

Th: Jefferson

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‘Liberty Today’ to make history new again

THOMAS JEFFERSON FOUNDATION AWARDED \$500,000 COCA-COLA GRANT

INSPIRING SOCIAL MEDIA-SAVVY STUDENTS and providing teachers with the tools to make early American history exciting to new generations is the premise behind Liberty Today, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation’s new educational outreach program.

Teachers, historians, digital media specialists and students from across the country gathered with Thomas Jefferson Foundation staff at Monticello and Montalto overlooking Monticello for a three-day conference in early August to take part in the first step of creating Liberty Today. The group shared ideas and explored new forms of media that can be used in the classroom and online to reach

a new age of students. The key ideas from the meeting will be used to create an intensive summer workshop for teachers and an interactive online component that will be made accessible to teachers and students around the globe.

“We are excited about the ideas that emerged from the summit. We are working with classroom educators to provide meaningful, actionable content and ideas. Teachers face many challenges in making history relevant in today’s media-rich environment. Liberty Today will allow educators to leverage digital resources and allow students to demonstrate the connection to their own lives of the ideas

of liberty and freedom launched by the American Revolution,” said Gary Sandling, Vice President of Visitor Programs and Visitor Services.

A recent study by the National Assessment of Educational Progress found that only 35 percent of fourth graders knew the purpose of the Declaration

of Independence—a startling fact that demonstrates the importance of investment in history education.

Funding for Liberty Today comes from a \$500,000 grant from The Coca-Cola Foundation.

“Liberty Today brings heightened focus to the teachings of Thomas Jefferson, his ideals and their relevance today,” said Coca-Cola Chairman and CEO Muhtar Kent. “This initiative uses interactive online tools to engage students to learn about early American history and our country’s rich traditions of continuous renewal, growth and optimism.”

“We are thrilled to receive this generous grant from The Coca-Cola Foundation,” said Leslie Greene Bowman, President and CEO of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation. “Jefferson believed that education was essential to creating an enlightened and free society. Throughout his life he was a champion of public education. This gift extends his legacy to new generations, allowing us to provide gifted teachers and international fellows the opportunity to advance Jeffersonian scholarship to students around the globe.”

Teachers interested in learning more about Liberty Today and scholarship opportunities can visit www.monticello.org/libertytoday to request more information.

Participants in the Liberty Today Summit included teachers from across the United States as well as faculty from the University of Virginia, the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University, and Boston University’s Center for History Education. T.J.F.

