



# THE GERMINATION PROJECT



Philadelphia is a historically great city at risk of losing its greatness to the pages of history. To those of us dedicated to seeing this region thrive once again on the global stage and become as powerful a force of commerce as New York to the north and as influential a hub of policy as Washington, D.C. to the south, **the time for a catalytic investment in our civic future is now.**

**The Germination Project will be that catalyst.** By identifying, nurturing, encouraging and connecting our brightest young people –from their high school years through their careers– to commit their talents to Philadelphia's greater good, the Germination Project seeks to do nothing less than establish a self-sustaining ecosystem of leadership to transform this city.

The concept of the Germination Project is compelled by a series of provocations, a collection of related problems demanding a comprehensive, coherent set of solutions.

# PHILADELPHIA HAS FALLEN BEHIND

The Cradle of Liberty. The Crucible of American Democracy. These are high-flown phrases that nonetheless accurately denote our city's role in the history of the western world. Throughout its first two centuries, Philadelphia could aptly be described as the lynchpin of (what is now) the Keystone State. First a refuge for free religious expression, this parcel of land between two rivers envisioned by William Penn as a "green country towne" became a haven and a hotbed of political ideas, a proving ground for the American patriots determined to throw off the yoke of tyranny. From its earliest days as the nerve center of our nation's nascent democracy well into the beginning of the 20th Century, Philadelphia was a city of firsts. It was here, in what would become the United States' first capital, that our founders put quill to parchment to draft both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the seminal documents of America's philosophy of government.

During Philadelphia's early halcyon years, the ingenuity of its favorite son Benjamin Franklin seemed to reflect the inventiveness of the city as a whole. In Philadelphia, the world saw the establishment of the Western Hemisphere's first secular university, its first public zoological park, the United States Navy, the first stock exchange, and America's first hospital, Pennsylvania Hospital, which remains a leading medical institution to this day. In the 1820's, Philadelphia was a pioneer in the realm of municipal infrastructure; the Schuylkill River Water Works, a cutting-edge system of gravity powered dams and conduits, pumped water to the far reaches of the expanding metropolis.

These civic innovations, particularly, access to a steady supply of water, were both necessary conditions and products of Philadelphia's exponential growth as a major industrial hub. Under the title "The Workshop of the World," Philadelphia became a leading rail and manufacturing hub.

The city served as the original headquarters of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, then the biggest manufacturer of steam locomotives, and of the Pennsylvania Railroad, once the world's largest public corporation. From its bustling stockyards and radiating railroads, locally-made goods from textiles to heavy machinery spilled forth from Philadelphia's factories, reaching markets both across the country and across the sea. During the height of America's great industrial age through to the end of the Second World War, Philadelphia grew and produced at a steady clip.

The precipitous manufacturing decline that began in the U.S. in the latter half of the 20th Century affected Philadelphia almost as much as any other American city. As blue-collar jobs disappeared and the region's factories shut down one after another, Philadelphians began leaving the city in calamitous numbers. By 1990, Philadelphia's population was down to 1.5 million, off 25% from its peak in 1950. As employment opportunities evaporated, as citizens decamped for the suburbs, and as the city's tax base shrank, the concomitant deleterious symptoms took hold. Poverty and crime increased, educational attainment dropped off, and for a generation, a seemingly intractable sense emerged that Philadelphia's best days were once and forever behind us. Even as our neighbors New York and Washington D.C. carried on in their respective spheres of influence, there was a pervasive feeling in Philadelphia of a collective loss of ambition, and a loss of hope.

The question that needed asking, and which now demands an answer, is whether Philadelphia will acquiesce to a role as a mere museum of American history, or whether we will recapture our foundational spirit.

