



75th Anniversary Campaign

Case Statement by the Aspen Institute





DEAR FRIENDS,

Seventy-five years ago, Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke founded the [Aspen Institute](#) as a place where people from all walks of life could come together to reflect, learn from one another, and help shape a better world. That spirit has guided us over the decades as we have grown into a global convening and leadership organization—and it continues to guide us now as we look to the future.

To steward our remarkable legacy, we're launching a \$450 million campaign to fuel four critical priorities: developing principled leaders, strengthening trust across society, elevating the voices of young people, and ensuring that our Bauhaus campus and core operations can support the Institute for years to come.

In the pages ahead, you'll read more about this vision and what it will take to bring it to life. We encourage you to think about what aspects of this historic campaign energize you—and consider how you might want to be involved.

We're grateful for all the ways you help the Aspen Institute. With your partnership, we will set the course for the next 75 years and beyond.

With gratitude,

MARGOT PRITZKER

[Chair of the Board of Trustees | Aspen Institute](#)

DAN PORTERFIELD

[President and CEO | Aspen Institute](#)

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Supporting the Aspen Institute has been one of my family's sincerest passions for many years. We have witnessed firsthand the Institute's enduring legacy of solving challenges through transformative conversations that inspire change. We are proud to stand with an organization that continues to enrich lives every day.

Lester Crown
Chairman Emeritus, Henry Crown and Company

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1949, in the aftermath of World War II, Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke sought to spark a new spirit of humanistic optimism equal to the promise and perils of the time. Their bold idea was to convene 2,000 thought leaders to the majestic mountain town of Aspen, Colorado, to imagine a more peaceful and prosperous future. Their historic 1949 Goethe Convocation, which was featured on the cover of TIME Magazine, included lectures, dialogues, and concerts that stirred and fortified the spirits of all who took part. To continue and extend this great conversation, the Paepckes then founded a new kind of people-serving institution meant to serve human dignity and advance the public good: the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies.

For 75 years, the Aspen Institute has embodied our founders' vision, becoming one of the world's most trusted convening and leadership organizations. Our seminars transform perspectives. Our fellowships empower leaders. Our festivals celebrate breakthrough ideas. Our programs tackle complex challenges. Our diverse networks unite people across generations, geographies, and viewpoints to create what we all aspire to — a "good society."

Throughout our history, we have remained steadfast to our purpose: "to ignite human potential to build understanding and create new possibilities for a better world." This calling resonates more powerfully today than ever before.

We live in an age of extraordinary opportunity and unprecedented challenges. Our economies, technologies, cultures, political systems, and planet are undergoing rapid

transformation. The questions before us are profound: How do we organize our societies for peace and prosperity? How can we bridge differences between competing perspectives? How might we harness breakthroughs in science and technology to advance human flourishing?

Answering these questions requires sustained dialogue across differences and disciplines, and trusted leadership at every level of society. The Aspen Institute remains committed to our mission and we truly believe that social progress is imperative and attainable.

Over the past seven years, under the leadership of our Board of Trustees and President and CEO Daniel R. Porterfield, the Aspen Institute has entered a new era of enterprise-wide alignment and aspiration. Where previous chapters emphasized growth in our programs and offerings — creating strong partnerships and elevating our brand — we now seek to strengthen the enterprise as a whole, connect our vast network of leaders, bring young people fully into our work, and unleash the power of Institute-wide collaboration.

Marble Sculpture Garden 1955
© Aspen Historical Society, Durrance Collection



\$450M

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

That's why we have developed a bold **five-year strategic plan** that commits us to three priorities — **fostering effective leadership, building societal trust, and sparking civil dialogue and service among young adults.** This plan also calls for strengthening our capacity for outstanding work by enhancing our public outreach, integrating our data systems, and revitalizing our historic Aspen Meadows campus.

In service to the Aspen Institute's purpose and our strategic plan, we are launching a \$450 million fundraising campaign with the following priority areas: Leadership, Societal Trust, Rising Generations, and Institute Strength.

