Our Mission

The Ashbrook Center seeks to restore and strengthen the capacities of the American people for constitutional self-government. Ashbrook teaches students and teachers across our country what America is and what she represents in the long history of the world. Ashbrook creates informed patriots.
A Message from the Chairman and Executive Director

Dear Friends,

This past year marked the 230th anniversary of our nation’s Constitutional Convention, where a few dozen men — farmers, doctors, merchants, lawyers, and soldiers — came together to consider, debate, and ultimately create a government. During the Convention, Benjamin Franklin was captivated by an image of the sun that was painted on the back of George Washington’s chair, wondering whether it was rising or setting. On the last day of the Convention, as they completed their work, he confidently stated, “I have the happiness to know, that it is a rising and not a setting sun.”

Franklin’s judgment proved right, as our nation has risen to become a symbol of freedom for the world. But you know as well as we do that American freedom is not guaranteed. Preserving freedom, and keeping the Founders’ hope alive, requires that every generation learn the rights and duties of citizenship.

By supporting Ashbrook, you are helping to raise a generation of young people who understand why they ought to love and respect their country.

2017 was a difficult year for our nation and the preservation of its story. All over the country, we saw the tearing down of historical statues and landmarks and the renaming of public buildings and schools in an effort to erase parts of our nation’s history.

And yet, here at Ashbrook, we continued to make progress in promoting and teaching our nation’s founding principles:

- We reached more than 3,100 American history and government teachers through Rediscovering America, swelling the ranks of Ashbrook teachers to over 17,000. That’s enough teachers to shape the hearts and minds of millions of students!
- We launched the Core Documents Curriculum project to supplement or replace textbooks in classrooms with the primary documents of our history.
- We prepared 173 principled leaders to take leading roles in our country’s civic life, through the Ashbrook Scholar Program and the Ashbrook Academy.

As you read this annual report about our shared accomplishments, we are confident that you will be filled with hope. America remains a rising sun. Thank you for your generous support and for helping to secure America’s legacy of freedom and opportunity for the next generation.

Sincerely,

Roger L. Beckett
Executive Director

Marvin J. Krinsky
Chairman of the Board
Creating Principled Leaders

The Ashbrook Scholar Program

Today’s young people are not acquainted with great statesmen like Washington, Jefferson, and Madison. They are often misinformed and led to believe that our nation’s Founding Fathers and their ideas are irrelevant to our world today. What kind of Americans will these young people become if they do not know the sacrifices of the men who pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor for the sake of our young nation?

The Ashbrook Scholar Program fights this trend. Ashbrook Scholars study our nation’s rich history by getting acquainted with the men and women who made and preserved America. They study the words and deeds of great statesmen and get to know them on their own terms. Ashbrook Scholars learn not only about America but why it is worthy of their last full measure of devotion.

In 2017, 27 students graduated from the Program with a deep understanding of America’s founding principles, eager to fulfill their duties as American citizens.

Ashbrook Scholar alumni have gone on to take leading roles in local, state, and federal government, law, education, business, and the military — each with the intellectual and moral virtues required to help steer our nation back on course.

“At Ashbrook our son truly learned what it means to be able to say with pride and understanding, ‘I am an American.’ The Ashbrook Center sends forth students who positively affect their families, workplaces, and hometowns with the importance of preserving this great country of ours.”

— Rose D’Andrea, Mother of an Ashbrook Scholar

Former Ashbrook Scholar Visits Ashbrook

Rebeccah Heinrichs, Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute and a 2004 graduate of the Ashbrook Scholar Program, is a prime example of an Ashbrook Scholar who is using her undergraduate education to make a big difference for our country. Rebeccah is a national security expert who has testified before Congress multiple times and whose work has appeared in major outlets including The Wall Street Journal, Fox News, The Washington Times, Politico, and The Hill.

“I had a tremendous amount of support from the Ashbrook Center. I could not have done it without them. They really helped put me in the place where I am today as a national security consultant who advises on strategic policy, nuclear deterrence, and missile defense. All of it began with the Ashbrook Scholar Program and an internship they arranged for me.”

— Rebeccah Heinrichs, Senior Fellow at Hudson Institute

Ashbrook Alumna and national security expert Rebeccah Heinrichs returned to campus in February to share her experiences and knowledge with current Ashbrook Scholars.
Introducing a New Major: Political Economy

Because of the generous support of Ashbrook donors and the Thomas W. Smith Foundation, the Ashbrook Scholar Program has added an option for students to major or minor in Political Economy. Students of Political Economy study the relationship between politics and the economy by reading classic works such as Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*.

