

# Braver Angels 2024 National Convention

## Programs and Activities Agenda

### Thursday, June 27th

#### Afternoon Programs and Activities

*12pm-5pm*

#### Braver Lens Gallery

**Description:** This past year, Braver Angels partnered with Interfaith Photovoice to pilot our new program Braver Lens, where participants explore their political divides through photography. Come see our gallery showcasing photographs taken throughout the project.

#### Carthage College Campus Tours

**Led by:** Carthage College Student Staff

**Description:** Come take a tour of Carthage College, home of this year's Braver Angels 2024 National Convention. Get acquainted with our spaces, hear about campus life, and learn about Carthage's history and ties to Abraham Lincoln - all led by active Carthage students!

#### College Debates and Discourse Alliance Symposium

**Led by:** The College Debates and Discourse Alliance (CD&D)

**Description:** The College Debates and Discourse Alliance of Braver Angels, ACTA, and BridgeUSA has launched hundreds of campus and classroom debates at higher ed institutions across the nation. More than 10,000 students have engaged in depolarizing dialogue that greatly enhances their college education experience. In this four-hour symposium, the CD&D team (including faculty and student fellows from several institutions) will showcase the program's best practices, success stories and case studies on the campus and curricular front, research findings and metrics, and much more. The Symposium is designed for an audience of college faculty, students, and higher education leaders— and is also open to Braver Angels volunteers, community members, and Convention delegates. [Register here.](#)

#### Depolarizing Ourselves Introductory Workshop

**Led by:** John Fletcher

**Description:** The Depolarizing Ourselves Introductory Workshop is designed to help you lessen the effects of polarization when you encounter them in your political conversations.

This is a group session that is 1.5 hours long. It corresponds to the first half of the Depolarizing Within workshop and can be delivered by self-trained D.O.-Facilitators as well as BA Moderators.

## **Exhibit Hall**

**Led by:** Braver Angels Office of Field Operations (OFO) and Braver Network

**Description:** Step into the Exhibit Hall and immerse yourself in a celebration of our movement's progress, showcasing the remarkable achievements of Braver Angels alliances and field leaders alongside organizations in the Braver Network.

## **An Introduction to Becoming a Braver Angels Organizer**

**Led by:** Yvonne Boyd

**Description:** In this session you will learn the basics to becoming a BraverAngels Organizer. You will be introduced to the 8 step process of putting on a BraverAngels workshop, the tech tools we use, and where to find help and support along the way. You'll learn how to connect with a remote Organizer who can help you with an event in your community, and complete the basic training needed for working with them. This Organizer training module completes the first week/module of full Organizer training.

## **Kenosha Civil War Museum**

### **Self-Guided**

**Description:** Take a tour of Kenosha's very own Civil War Museum! The Civil War Museum is like no other Civil War museum in the country. The Museum focuses on the Civil War from the perspective of the people of the seven states of the upper middle west: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Through the use of personal stories and narratives, the Museum also explores how the Civil War impacted the people on the Western home front before, during, and after the war by connecting the prewar causes to the postwar effects. Guided tour at 2:30pm, shuttles available from campus.

## **What Can We Do to Make Braver Angels More Attractive to Reds: A Conversation with David Blankenhorn and Barbara Thomas**

**Led by:** David Blankenhorn, Barbara Thomas, Barbara Farmer

**Description:** Please join the Red Caucus in welcoming Braver Angels President David Blankenhorn and Chief Operating Officer Barbara Thomas for a conversation about how to make Braver Angels more attractive to Reds. This will be a solutions-oriented exploration, where everyone is encouraged to bring their best ideas and recommendations about recruiting, retaining, and involving Reds at all levels.

## Evening Events

*8pm-10pm*

### Presidential Debate: Red/Blue Watch Party

**Led by:** Braver Angels Debates Team

**Description:** Come watch the first presidential debate between Joe Biden and Donald Trump of the 2024 election at the largest Red/Blue Watch Party we've ever had. Grab some popcorn, sit next to your Red and Blue friends, and take part in this special gathering at the dawn of the 2024 election season.

### Film Screenings: Lincoln Presidential Foundation Documentaries

**Led by:** Lincoln Presidential Foundation

**Description:** Come watch two award-winning documentary shorts produced by the Lincoln Presidential Foundation - *Warning Signs: Lincoln's Response to Rising Tensions in the 1850s* and *Fortifying our Democracy: Lincoln's Lyceum Address*. Discussions to follow.

## Late Night Programs

*10pm-11:45pm*

### Jam Session

**Led by:** Braver Angels Music Team

**Description:** Bring your voice or an instrument to a Braver Angels Jam Session! We will share songs across musical as well as political divides - who knows what kind of new sound we will create together.

