundation on the Founding principles gave me a solid groundwork for my internship with Senator Portman, and it was special for me to have a conversation with a U.S. Senator who holds Ashbrook to a high regard.”
– Mariah Halleck, interned with Senator Rob Portman

“Because of the relationships I’ve made with the professors and staff at Ashbrook, I was able to land the internship of a lifetime. I used skills that I learned in Ashbrook classes to write on current policy issues, and I saw firsthand the value of my education from Ashbrook.”
– Kayla Toth, interned with the Heritage Foundation
What Our Alumni Say About the Ashbrook Scholar Program

“The Ashbrook Scholar program made me fall in love with the American experiment and ignited my commitment to defend it and to do whatever I can with my talents and opportunities to see it flourish.”

– Rebeccah Heinrichs, Graduated 2004

“Ashbrook is creating people who can think for themselves. Unlike other programs out there, Ashbrook’s approach is to equip everyone with the tools they need to be rational people that can function in an effective democracy.”

– Luke Loboda, Graduated 2004

“The Ashbrook Scholar program educates the soul. It makes you take on the habits of a good citizen and I see that in the character, not just the way of thinking, but also the character of Ashbrook Scholars. They don’t fall prey to some of the problematic habits of other people their age.”

– Joe Postell, Graduated 2001

“Ashbrook has given me the confidence to speak out about the principles I adhere to and encouraged me to continue my education by reading thinking, and learning on my own. Thanks to Ashbrook, I have a strong intellectual foundation.”

– Jenna Beadle, Graduated 2012
Ashbrook proposes to change the way American history and civics are taught in America’s classrooms by putting an Ashbrook teacher in every one of the nation’s 35,000 schools.

The Problem:
America is losing its memory. As a nation, we are doing a poor job of teaching students about our history and our unique form of constitutional self-government. We are failing to educate the next generation of informed citizens. The problem is not our teachers, but how our teachers are trained. Teachers spend too much time learning how to teach and not enough time learning what to teach. Without a major change in how teachers are taught, we will raise yet another generation of students who do not understand what it means to be an American.

Why Ashbrook is Positioned to Solve This Problem:
Ashbrook is the only organization in the country that is positioned to take on this critical national challenge. During the past 16 years, more than 7,000 teachers, representing all 50 states, have participated in Ashbrook’s residential and online courses, webinars, professional development programs, and seminars at historic sites. In addition, each month during the last year 30,000 teachers have used educational materials on Ashbrook’s TeachingAmericanHistory.org website.

Ashbrook’s Plan:
Ashbrook’s plan is to change how American history is taught in classrooms, Ashbrook proposes to educate thousands of teachers about how to cut the tie to textbooks and to teach using documents. To accomplish this, Ashbrook will offer teachers a set of six programs that will provide the kind of sustained education necessary to change how American history is taught in classrooms across our country:

• Online Resources on www.TeachingAmericanHistory.org
• One-Day Seminars on American Principles
• Online Webinars on 50 Core American Documents
• Weekend Seminars on American Principles
• Online Master of Arts in American History and Government
• Residential Master of Arts in American History and Government

What is an Ashbrook Teacher?
An Ashbrook Teacher uses primary source documents as an indispensable path to understanding and affirming the principles of freedom and equality essential to being an American. Studying the words of the past breaks through current conceptions and preoccupations, allowing students to understand the past as those who lived it understood it.
Ashbrook Receives $2.5 Million Seed Grant to Expand Teacher Education Programs

Ashbrook has received a $2.5 million seed grant from the Ariel Corporation to expand its teacher education programs. This gift, given over 2 years, will enable Ashbrook to increase our efforts to combat civic illiteracy – the serious national problem created by the failure to educate the next generation about what it means to be an American.

Ashbrook has developed a powerful set of national education programs for American history, government, and civics teachers to address this problem. Ranging from online classroom resources to a full Master of Arts degree, Ashbrook programs provide the kind of sustained education necessary to change how American history is taught in classrooms across our country.

Ariel’s gift will enable Ashbrook to encourage thousands of teachers to end their dependency on textbooks and teach instead with primary source documents. Ashbrook has a great deal of evidence – both quantitative and qualitative – that teaching with documents is highly effective in increasing teacher and student knowledge and appreciation for America’s founding principles.

“At Ashbrook, we are so grateful to the Ariel Corporation for this extraordinary gift – the largest gift in Ashbrook’s history. Thanks to Ariel, Ashbrook is gearing up to help the nation’s 125,000 social studies teachers develop the next generation of informed citizens,” says Roger Beckett, Executive Director of the Ashbrook Center.

Ariel Corporation Founder and member of the Ashbrook Board of Advisors, Jim Buchwald says, “Ashbrook is the only organization in the country with a fully functioning program for educating secondary school teachers in our country’s founding principles. We have a duty to expand that program as our part in the effort to take our country back.”