Since our first convening in 1949, the Institute has been a catalyst for dialogue and for change. Today, we invite you to join us in claiming our future for the next 75 years and beyond.



Aspen Ideas Festival 2024
Photo by Dan Bayer

Our Priority Areas:

\$80M

LEADERSHIP

Building on decades of work, we will become the go-to community for leaders worldwide to connect, serve, and grow across the arc of their lives.



\$55M

SOCIETAL TRUST

We will address the erosion of societal trust by sparking productive dialogue, fostering civic imagination, promoting ethics in business and technology, and challenging institutions to better serve the people and communities that depend on them.



\$185M

RISING GENERATIONS

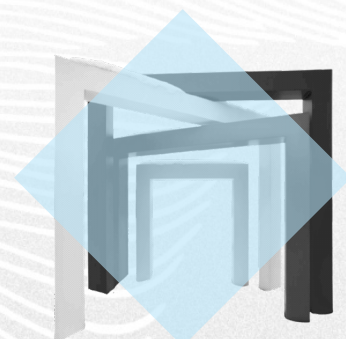
For youth and young adults — the future of our world — we will work with others to make civil dialogue, civic engagement, and leadership development predictable parts of the journey to adulthood.



\$130M

INSTITUTE STRENGTH

We will ensure the Institute's ability to pursue our purpose for generations to come by revitalizing the Aspen Meadows campus, strengthening our technology and operations, building financial resilience, and increasing our ability to link, leverage, and amplify our people and programs.



\$80M

LEADERSHIP

Meeting the moment.

The world needs more leaders who are, in Walter Paepcke's words, more "self aware, self correcting and self fulfilling." Now more than ever, we need individuals who are able to embody this aspiration and embrace the challenge of productively working together to build bridges across our differences; leaders who can come together to imagine and implement creative solutions to complex challenges at every level.



NATO Youth Summit
Photo by Anthony Nader

Since our founding, the Aspen Institute has viewed [leadership](#) as a driving force of societal progress. Over 75 years, we have identified, convened, challenged, and supported thousands of leaders of all types and have earned a reputation as one of the world's go-to organizations for purpose-driven leadership.

We now see an opportunity for even greater impact by both strengthening the core of our historic work and by exploring more effective ways to create a thriving interconnected community that harnesses the collective energy, insights, talents, and important efforts of our colleagues across the Institute and our partners around the world. We aim to help leaders to find deeper meaning in their life's work and enable them to connect with the resources they need to have greater impact.

Where Great Leadership Begins

More than **15,000** of the world's most prominent leaders have taken the [Aspen Executive Seminar](#) since its inception 75 years ago.



Built over 75 years, our leadership legacy includes:

OUR REPUTATION

The Aspen Institute is a trusted, creative, nonpartisan organization with a distinctive approach to nurturing leadership potential and convening groups of leaders to address the most critical issues we face.

OUR METHODOLOGY

Our distinctive approach is rooted in the humanistic tradition that prioritizes dialogue-based peer learning, the exploration of values, interdisciplinary thinking, and self-knowledge and discovery. We have developed a deep pool of trained moderators who are able to use our distinctive curricular offerings to create experiences that challenge, inspire, and connect the leaders with which we work.

OUR SEMINARS, PROGRAMS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Every year, we design and deliver hundreds of leadership offerings across the world that reflect our foundational belief that dialogue among diverse people and across diverse perspectives is essential both to improving our understanding and to finding solutions to modern challenges. Thousands of leaders with significant social capital and collective reach have benefited from our programs and convenings. Our leadership networks extend—or have the potential to extend—to nearly anyone and anywhere in the U.S. and around the world.

OUR NETWORKS AND REACH

Thousands of influential leaders have benefited from our leadership programs and convenings. Our community consists of members from all walks of life: corporate and community leaders, entrepreneurs and educators, government leaders, philanthropists, artists, youth and young adult leaders, and more. We bring together influential people across age groups who have been inspired by their experience to engage in the difficult work of building a better society, even if they don't always agree on the best way to do that.