# **Friday June 28th**

## **Morning Breakouts**

*10:30am-12pm*

### **Marquee: Can We Have a Better Pandemic?**

**Led by:** Wilk Wilkinson, Jay Bhattacharya

**Description:** What can America learn from the Covid pandemic so that we can do it better the next time? And what would that improved response look like? Stanford professor Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, co-author of the Great Barrington Declaration and one of the leading critics of the government's response to the pandemic, will take up these issues with a leader who disagrees with him in a full and free conversation. We'll discuss missed opportunities, lessons learned, and how we can have a better pandemic response in the future.

### **Marquee: How Can Our Elections Be More Trustworthy?**

**Led by:** Judge Thomas B. Griffith, David Becker, Tom Cook, Cheryl Clyburn Crawford, Elizabeth Doll

**Description:** What happens when you bring together an unusual and politically diverse group to discuss trustworthy elections? This extraordinary conversation, moderated by Judge Thomas B. Griffith, will dive into the recommendations of the Braver Angels "Trustworthy Elections Report," and feature responses from Americans across the political spectrum: David Becker, founder of the Center for Election Innovation and Research; Tom Cook, a pro-Trump voter concerned about election integrity; and Cheryl Clyburn Crawford, executive director of MassVote and a leader of the NAACP-Boston branch. Together, they'll take one of the most pressing questions facing America: moving forward, what can be done to ensure that Americans across the political spectrum can agree that our elections are trustworthy?

### **Marquee: Is the Class Divide Bigger Than the Partisan Divide?**

**Led by:** Batya Ungar-Sargon, David Lapp, Corrie Zech

**Description:** Donald Trump's election in 2016 shed light on a growing reality: many people in America's working class feel as if they have been left behind and disconnected from the rest of America. Many distrust that America's political class is looking out for working men and women. Is this growing class divide an even bigger challenge than the partisan divide? And what can be done to bridge this class divide? Batya Ungar-Sargon, author of the new book, *Second Class: How the Elites Betrayed America's Working Men and Women* and Newsweek opinion editor, discusses these issues with two leaders who see themselves as part of America's working class: Wilk Wilkinson, a red and host of Derate the Hate Podcast, and Corrie Zech, a blue and someone featured in Ungar-Sargon's book. David Lapp, co-founder of Braver Angels, will moderate this conversation.

## **Braver Angels Songwriting Workshop, Part 1 of 3**

**Led by:** Braver Angels Music Team

**Description:** Want to learn to write songs? And then perform them? Guided by professional musicians eager to teach and inspire you? Here's your chance! Led by the BA Music Team, delegates will participate in a three-breakout-long process that involves a fishbowl discussion Friday morning, and reconvening in the afternoon and following morning breakouts to write, record, and rehearse original songs, which will be performed in the concert on Saturday night! Participants in the Songwriting track do not need formal musical or songwriting experience to participate, but must participate in all three breakout sessions in order for the process to work. We can't wait to make music with you!

## **Braver Angels Volunteering - How to Better Recruit, Engage & Retain Volunteers**

**Led by:** Nancy Miranda, Linda King

**Description:** The breakout session is targeted for state coordinators. Other field leaders actively involved in volunteer recruitment, engagement and retention are welcome to attend as well. The format will be a brief presentation from the Braver Volunteering initiative followed by an interactive discussion to share tips and techniques you have implemented to increase volunteerism in your area.

## **A Braver Campus Dialogue (ABCD): Piloting a New College Debates & Discourse Alliance Workshop**

**Led by:** Sadie Webb, Bill Doherty, Doug Sprei, Ross Irwin

**Description:** Developed by the College Debates & Discourse (CD&D) team with guidance from Braver Angels co-founder Bill Doherty, this workshop draws upon elements from existing BA debate and workshop models, as well as BridgeUSA conversations. This will be a highly participatory and immersive experience in which participants delve into pressing social/political issues, explore their rich complexity, and air diverse perspectives on root causes as well as potential solutions. Rather than taking affirmative or negative stances as we do in Braver Angels debates, participants will be encouraged to grapple with open-ended questions within a solution-oriented conversation. This format is ideally suited to address the nuances of complex topics such as climate change, gender issues, and the student mental health crisis.

## **Braver Listening for Better Understanding: Taking the LAPP Model to the Next Level**

**Led by:** Yael Petretti and Joel Berman (Compassionate Listening Project)

**Description:** The tools that we offer can help us listen in a non-judgmental way, especially when we are not in agreement with someone. We have used this type of deep listening skill for over thirty years in different parts of the world where there is conflict. Our experience

has taught us that "re-humanizing" the other is the key to managing and resolving conflict. While this breakout session is open to anyone, it's especially recommended for those already familiar with Braver Angels' LAPP model (Listen, Acknowledge, Pivot, Perspective).