Program Director Brianne Wolf commented on the modern relevance of this study: “When we think about economic and political life as the classical economists of the Eighteenth Century did, we become more hopeful about the future. We often hear that the high-tech revolution is rendering traditional jobs obsolete. But human beings are endlessly innovative.”

“Int high school, history was just facts and dates. With Ashbrook, historical figures come to life as we read their own words and learn what made them great and worthy of our study.”

— Matthew R., Class of 2019

“Ashbrook has prepared me well for life after college. At many places, the primary emphasis is simply on earning a degree. At Ashbrook, you learn to master the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and thinking — skills that will be useful to me in any job for the rest of my life.”

— Halle H., Class of 2018, Recipient of D. Louise and Edward S. Young Endowed Scholarship

Honoring an American Hero

We are grateful to Frank and Jane Griffith for endowing the Lieutenant Colonel Joseph K. Griffith Scholarship. The Scholarship honors Frank’s father who enlisted in the merchant marines at age 16 and served in three wars overseas — World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. During his 26 years of service, Lt. Col. Griffith was awarded a Silver Star, three Bronze Stars, and the Air Medal for 120 combat fights over enemy territory. Before his death in 1998, he encouraged his grandchildren to “be proud of being, and be thankful that you were born, an American.” And he told them “to keep your freedom, you’ll have to preserve it; it’s up to you.” Two of his grandsons, Joseph (’14) and Daniel (’17), are graduates of the Ashbrook Scholar Program.

Caleb Boyer, a junior studying Political Science and History, is the current recipient of the Griffith Scholarship. Caleb said, “I’m grateful to the Griffith family for their support. I hope that my education will help me play a role in preserving the freedom that men like Lt. Col. Griffith fought to defend.”
Creating Principled Leaders

The Hilda E. Bretzlaff Ashbrook Academy

Thanks to the generosity of The Hilda E. Bretzlaff Foundation, 48 high school students from 18 different states participated in The Hilda E. Bretzlaff Ashbrook Academy on the Founding, Development, and Future of American Self-Government in June. This weeklong program invites rising high school juniors and seniors to consider the American experiment as a historical triumph that demands serious study.

Led by faculty from Ashland University’s Department of History and Political Science, participants are immersed in deep study of the biggest challenges that have faced our Republic. Many of the young participants have never learned about America by studying primary source documents. They find that approach, while challenging at first, to be refreshing and eye-opening.

In 2017, 48 students from 18 states participated in Ashbrook Academy

Since starting the Ashbrook Academy in 2015, 15 participants have gone on to become Ashbrook Scholars

“This is what the Founders wanted, and more programs like this would make the world a better place.”
— Mikayla C., 2017 Participant

“My high school history classes make me sick because the portrayal in the textbooks is so negative. But coming here and being educated with these documents and these professors and learning in this way makes me proud to be an American.”
— Kensey M., 2015 Participant, Current Ashbrook Scholar

“You have no idea what this has come to mean to me; I have taken a part — the heart of this place and its people — with me, and I’m going to incorporate it into all that I do.”
— Christabel H., 2017 Participant

Academy students participate in a discussion on the Declaration of Independence. All Academy discussions are student driven, guided by the expertise of Ashbrook faculty.

Academy student Oliver D. leads a class discussion.
Professor Chris Burkett responds to an Ashbrook Academy student’s question about the concept of freedom.

Ashbrook Scholar Rachael W. makes a point about Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address to Professor Jeff Sikkenga.

Ashbrook Scholar Nicholas B. asks Fox News host Tucker Carlson a question about today’s political climate.
Helping Teachers Rediscover America

Rediscovering America is helping the nation’s 125,000 middle and high school American history, government, and civics teachers to deepen their understanding of and appreciation for the subject they teach. It also encourages them to replace textbooks in their classrooms with primary source documents.

Thousands of teachers from every state have participated in these substantive on-site and online educational programs ranging from weekend colloquia at historic sites to webinars to graduate courses.

Teachers who participate in Rediscovering America programs develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for their country and return to their classrooms with the passion to teach our children and grandchildren to be patriotic, dutiful American citizens.

Master of Arts in American History and Government (MAHG)

The Master of Arts in American History and Government (MAHG) program is the only graduate program of its kind in the country. Designed for secondary school teachers, the program offers the most comprehensive and challenging education available to America’s history and government teachers.

This year 57 teachers from 23 states graduated from the MAHG program. These teachers have gone back to their classrooms with renewed confidence. No longer reliant on textbooks, they have conversations with their students about the beautiful story of America as it is told in the primary documents of our history.