Ariel Corporation founder Jim Buchwald and Ashbrook Center Executive Director Roger Beckett
Ashbrook Teachers

Most Americans learn what they know about our government in high school. Yet most history and civics teachers were credentialed through education departments, learned little about America, and rely on slanted textbook interpretations. We introduce teachers to the speeches, letters, and essays written by statesmen who shaped our country. Ashbrook teachers take these original documents back to their classrooms, where their students gain an unfiltered view of our past.

2014 Master in American History and Government

Ashbrook welcomed 120 teachers from 31 states to the campus of Ashland University in Ashland, Ohio, for the 10th annual summer session of Ashbrook’s Master’s program. Thirteen courses were offered, including Democracy in America, The American Founding, Sectionalism and the Civil War, and The Progressive Era. High school teachers participating in Ashbrook’s nationally recognized Master’s program study with some of the best faculty in the country in a vibrant learning community. In addition to these residential classes, 82 teachers participated in Ashbrook’s ten online courses throughout summer.

Voices of Ashbrook Teachers: Why Ashbrook?

“Because of Ashbrook, I now include far more primary sources for analysis in my classroom and I am able to provide a more comprehensive context to the era presented in my classes. Also, far more importantly, the enthusiasm that each course ignited in me became contagious to the students.”

– Trish Everett

“I chose Ashbrook because I wanted a real degree that challenged me and allowed me to grow as a teacher. After spending the summer with Ashbrook, I came home and completely reformed my A.P. U.S. History class, incorporating more primary source documents into my lesson plans. Spending time discussing history with scholars and fellow teachers deepened my content knowledge and inspired me to be a better teacher.”

– Amy Parker

“The Ashbrook program at Ashland University has been the best thing that has happened to me in my more than 30 years in the classroom. The courses I have taken have dramatically improved my knowledge of American history and government. The professors have been fantastic: knowledgeable, approachable, and friendly. The other teachers I now know have created a nationwide network of incredible colleagues.”

– Mark Matthews

“Through the in-depth study of primary source documents in Ashbrook’s MAHG classes, I have developed a better understanding of how to use these same documents in my own classroom. Also, as a teacher, I appreciate the fact that Ashbrook provides wonderful free resources to teachers through the TeachingAmericanHistory.org website. It is my first go-to source for finding primary documents to incorporate into my curriculum.”

– Alicia Ferguson
Citizens

The young are our future leaders. Each gift you make to our Scholars’ undergraduate education is multiplied in future acts of principled leadership. When you support our teacher programs, you help educators understand the principles on which our nation was founded. These teachers pass their understanding of our constitutional republic to hundreds of students, multiplying your gift many times.

An Evening with Lynne Cheney


We were fortunate to celebrate Constitution Day with Mrs. Cheney at this special dinner event.

Dr. Ben Carson speaks at Ashbrook Memorial Dinner

Pediatric neurosurgeon and *New York Times* bestselling author Dr. Ben Carson spoke at the 29th annual John M. Ashbrook Memorial Dinner on Thursday, August 21. Over 700 guests attended the dinner, making it one of the best-attended dinners in Ashbrook’s history.

In his speech “One Nation: What We Can All Do to Save America’s Future,” Carson spoke about the importance of education for our country’s young people. In addition, Carson repeatedly stressed the importance of citizens using their personal “spheres of influence” to affect real improvements in the United States. “The vast majority of Americans have common sense, values, and principles,” Dr. Carson said as he encouraged the audience. However, he was quick to articulate what he suspected many in the audience were thinking, saying that “the people with common sense have been beaten down, and they’re afraid to express themselves.”

Most importantly, the Memorial Dinner raised over $200,000 for the Ashbrook Scholar program—Ashbrook’s flagship program for the education of undergraduate students.

Planned Giving

Through a planned gift, you can increase the eventual impact of your donation. We are available to guide you through a variety of options and help you choose the plan that best suits your desire to further support Ashbrook. Please contact Sally Rhoades at srhoades@ashbrook.org or by phone at (877) 289-5411.
National Review editor and columnist Jonah Goldberg spoke to over 100 guests at the Cleveland Marriott East on June 24, 2014. This event was co-sponsored by the Ashbrook Center, The Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions, and the National Review Institute. Goldberg’s talk entitled “The Eternal Struggle: Why America’s Conflict of Visions Isn’t Going Away,” commented on the present day conditions in America, described the war on capitalism, and encouraged conservatives to never give up. His advice was to: “Be happy warriors. Enjoy yourself. You’re only on the good side of the only really important fight that there is...do what you can when you can, and you live and you persuade people by example the rest of the time. This will preserve the fundamental American principles!”