\$80M

BUILDING THE CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP

Looking forward, we will build a Center for Leadership — an endowed cross-Institute resource that can serve as:

- A center of excellence for ensuring the quality and impact of our work
- A learning lab that spurs innovation and evolves dynamically
- A connective platform that fosters deeper connections amongst our programs and people

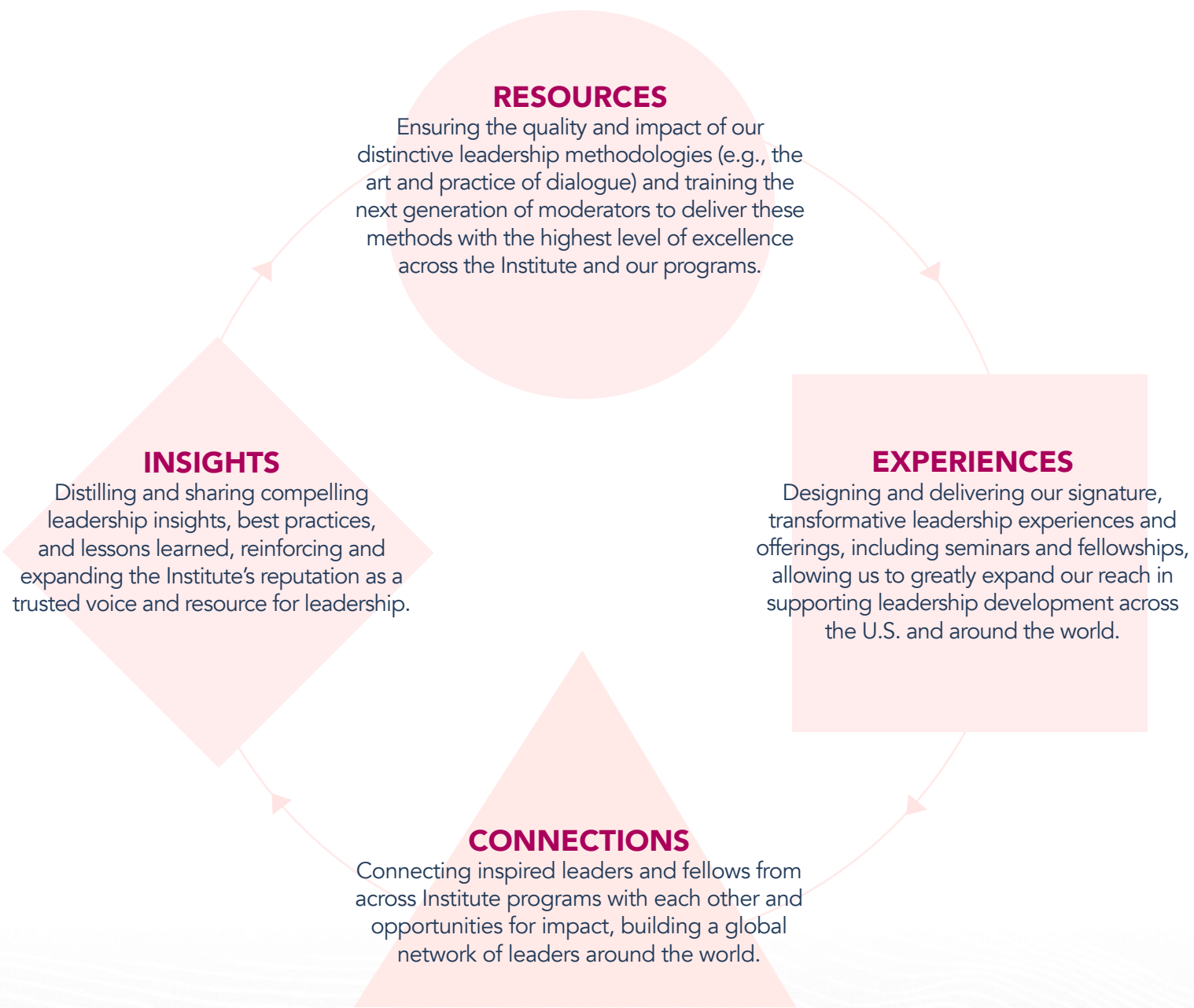
The Center will ignite the potential of more people to step into the fullness of their leadership. It will be dedicated to challenging, connecting, and enabling leaders from across the Aspen Institute’s networks to increase their individual and collective impact for a better world.