### **Catch 'Em Early: Seeding Braver Angels in High Schools**

**Led by:** Sara Silver

**Description:** Our rationale for taking BA to high schools is to address the increasingly polarized nature of school communities across the nation. Our presentation will equip participants with the knowledge and skills: (1) to market the Braver Angels (BA) high school (HS) workshop in their communities; (2) to plan with school staff; (3) to moderate the high school workshop; (4) to train teachers to turnkey the workshop with their students; and (4) to facilitate embedding the BA habits of discourse into HS curricula.

### **Common Ground Workshop: Addressing Immigration**

**Led by:** Maggie Bayless, Lucy Gerold

**Description:** This will be a demonstration Common Ground Workshop on one of the top four issues chosen by our membership to be explored at the convention. This demonstration 90 minutes workshop will bring together a small group of Reds and Blues to see where agreements can be reached on values, concerns, and solutions. Observers are welcome.

### **Debate: "Resolved: American capitalism promotes human flourishing."**

**Led by:** Aletheia Underhile

**Description:** Does American capitalism promote human flourishing? Is it a fundamentally flawed economic system that detracts from human flourishing? Join your fellow Braver Angels for a lively debate on "Resolved: American capitalism promotes human flourishing."

### **One Small Step by StoryCorps: Conversations Across Differences**

**Led by:** StoryCorps Staff

**Description:** This breakout brings together convention delegates with different political views for one-to-one conversations—not to debate politics, but to learn who we are as people. Participants are encouraged to share their lived experiences in order to understand the origins of their beliefs. The goal is to remind the country of the humanity in all of us, even those with whom we disagree.

### **Principles and Priorities: Facing the Future of Federal Budget Policy**

**Led by:** Phil Smith (The Concord Coalition)

**Description:** Principles & Priorities is an interactive group budget exercise that puts us in the shoes of Congress. Participants learn and engage about US fiscal policy by attempting to build our own ten-year, economically sustainable federal budget plan. Working in groups of five to ten, we will "role-play" as members of the House of Representatives and review

current tax and spending policies, suggest priorities for the future, and apply our personal principles throughout the immersive exercise.

## **Putting the FUN in Fundraising: Empowering Your Alliance to Grow**

**Led by:** Dawn Strauss, Kira Barone

**Description:** Grow your alliance through FUNdraising! In this breakout, learn ways to approach individuals and local businesses to fundraise for your alliance. During this fun, interactive session, learn fundraiser ideas, how to craft your fundraising pitch and get all of your Braver Angels finance questions answered.

## **Transgender Care: Finding Common Ground**

**Led by:** Zander Keig, Jamie Reed

**Description:** The topic of gender-affirming care for minors presents unique challenges. In this session, we will delve into international best practices, such as the recent UK NHS Cass Review recommendations, to explore common ground and discuss potential implementation in the US. Led by Zander Keig, a trans man and the Red Co-Chair of the Equality Caucus, and Jamie Reed (Blue), one of the first public whistleblowers from a pediatric gender clinic in the United States.

## **Why Should Reds Like Braver Angels? Perspectives from Reds**

**Led by:** Ron McFarland

**Description:** What is the value proposition that Braver Angels offers to Reds? The Red Caucus and other Red leaders from Braver Angels will discuss the value that Reds can derive from Braver Angels. We will share stories and our experiences of what has worked for us and for others we know. We will share the value we have found in the idea of a "level playing field." We will share our appreciation of the freedom from scorn and shaming that we have found in Braver Angels, and how that has enhanced our lives. And, we will discuss how we as Reds can help to make Braver Angels even better than it is today.

## Afternoon Breakouts

*3pm-4:30pm*

### Marquee: Can Faith Communities Help America Navigate 2024?

**Led by:** Anne Snyder, Bishop Mark Beckwith, Rev. Daniel Darling, Paul Lambert, Rhonda Lindner, and Fr. Aaron Wessman

**Description:** Some people believe that faith communities have been just as much a part of the problem of polarization as they have been part of the solution. But can't faith communities both be faithful to their convictions and be forces for depolarization? In conversation with various religious leaders—including a Southern Baptist leader, an Episcopal bishop, a Jewish interfaith organizer, a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints expert on religious pluralism, and a Catholic priest—participants will hear how faith communities can draw on their own traditions and principles to help Americans both stand for their convictions and be peacemakers amidst a polarizing election year. This session is moderated by Anne Snyder, editor-in-chief of Comment magazine.

