



BEN FRANKLIN COFFEEHOUSE CHALLENGE PRESENTS *THE COFFEEHOUSE HONORS*

The Ben Franklin Coffeehouse Challenge

Although Franklin is often given sole credit for his many civic initiatives, it was his firmly-held belief that people who banded together for a common purpose could achieve greater goals than individuals could do separately. Franklin's convivial nature combined with his lifelong desire to further the common good meant that he spent many productive hours deep in coffeehouse conversations with his fellow Philadelphians, drawing up civic improvement plans. Together, the group tackled community challenges both large and small: they started a neighborhood watch; improved street lighting and cleaning; and founded the Pennsylvania Hospital, America's first public hospital, as well as the Union Fire Company, Philadelphia's first volunteer fire brigade, and the Library Company of Philadelphia, America's oldest lending library.

The Ben Franklin Coffeehouse Challenge was an opportunity to recreate Franklin's special brew of civic generosity via informal gatherings in Starbucks coffeehouses around the region, in which community discussion generated creative and practical responses to shared public concerns. The coffeehouse has a long history as a place of collective engagement, where the social could be combined with the serious in lively discussions that produced revolutionary ideas. Today, Starbucks serves as a meeting place for the diverse residents of Greater Philadelphia and Central Pennsylvania, a contemporary analogue to the coffeehouses of Franklin's day. This project served to bring Franklin's legacy to life, and will produce lasting benefits for our region, beyond Ben's tercentenary year.

The Ben Franklin Coffeehouse Challenge is sponsored by CBS 3, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Daily News* and Philly.com, and each of these media partners were actively involved in creating awareness and enthusiasm for the initiative.

Results

- Between January and June 2006, volunteers organized thirty-four Coffeehouse Challenge meetings to discuss ways to improve their communities, from dog parks to mentoring schemes. At the end of each inaugural discussion, most Coffeehouse Challenge groups committed to regular meetings in order to turn their best ideas into reality.
- By the July 4 deadline, twenty-eight groups had submitted project proposals with ideas ranging from creating a community map to founding a film society in an abandoned train station. On September 6, 2006, Starbucks will award \$3000 each to the five most ingenious and practical plans proposed by Coffeehouse Challenge groups.

How it worked

- Coffeehouse Challenge Facilitators were volunteers with a community concern that they wanted to find a grassroots solution for, or a civic improvement idea that they wanted to develop with the help of their neighbors. Some were actively recruited from existing regional organizations, while many came forward of their own accord after having heard about the program.
- Facilitators worked with Starbucks District & Store Managers to organize the first meeting date/time. Together they acted as coordinators, inviting participants from community groups, businesses, NGOs, local authorities, secondary schools, colleges and universities, as well as Starbucks customers.
- Fueled by freshly brewed coffee, the groups enjoyed informal and lively exchanges of ideas, analysis, and practical solutions. Groups developed their ideas into a project proposal, which they submitted to the Tercentenary by July 4, 2006.
- Coffeehouse Challenge groups started meeting between January and June 2006, and more than one group was able to meet in each neighborhood, and Starbucks store. Some groups met many times to flesh out their thoughts: some may have only met once or twice before they were ready to put their proposal together.
- From July through August 2006, a special panel reviewed the project proposals. On September 6, 2006, Starbucks Coffee Company will present a check for \$3000 to the top five proposals so that these groups can continue their work, and make their vision a reality for their community.

About The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary

The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary, a non-profit organization supported by a lead grant of \$4 million from The Pew Charitable Trusts, was established to mark the 300-year anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's birth (1706-2006) with a celebration dedicated to educating the public about his enduring legacy and inspiring renewed appreciation of the values he embodied. The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary was founded in 2000 by a consortium of five Philadelphia cultural institutions: the American Philosophical Society, The Franklin Institute, The Library Company of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the University of Pennsylvania. In addition, an Act of Congress in 2002 created The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary Commission, a panel of fifteen outstanding Americans chosen to study and recommend programs to celebrate Franklin's 300th birthday. The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary can be found online at www.benfranklin300.org.

About Starbucks Coffee Company

Through the dedication of our passionate partners (employees), Starbucks Coffee Company has transformed the way people in 37 countries enjoy their coffee, one cup at a time. Starbucks is the premier purveyor of the finest coffee in the world, with more than 11,500 retail locations in North America, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and the Pacific Rim. The Company is committed to offering its customers the highest quality coffee and human connection through the *Starbucks Experience*, while striving to improve the social, environmental and economic well being of its partners, coffee farmers, countries of coffee origin, and the communities which it serves. Through Ethos Water, Starbucks demonstrates its long history of integrating a social conscience into all aspects of its business. The Company surprises and delights its customers by producing and selling bottled Starbucks Frappuccino® coffee drinks, Starbucks DoubleShot® espresso drinks and Starbucks® superpremium ice creams through its joint-venture partnerships, and Starbucks™ Coffee and Cream Liqueurs through a marketing and distribution agreement, in other convenient locations outside its retail operations. The Company's brand portfolio includes superpremium Tazo® teas, Starbucks Hear Music™ compact discs, Seattle's Best Coffee and Torrefazione Italia. These brands' unique and innovative personalities allow Starbucks to appeal to a broad consumer base.

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