We have recruited [Stace Lindsay](#)—a 2002 Henry Crown Fellow with more than 30 years of experience working with senior leaders in business, government, and civil society—to oversee the development of the Center. Through \$10 million of current use funding to be used in 2025 - 2027 and a \$70 million endowment, we will accelerate leadership as a distinctive, enduring Institute commitment and practice, positioning the Center for immediate growth and success. **While we seek to raise \$80 million through this campaign in current use and endowment resources, our aspirational goal is for the Center to be supported by a \$125M endowment to ensure its long-term success and impact.**



Resnick Aspen Action Forum 2024
Photo by Dan Bayer

The Center would focus on four mutually reinforcing bodies of work:



“The focus on leadership is very personal to me as a Henry Crown Fellow who cares deeply about great leadership solving great challenges. The other areas of focus, Rising Generations and Societal Trust, combine with Leadership to form a powerful platform to inspire people to lead and go towards one another to enable strong communities.

Mark Hoplamazian
President and CEO, Hyatt Hotels Corporation

\$55M

SOCIETAL TRUST

Around the world, the well-documented erosion of trust is tearing the social fabric and impeding collaboration. For decades, however, the Aspen Institute has built and strengthened trust on four mutually reinforcing tracks:

Developing and convening trust-builders.

We train, assist, and connect people who are driving change through trust-fostering leadership.

Enabling solutions that build trust.

We advance initiatives to address challenges in areas such as civic participation, trust in institutions, and disruptive technology.

Elevating trust-building stories.

Across our events and platforms, we showcase what trust building looks like, and who makes it happen.

Creating spaces for critical conversations.

We use dialogue to establish spaces for those with different backgrounds and perspectives to have honest conversations and build understanding.

The Social Trust Index

Weave: The Social Fabric Project created the Social Trust Map, an interactive experience to help community members identify the assets in their neighborhood that they can leverage to foster social trust. Recently bolstered by a \$22.4 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., Weave will partner with 75 community-based organizations and distribute awards to 6,000 local weavers who are tackling shared issues and bringing their communities together.



Community members weaving connection at the Kinship Food Center in Milwaukee, WI – from Weave's Trust Map.

Looking ahead, with \$55M, we will:

LAUNCH A MAJOR PUBLIC CONVENING ON SOCIAL TRUST

(e.g., "Aspen Ideas: Trust") to elevate solutions, in the style of our cross-program [Global Inclusive Growth Summit](#) and [Aspen Ideas: Climate](#).

CREATE A "SOCIETAL TRUST FUND" AT THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

The Fund will be designed for rapid investment in promising efforts, including:

- Launching multi-year, multi-program initiatives that advance understanding of the role of [artificial intelligence](#) in areas such as media, elections, national security, healthcare, and climate and energy.
- Increasing nonpartisan programming for members of Congress to have closed-door conversations and learning sessions on critical issues.
- Expanding and amplifying training of on-the-ground leaders (e.g., educators, students, community organizers) with the skills for collaboration and conflict resolution to reduce polarization.



Aspen Security Forum 2024
Photo by Dan Bayer

\$185M

RISING GENERATIONS

In August 2024, the Aspen Institute and the Bezos Family Foundation formally announced the founding of the **Center for Rising Generations** at the Aspen Institute.

Through a historic investment of \$185.7 million, \$175 million of which established a permanent endowment, the Center will work to expand Aspen's inclusion of [young people](#) in our programs and convenings and work to make civil dialogue, civic engagement, and leadership development become an integral, predictable part of the journey to adulthood for young people in the United States and around the world.