# A KAIROTIC MOMENT

In ancient Greek, the word “kairos” referred to a moment pregnant with opportunity. Philadelphia’s kairotic moment is upon us. Even in the face of the global economic downturn of the last five years, from which we were certainly not immune, the seeds of new growth, dynamism and hope have taken root in Philadelphia. After a fifty-year decline, Philadelphia’s population trend has finally reversed, as international immigrants, empty nesters relocating from the suburbs and millennials choosing to make the city their post-graduate home have slowly but surely increased Philadelphia’s population to 1.55 million and rising. This encouraging phenomenon has various authors, to be sure, and the key to capturing and cultivating such a moment requires both the recognition and the stewardship of its components.

Beginning in the 1990’s and early 2000’s a massive investment in Philadelphia’s Center City as a destination for civic and social activity began to recast the city from an unappealing, dangerous no-man’s land into a hotspot for entertainment and culture. Efforts by the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the renowned and visionary Live Arts Festival and Philly Fringe, and the recent relocation of the Barnes Foundation to the Ben Franklin Parkway have all served to attract new visitors, new residents, and new businesses keen to get in on what they view as a refurbished “ground floor” of opportunity. Inspired by the approach taken in Center City, comprehensive revitalization initiatives are in the process of transforming University City in West Philadelphia, and the Navy Yard to the south. Heartened by these efforts, players in the regional real estate sector have taken notice and are making new forays into Philadelphia. Recently published reports point to an aggregate of approximately \$8 billion new dollars in five major property development projects throughout the city.

It’s not just the ongoing municipal facelift that is causing a previously indifferent business community to take another look at Philadelphia. While the smokestack economy of the 20th century is gone for good, new industries –namely, academic research, medicine, and information technology – have found or can find a strong foothold and a willing workforce in our region. Presently, the “Eds and Meds” sectors are Philadelphia’s principal economic engines. There are 25 colleges and universities within Philadelphia’s

city limits, playing host to more than 100,000 students. Fully 20% of all jobs in Philadelphia are in the fields of medical research and clinical practices. And, while Philadelphia still lags as a technology hub, efforts both to attract tech entrepreneurship and to espouse entrepreneurial practices on the municipal level are gaining momentum. In particular, Philadelphia’s GreenWorks initiative, focused on improving the city’s environmental sustainability profile, is creating opportunities for similarly aligned tech start-ups. Drawing from economic studies concluding that nearly 50% of U.S. annual GDP growth is attributed to increases in innovation, endeavors like GreenWorks, which demand creative solutions to entrenched ecological issues, have the potential to fuel significant revenue-generating innovation.

All of the foregoing is to emphasize that Philadelphia presently finds itself at the center of a confluence of events and imperatives rich with possibility for exploitation. But it is a window that will not remain open for long.

**Unless we can engage and dedicate our most talented and energetic young citizens to seize the vast opportunities before us, it may be another fifty years –or more- before Philadelphia sees another chance to reclaim our ethos of invention and ingenuity.**

# CULTIVATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

Philadelphia is the 5th largest city in the U.S. by population, with the 9th largest metro economy in the world, and a gross metro product that would rank 31st among nations (between Denmark and Argentina). From an economic perspective alone, Philadelphia and its surrounding communities constitute a very large and diverse market.

Still, Philadelphia's nagging and oft-reported social statistics –high rates of crime and poverty, high taxes juxtaposed with chronic budget deficits, dismal graduation rates and a public school system fraught with internecine conflict and insufficient resources- paint a picture unbecoming of the cradle of American democracy. Quick fixes and factionalized political band-aids, products of that entrenched and sour political culture of old, won't work to impose transformative positive change on this city. It is no longer acceptable for those who love Philadelphia to lament its decline, as our best and brightest seek opportunities elsewhere. For Philadelphia to reassert its greatness, we must enlist the next generation. We need young people, fresh thinkers with smarts, energy, ambition, and a willingness to build a new culture of engagement.