“Freedom is America’s greatest blessing. Its preservation requires all of our citizens to understand and cherish it. To achieve this I am proud to support the Ashbrook Center’s mission to encourage our frontline teachers as they educate our future freedom supporters.”

— Dr. Pearl Compaan, Benjamin Franklin Legacy Society Member

Dr. Compaan’s annual gift and estate commitment fund an annual fellowship for teachers participating in the MAHG program.

“I am an immeasurably better teacher and citizen as a result of the MAHG program.”

— Amy P., 2016 Master of Arts in American History and Government Graduate

“This program is the single greatest thing I’ve done to improve my teaching. I feel much more comfortable challenging my students to get deeper into the content because of the confidence I now have in my own knowledge.”

— Charles M., 2013 Master of Arts in American History and Government Graduate

Over 175 Rediscovering America programs in 2017!

In 2017, Rediscovering America expanded into Texas, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania. In 2018, we will expand into Oklahoma and Indiana.

Fall 2017 enrollment up 5% — a new semester record!

Summer 2017 enrollment up 9%

Weeklong MAHG courses are offered on campus every June and July, allowing full-time teachers to fully immerse themselves in study.

MAHG attracts teachers from across the country, including these two teachers from Utah and Wisconsin.
One-Day Seminars
Rediscovering America

One-day seminars cultivate teachers’ knowledge through in-depth study of a particular person or theme in American history. In 2017, we hosted 66 seminars on topics ranging from Benjamin Franklin to the Cold War.

In conversations guided by distinguished scholars, teachers carefully consider and thoughtfully debate with their peers about questions of ultimate significance to freedom’s survival — What is the proper role of government? What are the rights and duties of American citizens? Teachers leave our seminars well prepared to engage their students and help them learn why they ought to love their country.

66 one-day seminars in 10 states!

More than 1,200 teachers participated.

Liberty Fund Weekend Colloquia at Historic Sites
Teachers participating in weekend colloquia immerse themselves in American history at a historic site. Thanks to the generous support of the Liberty Fund, we co-sponsored seven weekend colloquia in 2017. Programs were held at Monticello, Independence Hall, and the Lincoln Home, to name a few. Teachers at these colloquia benefit from tours of the sites and seminars on the men and women and the ideas connected with them.

One teacher who attended a weekend colloquium at Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage had this to say,

“To have a time set aside for scholarly discussion of primary source documents is very important to reconnecting with why we love history and why we want students to love history, too. I have taught about Andrew Jackson for 16 years, but I honestly did not understand the importance of the era and the man. My teaching will forever be changed.”

Professor Dennis Boman leads a seminar on Westward Expansion at Alta High School in Utah.

116 teachers participated reaching over 14,500 students

Our most popular program! In 2017, there were 7 times as many applicants as available spots.

“One always loved my teachers and appreciated all they did for me. Likewise, I love my country and appreciate all the good things America has offered me. This gift is my way of saying, ‘Thank you,’ to my teachers and to my beloved country.”

— Norma Zimdahl
Director’s Club Member

“Norma’s recent gift to fund one-day seminars is helping Arizona teachers educate the next generation about what it means to be an American.

“I have attended several seminars, and I always find them beneficial. This is the very reason I willingly make a drive of four hours, one way, to attend. I have driven as many as six hours in the past. A Saturday well spent.”

— Steven R., Teacher in Wilmington, NC

“This experiences are invaluable to my continuing success as a teacher. I become a better teacher with each seminar as I learn new techniques, find new resources, and gain much greater knowledge of our shared history.”

— Jessica H., Teacher in Washington, DC

Teachers gather at George Washington University’s Mount Vernon campus for a weekend colloquium titled “Religious Freedom in America: Historical Sources and Contemporary Issues.”
Core Documents Curriculum

There is no better way to learn the story of America than by studying the words and deeds of men like Washington, Lincoln, and Frederick Douglass. While textbooks offer an interpretation, original historical documents put students into direct contact with the facts, and with the ideas, opinions, and emotions of the Americans who struggled to build and preserve our country.

In 2017, we published the first two collections of the Core Documents Curriculum: The American Founding and The Great Depression and the New Deal. The curriculum, made up of 35 document volumes, will cover the full range of topics in American history and government taught by teachers. Each volume will contain key documents selected by an expert and reviewed by an editorial board.

