

Session One

Idea of America:

Introduction

Idea of America Network



“A CALL FOR ACTION AND UNITY”

Declaration of Premise

The premise of Idea of America Network is that America is unique in being founded on enlightenment values that proclaim the inherent equality of all human beings, that values the life and well-being of all human beings, that promotes education and cultivation of individual and civic responsibility as the means by which we as individuals can attain our happiness, and that the source of our unity as a nation is our embracement of these values.

Dr. John O. Wilson
Founder and Director
Idea of America Network

Goals of the Idea of America Network

GOAL ONE: To advance the cause of the common good in our nation through education and civic-engaged debate on the fundamental values that formed our nation and are shaping our future.

GOAL TWO: Develop seminars and programs for the continuing education of civic-minded adults that will be offered through local institutions, including educational, religious, and civic groups.

GOAL THREE: Develop new programs for the learning of our values and our history for youth. Enable our youth to learn from our past so that they can become engaged citizens in our future.

Platform One: Idea of America Seminar Program

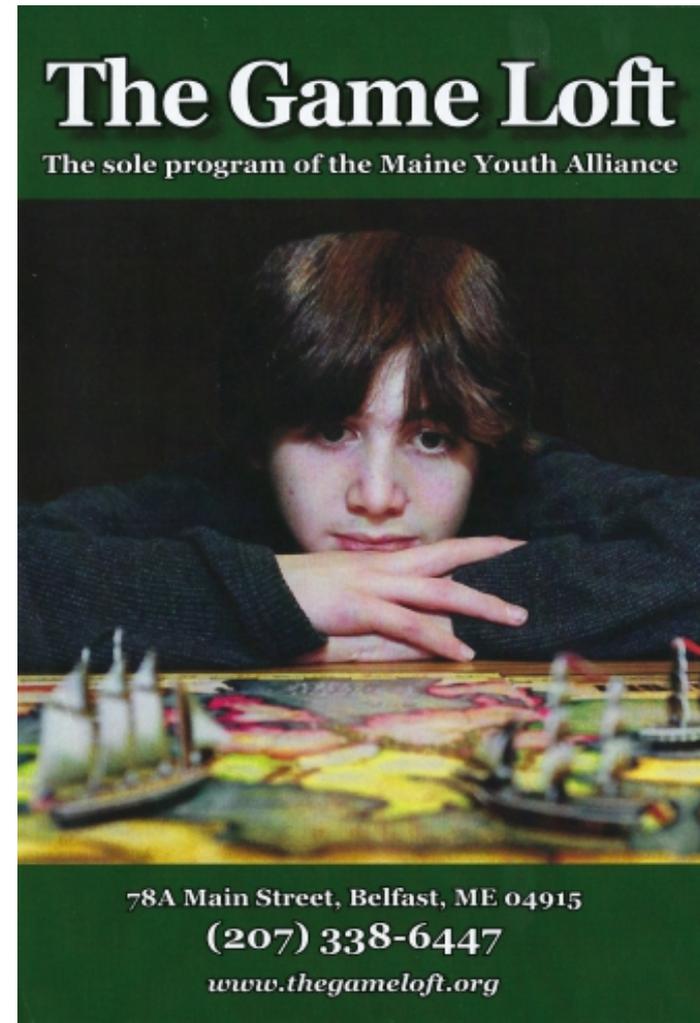


Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
University of Miami

Our core program is a seminar-discussion debate forum where civic-minded adults can gather face-to-face. We view it important to provide a forum to discuss current issues and challenges facing our nation and our local communities in a safe setting where participants respect differing views and opinions and each other. Such a setting can be the continuing education programs of local universities and colleges, places of worship, senior centers, libraries, book clubs and other local civic-minded institutions.

Platform Two: Coming of Age in America Youth Program

Our second platform has developed special after-school programs to engage junior-high school students in history and civics. These are designed to reach youth at critical life stages when they are developing their own self-awareness, identities and values. Our programs are a combination of role-playing, interactive games built upon actual historical events that relate to current times and community mentoring. The highly successful Maine Youth Alliance of Belfast, Maine, better known as the “the Game Loft” is our partner in developing these creative programs. Our goal is to have communities across the nation adopt these Idea of America after-school programs.



Platform Three: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation



“We are grateful for our nation's long history of civil discourse and applaud the strength and tenacity with which Americans debate our values. We urge all citizens to join the debate for such active engagement is the only way to assure that our democracy will be sustained.”

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

The Idea of America Seminars



On-site in Williamsburg. A special invitation to explore our values, our legacy, our future. We look at history as a continuing debate – a debate about how we balance the values Americans hold sacred. The *Idea of America Seminars* provide a framework to equip citizens to analyze current issues in the context of our shared values and to appreciate – and to instill in others an appreciation of – the privileges and responsibilities of American citizenship.

Value Tension Model

Law

vs

Ethics

Freedom

vs

Equality

Diversity

vs

Unity

Private Wealth

vs

Common Wealth

Major “Value Bridges” for Idea of America

Equality

Freedom

Common Good

A value bridge is a dramatic means of connecting the audience with the actor and the stage. The intent is to focus on the most important message to portray and to connect with the audience. The goal is to heighten the spectator's participation, not by testing the audience's knowledge of a subject, but instead by inviting the audience to develop their own thoughts and criticisms about the events on the stage.