It is a common misconception that to be a leader is to possess power. Whether or not this misconception applies worldwide, it certainly persists in Philadelphia. Having power doesn't make a person a leader (though it does tempt tyranny); what makes a person a leader is how she wields the power she does have. Leadership is about much more than the capacity to impose one's will, rather it consists in the ability to build consensus, to articulate a vision, to motivate colleagues and subordinates, to manage conflict and to bring rivals into the fold. For Philadelphia's next generation of leaders, success will be measured by their effectiveness in engaging the city's diverse and competing stakeholders.

Philadelphia doesn't suffer from a lack of leaders, but from a lack of an institutionalized culture of leadership. Our city and region are home to a who's who of successful, pioneering individuals in academics, business law, government and philanthropy, but we have not yet found a way to bottle their particular lightning, to have them inspire, teach and mold their successors.

**For a culture of leadership to flourish in Philadelphia, we need to connect the current generation of leaders with the next, to build a cross-generational and sustainable network of thinkers, visionaries and achievers. Above all, we need to retain those leaders; to convince them that the best use of their gifts is in the service of growing and strengthening our region.**



# BUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM

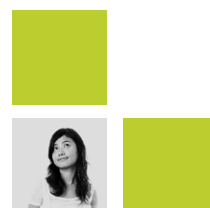
In the ruthlessly competitive and highly lucrative realm of American professional sports, discovering the next superstar is necessarily a group effort. Driven by the prospect of financial gains or just that ineffable obsession with the game, all manner of prospective stakeholders -from parents and college coaches to scouts and corporate sponsors- devote entire careers to identifying the next Michelle Wie or Serena Williams. At ever younger ages, highly talented athletes are singled out for nurturing and guidance with access to the resources of increasingly sophisticated ecosystems committed to seeing these stand-outs realize their appointed destinies.

The Germination Project will respond to its foundational provocations by building an ecosystem for leaders in Philadelphia. By enlisting our region's current leaders -from the public and private sectors alike- to impart their wisdom and offer their support to those poised to succeed them in the years to come, the Germination Project seeks to catalyze and energize an elite cadre of ambitious young men and women, brought together by their talent, drive and commitment to putting their gifts into service for the benefit of the city.

Just as no young athletic stand-out can rely on a single motivational speech or a one-off expert training session to launch his or her career, the Germination Project recognizes that the investment of this generation's leaders in the futures

of the next generation must be a long-term investment. The community that Germination Project participants form will serve them, and be served by them, throughout the course of their careers and across generations. For its participants, the Germination Project will not only be an incubator designed to tap leadership potential, but a prestigious elite bestowing a lifetime's worth of opportunities in exchange for a promise by its members to pay those opportunities forward.

From the day that Germination Project participants matriculate as student fellows in the annual summer leadership boot camp, they will begin sewing the seeds of a powerful, lasting peer network. The branches of that network will afford Germination Project participants a platform to launch successful careers in any number of fields.





# THE SUMMER LEADERSHIP BOOT CAMP

Each Germination Project annual class will convene with an intensive, four-week summer boot camp for rising high school juniors admitted through a rigorous, competitive application process. The program, initially being funded by a \$500,000 grant from the Pamela and Ajay Raju Foundation, will be hosted by one of Philadelphia's leading universities, and the curriculum will delve into a series of core leadership concepts through in-person instruction by our hand-picked faculty, case studies and collaborative team-based projects.

## CORE CURRICULUM

The Germination Project Leadership Boot Camp will focus on a set of leadership attributes, elaborated principally by way of video-taped discussions with a selection of Philadelphia business and civic luminaries. The content of this "Icon Series" will center around the personal experiences of these trail-blazing individuals and the ways in which they applied one or more of core leadership concepts in their own careers. Not only will the Icon Series discussions provide meaningful and enlightening guidance to student fellows, but they will serve to constitute an invaluable historic chronicle of the accomplishments, philosophies, insights and personal stories of Philadelphia's greatest visionaries of the modern era.