Led by [Kaya Henderson](#), the Center's newly appointed Executive Director and the former Chancellor of DC Public Schools, the Center will exist in perpetuity as a resource for youth and young adults, as well as those who support their development and leadership. **Notable goals over the next five years include:**

Program Excellence

We will supervise and integrate five Aspen Institute programs: Aspen Young Leaders Fellowship, Aspen Challenge, Education and Society Program, Center for Native American Youth, and Stevens Initiative.

Cross-Institute Support

We will enhance the Institute's focus on young people and connect youth and young adults to more of our programs — an enterprise-wide strategic priority.

Convening and Community

We will use the influence and prestige of the Institute to build national momentum for a focus on young people. And we will build a ladder of engagement within the Institute to ensure that young people initially served by the Center can continue to affiliate with the Institute as they pursue their interests.

Innovation

We will become a hub and a resource for young innovators, connecting them to mentorship, partners, and resources.

The new endowment provides core resources for the Center to optimize its portfolio of programs, connect and grow youth and young adult opportunities within Institute programs, and develop convenings focused on youth and young adults. Aided by additional investment, the Center will be able to develop and implement:

ADVISORY BOARDS

We will establish resources to help organizations and communities create youth advisory boards.

ANNUAL AWARDS

We will establish a set of annual awards to highlight young people and organizations making change in their communities.

EDUCATION STRATEGY GROUP

We will establish a strategy group akin to the Aspen Strategy Group and Economic Strategy Group.

EXPANSION GRANTS

We will use seed grants to help all Aspen Institute programs to engage with young people.

RESEARCH CENTER

We will support innovative research by and about young people through a journal and convenings

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT IDEAS FESTIVAL

We will develop an Ideas Festival by, for, and featuring young people.

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT NETWORK HUB

We will create an online hub to help connect young people to each other and to trainings and organizations to support them.

“My wife Jackie and I are continually inspired by the bright ideas and hope that young people bring for our collective future. Supporting the leadership, passion, and creativity of young minds to enact change today has been central to our philanthropy. With the Aspen Institute's strong values-based leadership and expertise, we are confident the Center for Rising Generations will exponentially expand opportunities for our rising generations, bringing their voices to the forefront of conversations and decisions to shape our world for the better.”

Mike Bezos
Bezos Family Foundation

Rising Generations Summit

The inaugural [Rising Generations Summit](#) brought together 125 teenagers from nearly every U.S. state and territory: Native American youth; ROTC members; immigrants; future business leaders of America members; refugees; a self-described “rural farm boy, passionate about voting rights”; youth in foster care; and young people who have worked on farms, at McDonalds, and in the U.S. Senate.

Participants came with a passion for a wide range of issues, including expanding economic opportunity, improving education, and addressing housing insecurity. During the Summit, they worked with mentors to develop their skills, knowledge, and connections, furthering their efforts to lead change in their community.

We expect to see great things from participants as they return to their communities and continue to advance their projects.



\$130M

INSTITUTE STRENGTH AND CAMPUS VITALITY

\$50 Million of Unrestricted Funding

A key tenet of our strategic plan is ensuring that the Institute operates in an integrated, collaborative, and sustainable manner. In recent years, we have improved our financial performance through revenue growth, expense reduction, and strong financial management. By developing a meaningful unrestricted endowment, we will secure flexible annual resources to invest in strategic opportunities, campus needs, and technology — and to ensure that the Institute and our programs are positioned to absorb potential financial risks. **\$50M of unrestricted funding will allow us to:**

Enhance

Enhance our strategy, staff development, risk management, campus operations, communications, and public events functions.

Develop

Develop and implement a new CRM data system that connects constituents across the entire Institute.

Build

Build a new, state-of-the-art website that will give all of our stakeholders a personalized “Aspen Passport” to access our programs and content.

Create

Create a reserve fund to support our programs and emerging opportunities.

Generations of my family have been involved with the Aspen Institute for more than 45 years. The Institute has transformed leaders, shaped significant policies, and held important discussions from local communities to international forums. That global reach is crucial to expanding values-based leadership worldwide.