### Marquee: How Can Media Be Less of a Problem and More of a Solution?

**Led by:** Mónica Guzmán, Batya Ungar-Sargon, Joy Mayer

**Description:** This panel will be moderated by lifelong journalist Mónica Guzmán and will feature Batya Ungar-Sargon, Deputy Opinion Editor at Newsweek, and Joy Mayer, Director of Trusting News. Together, they'll explore why the public's trust in media has been broken and how we can work to rebuild it.

### Artificial Intelligence (and Algorithms): Threats, Remedies, and Governance

**Led by:** Don Byrd, Isak Asare, David Crandall

**Description:** AI and other algorithms have the potential to make the polarization of our society even worse; they also have the potential to reduce polarization, but without well-thought-out governance, negative effects are much more likely. This breakout session will focus on both threats to civil discourse caused by AI and other algorithms, and on ways governments can mitigate the threats and support applications with positive effects. The session will have three parts: first, establish a common basis for discussion with information about AI; hear the current perspectives of experts (including at least one AI staffer of a member of Congress) and then engage in open discussion.

### Braver Angels Songwriting Workshop, Part 2 of 3

**Led by:** Braver Angels Music Team

**Description:** Want to learn to write songs? And then perform them? Guided by professional musicians eager to teach and inspire you? Here's your chance! Led by the BA Music Team, delegates will participate in a three-breakout-long process that involves a



fishbowl discussion Friday morning, and reconvening in the afternoon and following morning breakouts to write, record, and rehearse original songs, which will be performed in the concert on Saturday night! Participants in the Songwriting track do not need formal musical or songwriting experience to participate, but must participate in all three breakout sessions in order for the process to work. We can't wait to make music with you!

## **Bringing Debates and Discourse to the College Classroom**

**Led by:** Bryan Paul, Doug Sprei, and Sadie Webb (CD&D Alliance)

**Description:** In this faculty-focused session, participants will learn how educators can deploy the College Debates & Discourse Alliance's **Curricular Toolkit** in their classrooms. CD&D faculty fellows from several universities will share case studies and highlight how they have used the Toolkit to successfully implement Braver Angels debates as an immersive course assignment for students. Participants will leave this session with a clear sense of how Braver Angels programming can align with pedagogical practice, support the educational mission of their institutions, and effectively integrate debates and discourse into their own course curriculum.

## **The Civic Renewal Playbook: Taking Action & Building Hope**

**Led by:** Harry Boyte, Charles Hecksher, Barbara Farmer, Steve Saltwick

**Description:** Hear an inspiring narrative of Civic Renewal that generates HOPE and ENGAGEMENT of volunteers and communities who take leadership, as citizens, in addressing public problems. Understand how field ACTION can be orchestrated by Alliances, States and Network Partners. A practical playbook of resources, successes, and critical success factors will be presented and discussed.

## **Common Ground Workshop: How to Reduce Economic Inequality and Increase Growth**

**Led by:** Sandra Birkhead, Tom Smerling

**Description:** This will be a demonstration Common Ground Workshop on one of the top four issues chosen by our membership to be explored at the convention. This demonstration 90 minutes workshop will bring together a small group of Reds and Blues to see where agreements can be reached on values, concerns, and solutions. Observers are welcome.

## **Debate: "Resolved: The rights of a woman take precedence over the rights of a fetus."**

**Led by:** Kayla Johnston

**Description:** Should the rights of a woman take precedence over the rights of a fetus? How do we build up our country together when we disagree on such grave moral issues? Bring your passion for justice AND your desire for better disagreement and join us to share and

listen as we debate “Resolved: The rights of a woman take precedence over the rights of a fetus.”

## **Debate: "Resolved: Progressivism is a force for good in the Democratic Party."**

**Led by:** Jessie Mannisto

**Description:** Is progressivism a positive force in the Democratic Party? Or do progressive politics do more harm than good in the Democratic Party? Join your fellow Braver Angels to debate “Resolved: Progressivism is a force for good in the Democratic Party.”

## **The Dignity Index: A New Tool to Ease Divisions, Prevent Violence, and Solve Problems**

**Led by:** Tami Pyfer, Preston Brightwell, Madeleine Jones (UNITE)

**Description:** The Dignity Index is a brief, intuitive scale that scores speech from a low of ONE – which sees no dignity at all in the other side – to a high of EIGHT - which sees dignity in everyone. Learning to recognize the features of contempt and dignity in our language helps us communicate and solve problems together – not only in politics, but also in our families, our workplaces, our communities, and in our country. Come learn why veteran Republican pollster Frank Luntz said of the Index, “It is long overdue, and no one’s tried this before: it has the potential to be incredibly impactful.