Guided by the content of the Icon Series lectures, student fellows of the summer boot camp will undertake a range of experiential learning opportunities designed to apply distinct leadership attributes to a variety of real-life situations

## MENTORSHIP & SERVICE

Student fellows of the Germination Project will be matched with mentors at the commencement of the summer program. These mentors will be drawn from a pool of the region's "mezzanine leaders," young professionals in the early to middle phases of their careers, who are well equipped to recognize and respond to the particular challenges faced by the post-millennial generation.

Once the four-week summer program concludes, the mentoring relationships will continue. Student fellows will be expected to maintain contact with their mentors throughout their junior and senior years of high school. Likewise, mentors will be expected to remain involved with their student fellows. Mentors will provide guidance with the college application process (e.g. reviewing personal statements, making connections with admissions officers where feasible). During the course of the student fellows' senior year, the Germination Project will hold reunion/networking events, to provide alumni of the program an opportunity to reconnect, to share experiences and insights about the college application process, and to benefit from further personal interaction with mentors and Germination Project faculty.

As a requirement of admission to the Germination Project, student fellows will pledge to complete a community service project during their senior year of high school. In collaboration with their mentors, each student fellow will

identify and devote at least 20 hours to a service project that involves the application of one or more core leadership concepts studied during the summer program. Student fellows will be required to provide periodic status updates to their mentors, and obtain completed evaluations from a supervisor at the organization hosting the student fellow's service project.

The Germination Project is designed not only to foster professional growth and strong civic citizenship among all of its student fellows, but to serve as a lasting resource and a vibrant network for its alumni. Successful participants in

the Germination Project will enjoy a lifetime of access and opportunities limited only by the extent of their enthusiasm, involvement and willingness to pay forward those benefits to subsequent classes of student fellows.

## PARTNERS & FACULTY

The success of the Germination Project depends not only on the engagement and drive of our student fellows, but on the quality of our faculty and institutional partners. The Germination Project will draw from among the Philadelphia region's leading lights in academia, business, government and civic society.

# THE SELECTION PROCESS

In the Germination Project's inaugural year, the student fellow selection process will be undertaken on a pilot basis. Ten accredited Philadelphia high schools (including district schools, charter schools, magnet schools and parochial schools) selected by the trustees of the Pamela and Ajay Raju Foundation will be invited to participate. In subsequent years, the pool of participating schools will be expanded.

The application and selection process for the Germination Project is rigorous and competitive. At the beginning of the 2015 academic semester, all sophmores in good standing from invited Philadelphia high schools will be eligible to submit applications to their schools' principals. Each application will include the following components:

- Personal data form, including extracurricular resume and personal statement
- Reference letters from two prior-year teachers
- Letters of recommendation from guidance counselor

From among the applications received, each principal may submit a maximum of five student applications to the Germination Project Selection Committee. In addition to the items noted above, the Principals' submission packages must also include the applicants' academic record, comprising recent transcripts, current grades, attendance records, and to the extent available, test scores and class standings. Principals will also have the option to include their own letters of recommendation with one or more of their submission packages.

The Germination Project Selection Committee will consist of corporate and civic leaders from the Philadelphia region, appointed by the trustees of the Pamela and Ajay Raju Foundation. The Selection Committee will carefully each submission package and select students based on academic performance, extracurricular activities, written expression (based on personal statement), and the recommendations of teachers, counselors and principals. The Selection Committee will choose at least one student from every high school for which an application is submitted. In offering admission to multiple students from a given school, the Selection Committee may consider (i) the student's individual socio-economic circumstances, (ii) the overall socio-economic circumstances and performance of the high-school in question, and (iii) the capacity limits of the summer program.

The Selection Committee will issue written acceptance and rejection letters to applicants prior to the end of the 2015 academic semester. Admitted applicants will receive further detailed information in the months leading up to the commencement of the summer program.

The mission of the Germination Project is ambitious. Accordingly, the student fellows who take part in the project will be subject to high standards, lofty expectations, and a duty to deploy their talents not only for their personal gain, but for the collective benefit of the Philadelphia region and all of its stakeholders.