Already we are hearing great feedback from teachers who have begun using the volumes. When students begin learning from the primary documents of our history, their test scores improve and they develop a newfound love and respect for their country. As one Ashbrook teacher put it, “reading primary documents allows students to ask questions of themselves, ask questions of each other, and ultimately ask questions of history.”

In 2018 we are eager to continue our work on the Core Documents Curriculum and aim to complete nine more volumes. The volumes will become indispensable resources for teachers to supplement and ultimately replace their textbooks. When complete, the curriculum will be comprehensive and authoritative because it will present America’s story in the words of those who wrote it.

35 Document Volumes on topics such as:

• The American Founding
• Ratification of the Constitution
• Cold War America
• The First Amendment – Religious Liberty
• The American Presidency and Executive Power
• Political Economy

“Over the past couple of decades, much of history education has been neglected or altered in many schools in the United States. It appears we now have a hunger for constitutional teaching and governing in our country. Ashbrook is a fine source for those who need help.”

— Leone Sutherland, Director’s Club Member

“If one is to truly learn history, they must study it through the eyes of those who made it!”

— Sean B., Government Teacher

in Cleveland, OH

“Ashbrook has given us a wealth of resources to be able to go through and find primary resources. Along with this, Ashbrook gives us the ability to understand documents so that we can pass that understanding on to our students.”

— Jan N., 2013 Master of Arts in American History and Government Graduate
TeachingAmericanHistory.org

TeachingAmericanHistory.org provides teachers with access to an online library of over 2,500 primary historical documents. The collection of speeches, letters, and articles are among the best available resources on a given subject in history or government. Teachers can also access document-based lesson plans for use in their classrooms and listen to archived webinars.

In 2018, TeachingAmericanHistory.org will undergo a redesign, making the primary documents of our history even more accessible for teachers. As part of this redesign, the Core Documents Curriculum will be made available online as they are completed.

TeachingAmericanHistory.org Podcast

In 2015, Ashbrook launched the TeachingAmericanHistory.org Podcast, which enables teachers to access past webinars through the convenience of their mobile devices. Many teachers have found this helpful to refresh their knowledge prior to engaging their students on topics they have not studied lately. Some teachers even require students to listen to the podcasts themselves.

113 podcast episodes are available, and two or more new episodes are added each month. From July 2015 through December 2017, 17,458 episodes have been downloaded.

In the last half of 2017, a marketing initiative resulted in 8,919 additional downloads, a 380% increase over the previous six months!

Webinars

In 2017, 1,456 teachers participated in 20 document-based webinars. Each webinar is moderated by a panel of distinguished scholars for a live audience of teachers. The webinars explore particular themes or significant documents in American history. All programs are archived and available online at tah.org/webinars.

In Memoriam:
A Tribute to Bill Harris (1934 – 2017)

America lost a fine man and a great defender of liberty last year. Bill Harris was the President of the Ohio Senate from 2005–2010. He served his country in Korea and Vietnam, first as a machine gunner and later as an intelligence officer. Aside from his political and military accomplishments, Senator Harris was also a capable entrepreneur who established one of the largest automobile dealerships in northern Ohio.

Senator Harris served on the Ashbrook Board from 1997–2015. Ashbrook has been blessed by his contributions and service over the years. Senator Harris was a true patriot and proof that the American dream exists. He will be sorely missed.

More than 60,000 users — many of them social studies teachers — utilize resources once or more a month on TeachingAmericanHistory.org.
Rediscovering America Weekend Held at Mount Vernon

The Inaugural Rediscovering America Weekend took place October 20–22 in Old Town Alexandria. This exclusive event for Director’s Club members featured a tour of George Washington’s Mount Vernon Estate, as well as a behind-the-scenes tour of the Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington. Director’s Club members were given special access to the vault containing original papers and notes penned by our nation’s first president. Ashbrook faculty members Chris Burkett and Jeff Sikkenga facilitated a conversation focused on Washington’s statesmanship and political principles.

To recognize and honor the generosity of our Director’s Club members, we plan to host an annual Rediscovering America Weekend at a historic site. For information about the Director’s Club, please contact Stacey Cadman at scadman@ashbrook.org or (419) 207-4912.

John M. Ashbrook Award

The 2017 John M. Ashbrook Award was presented to Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska. Senator Sasse is a champion of limited constitutional government and fully dedicated to Ashbrook’s mission of strengthening the capacities of the American people for self-government.
Refining and Enlarging the Public View

Ashbrook in the News

2017 was a busy year for Ashbrook communications as we raised our national presence and recruited new supporters to the cause of freedom.

