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The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary and Starbucks Coffee Company present the
BEN FRANKLIN COFFEEHOUSE CHALLENGE

The Ben Franklin Coffeehouse Challenge

Although Franklin is often given sole credit for his many civic initiatives, it was his lifelong 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 is an opportunity to recreate Franklin's special brew of civic generosity via informal gatherings in Starbucks coffeehouses around the region, in which community discussion will generate 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 will serve 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 will be actively involved in creating awareness and enthusiasm for the initiative.

How it works:

- Coffeehouse Challenge Facilitators are volunteers who are committed to their community. Some will actively be recruited from Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary consortium member institutions and other regional organizations, while many will come forward after having heard about the program.
- Facilitators will work with Starbucks District & Store Managers to agree on a compelling local issue and organize the first meeting date/time. Together they will act as coordinators, inviting participants from community groups, businesses, NGOs, local authorities, secondary schools, colleges and universities, as well as Starbucks customers.
- Fueled by fresh, brewed coffee, the group will enjoy their first informal and lively exchange of ideas, analysis, and practical solutions. We hope they'll meet again to develop their ideas into a project proposal, which they should submit to the Tercentenary by July 4, 2006.
- Coffeehouse Challenge groups can start meeting anytime between January and June 2006, and more than one group can meet in each neighborhood, and Starbucks store. Some groups will want to meet many times to flesh out their thoughts: some may only meet once or twice before they achieve their goals.

- From July through August 2006, a special panel will review the project proposals, and in early September 2006, a ceremony will be held to award the five proposals with \$3000 each from Starbucks, so that they can continue their work, and make their vision a reality for their community.

Ben Franklin 300 Overview

January 17, 2006, marked the 300th anniversary of Ben Franklin's birth. The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary, a registered nonprofit, has been charged by the federal Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary Commission with the creation and organization of America's national celebrations in Franklin's honor. The Tercentenary represents a consortium created in 2000 by the American Philosophical Society, The Franklin Institute, the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the University of Pennsylvania.

The Tercentenary's goal throughout all of the projects and programs is to underscore Franklin's contemporary relevance so that Americans can not only understand Franklin in a much broader context, but also be inspired by his example. Therefore, from Fall 2005 through 2006, the Greater Philadelphia area will be abuzz with concerts, performances, lectures, events, and exhibitions exploring Franklin's legacy and his place in our lives today. Central among these is the Tercentenary's blockbuster international traveling exhibition, *Benjamin Franklin: In Search of Better World*, which will be hosted by the National Constitution Center until April 2006, when it will travel to venues across the U.S., and on to Paris in 2007.

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