Leonard Lauder (in memoriam)

Chairman Emeritus, The Estée Lauder Companies, Inc.

Our Global Reach

Inspired by the Aspen Idea, 13 independent **International Partners** operating in 16 countries have adopted and expanded the Aspen Institute’s model and methodology in their own communities.



Bloomberg CityLab 2024
Photo Courtesy of Bloomberg Philanthropies

“Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke’s value of and vision for “mind, body, and spirit” resonates just as strongly today as it did 75 years ago. Our support of the Center for Wellness is an important step for the Institute’s goal of nurturing holistic well-being at the Aspen Meadows campus and across the Roaring Fork Valley.

Melony Lewis

Co-Founder & General Partner, Canyon Echo Capital

\$80 Million towards the Aspen Campus

With its stunning Rocky Mountain views, the magic of convening on our remarkable 40-acre campus remains unchanged from Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke’s early vision. Our campus includes our gorgeous convening spaces for seminars, events, and the Aspen Ideas Festival, as well as the 98-suite Aspen Meadows Resort managed by the Salamander Collection. However, our campus does not have an endowment to support its operations and, with an average of 26 feet of snow piling atop 16 buildings per year, we face a constant need for maintenance, upgrades, and renovations. **\$80M Campus Vitality funding priorities include:**

ASPEN CAMPUS AND ASPEN MEADOWS RESORT

A number of upgrades and renovations are needed for buildings on campus; this includes a recently completed renovation of the [Aspen Meadows Resort](#) and restaurant.

A WORLD-CLASS WELLNESS CENTER

As a reflection of our mind/body/spirit ethos, this \$10M initiative will allow us to make necessary upgrades to our health and fitness facility for our guests and program participants.

RESNICK CENTER FOR HERBERT BAYER STUDIES

A \$30M endowment to fund the operations of the [Resnick Center for Herbert Bayer Studies](#) to preserve and promote a critical dimension of our history and our commitment to honor art and design in all we do.

EMPLOYEE HOUSING

A sustainable employee housing initiative. The Institute is requesting approval from the City of Aspen to build employee housing on campus to support our mission and assist our employees. This \$30M project will address mounting challenges of recruiting and retaining staff due to increasing regional rent and home prices. By building on land we own, we can keep rental rates reasonable for our workforce.



Resnick Center for Herbert Bayer Studies
Photo Courtesy of Michael Brands

Art and design have the power to shape the world and elevate the human spirit, which has continually inspired Stewart and me. Few embodied this more than Herbert Bayer, whose vision transformed Aspen and the Aspen Institute into living works of art that celebrate nature, creativity and community. We are honored to help preserve Bayer’s legacy, ensuring that his bold ideas and the enduring spirit of the Bauhaus continue to inspire future generations as they make their own contributions to art and society.

Lynda Resnick

Co-Owner and Vice Chairman, Wonderful Company

HONORING AND STRENGTHENING OUR LEGACY

75 years ago, Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke came to a quiet meadow where a river meets a creek, embraced by mountains on all sides, and pledged to build an institution to inspire and serve. For 75 years, generations of leaders and donors have trusted in that vision and, today, the Aspen Institute serves in countless ways and places — always rooted in the community where we began.

Today, the needs of the world are great. Our mission is more important than ever. Our methods are more relevant than ever. Our reputation and community are

stronger than ever. As we look ahead to the next 75 years, with your partnership, we will draw inspiration from our history, tap our expertise, build our brand and reach, and expand our commitment to igniting human potential in service of building a better world.

Just as we are grateful to our founders for their vision for the Aspen Institute, so, too, are we thankful for your investment and engagement in the future of this extraordinary organization. **Together, we will honor and strengthen our enduring legacy of service for generations to come.**

Aspen Ideas Festival
Photo by Dan Bayer





The Aspen Institute is a global nonprofit organization whose purpose is to ignite human potential to build understanding and create new possibilities for a better world. Founded in 1949, the Institute drives change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve society's greatest challenges. It is headquartered in Washington, DC, and has a campus in Aspen, Colorado, as well as an international network of partners.