Ashbrook’s op-eds and quizzes appeared in 35 of the top 100 daily newspapers, including:

- USA Today
- FOX News
- Newsweek
- YAHOO!

Senior Fellow Gordon Lloyd’s lecture, “The Lost Art of Compromise,” and Acting Assistant Attorney General Chad Readler’s address at Ashbrook, “Justice and the Constitution,” both aired on C-SPAN in honor of Constitution Day, September 17.

Ashbrook Civics Quizzes were published nearly 500 times, averaging 56 publications a month. That’s 33% more than in 2016!

4 opinion-editorials appeared in 52 publications.

Ashbrook received coverage in 48 states that’s 5 more than 2016 and only 2 away from total nationwide coverage.

2017 John M. Ashbrook Memorial Dinner

Tucker Carlson, host of Fox News program Tucker Carlson Tonight, spoke about “Today’s Political Landscape” at the 32nd Annual John M. Ashbrook Memorial Dinner on June 3.

Tucker Carlson engaging the audience during Q&A with Ashbrook Executive Director Roger Beckett.
Ashbrook Events
Ashbrook hosts events throughout the year to engage leading political and intellectual figures on matters of public concern. We hosted 14 events in 2017.

Colloquia

**January 27, 2017**
“What is America’s Role in the World?”  
Rebeccah Heinrichs, Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute

**February 10, 2017**
“Political Economy and the Free & Virtuous Society”  
Rev. Robert Sirico, President of Acton Institute

**April 7, 2017**
“Political Economy”  
Kevin D. Williamson, Roving Correspondent at National Review

**October 27, 2017**
“One Compromise”  
Eva T. Brann, longest-serving tutor (professor) at St. John’s College, Annapolis

**November 17, 2017**
“Is President Trump the ‘Coarse’ Correction America Needs?”  
Ken Masugi, Senior Fellow at the Claremont Institute

**December 1, 2017**
“Rugged Individualism: Dead or Alive?”  
David Davenport, Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford

Major Issues Lecture Series

**April 20, 2017**
“How Brexit Can Benefit Everybody”  
Daniel Hannan, Member of European Parliament and Senior member of the Brexit Campaign

**September 15, 2017**
“Justice and the Constitution”  
Chad Readler, Acting Assistant Attorney General

**October 17, 2017**
“Higher Education: Higher than What?”  
Mitch Daniels, Jr., President of Purdue University

Special Events

**February 17, 2017**
The Villages, Florida  
“We Hold These Truths: Principles from the American Founding”  
Jeffrey Sikkenga, Professor of Political Science at Ashland University

**October 20 – 22, 2017**  
Alexandria, VA  
Rediscovering America Weekend

**November 3, 2017**  
Mansfield, OH  
2nd Peter W. Schramm Memorial Lecture “Andrew Jackson and the Miracle of New Orleans”  
Brian Kilmeade, Co-Host of Fox & Friends
Ashbrook board member and longtime supporter Jim Buchwald with Tucker Carlson at the 32nd Annual Ashbrook Memorial Dinner.


Mitch Daniels, president of Purdue University and former Governor of Indiana, discusses higher education with Ashbrook Scholars.
2017 Financial Report

Revenue

- **Major Gifts**: $2,931,638
- **Foundations**: $1,443,207
- **Tuition & Fees**: $1,029,726
- **Event Sponsorships & Tickets**: $320,689
- **Direct Mail**: $297,139
- **Other**: $70,489

Total Revenue: $6,092,888

Expenses

- **Teacher Education Programs**: $2,361,998
- **Student Education Programs**: $567,904
- **Public Education & Events**: $561,257
- **Communications Outreach**: $547,921
- **Development**: $435,898
- **Administration**: $199,513

Total Expenses: $4,674,491
Ashbrook Center Staff and Faculty

Staff

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Executive Director
Melanie Briner
Development
Administrative Assistant
Ali Brosky
Teacher Programs and
Special Projects Coordinator
Stacey Cadman
Director’s Club Manager
Carrie Clever
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David Davenport
Counselor to Executive Director,
Visiting Fellow
Jeremy Gypton
Teacher Program Manager
Tim Haglund
Donor Relations Manager
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Sarah Morgan Smith
Fellow, General Editor of Core
Documents Collections
David Tucker
Senior Fellow, Director
of Faculty
Ellen Tucker
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Co-Director, Ashbrook Scholar
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Professor of Political Science
and History
Brianne Wolf
Director, Political Economy
Program; Assistant Professor of
Political Science
20 Student Interns
32 Distinguished Visiting Faculty
from colleges and universities
across the nation
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