## **A Grand Bargain: A Practical Way to Resolve America's Critical Problems**

**Led by:** Sol Erdman (Center for Collaborative Democracy)

**Description:** Join a conversation about the Grand Bargain Project, an initiative by the Center for Collaborative Democracy, designed to unite Americans of all kinds -- young and old; left and right; urban and rural; poor and well-off; white and of color -- around a shared vision of our country's future, consisting of six objectives that over 90 percent of Americans see as critical to their family’s future: 1) Boosting economic mobility, productivity, and growth; 2) Reforming education so students can reach their potential; 3) Making healthcare more effective and less costly; 4) Stabilizing the global climate; 5) Curbing the national debt; 6) Making the tax code fairer and simpler.

## **Meetings That Connect and Get Things Done**

**Led by:** Bill Doherty

**Description:** Part of the secret sauce of Braver Angels is having really good meetings. Learn the essential strategies and tools from our chief workshop and meeting designer.

## **One Small Step by StoryCorps: Conversations Across Differences**

**Led by:** StoryCorps Staff

**Description:** This breakout brings together convention delegates with different political views for one-to-one conversations—not to debate politics, but to learn who we are as people. Participants are encouraged to share their lived experiences in order to understand the origins of their beliefs. The goal is to remind the country of the humanity in all of us, even those with whom we disagree.

## **Why Are We So Angry?**

**Led by:** Martha Bayles

**Description:** Anger can be constructive, a stimulus to greater understanding between people and a catalyst for positive change. But anger can also be destructive when indulged in for its own sake. What are the forces, commercial and political, that have turned so many Americans from constructive to destructive anger in recent years?

## **Winning Elections the Braver Angels Way**

**Led by:** Elizabeth Doll, Alicia Gregg, Doug Teschner, Amy Harris, Dan Newhouse

**Description:** Can you bridge the partisan divide and win competitive elections? Yes—and we'll hear from people who have done exactly that. Electeds from across the country, at different levels of government and in different types of districts will explain how they engage across divides and identify the correct audiences to win. Consultants will explain how negative advertising sometimes backfires and how they avoid negative advertising while still successfully driving turnout or raising funds for their candidates. Party leads will explain why it's better for everyone for candidates to compete in a depolarizing way.

## Special Activities

*4:30pm-6pm*

### Braver Lens Gallery & Reception

**Led by:** Roman Williams, Elizabeth Doll, Mark Metzger, Braver Lens Leaders

**Description:** This past year, Braver Angels partnered with Interfaith Photovoice to pilot our new program Braver Lens, where participants explore their political divides through photography. Come see our gallery showcasing photographs taken throughout the project and hear directly from participants about their experiences leading Braver Lens projects in their own communities.

### Debate Chair Training: Mock Debate

**Led by:** Natalie Laroche, Jessie Mannisto

**Description:** Interested in becoming a debate chair? Complete steps two and three of your training here in Kenosha! Participants will select a resolution as a group; then each will have a chance to wield the gavel while others role play challenging experiences you may encounter as a chair.

Note: Participants must complete the online chair training course before attending this workshop. [Visit our webpage to get started.](#)

### Exhibit Hall

**Led by:** Braver Angels Office of Field Operations (OFO) and Braver Network

**Description:** Step into the Exhibit Hall and immerse yourself in a celebration of our movement's progress, showcasing the remarkable achievements of Braver Angels alliances and field leaders alongside organizations in the Braver Network.

### Film Screening: The Coddling of the American Mind

**Led by:** Braver Angels Film Club

**Description:** Presented by Korchula Productions and Substack. Adapted from the bestselling book by Greg Lukianoff (FIRE) and Jonathan Haidt (Heterodox Academy), Ted Balaker's documentary explores how anxiety, depression, and suicide shot up among young people, and why nobody noticed. Then one man's brush with suicide revealed some unexpected clues, and five 20-somethings from around the world began to piece together a solution they hoped would pull themselves out of the darkness. Post-screening discussion to follow.

### Purpletown: Photos and Voices From the Thin Divide

**Led by:** Paul Shambroom

**Description:** Purpletowns are communities that were exact or virtual ties in the 2020 US presidential election. Is there a natural process of social preservation in these places, an

unspoken system of checks and balances on the discord that plagues the rest of our nation? Photographer Paul Shambroom hit the road to find out, visiting over 60 such communities in 22 states between 2021 and 2024.

## **2023 Civic Renewal Platform Revision**

**Led by:** Elizabeth Doll

**Description:** Join the Platform Committee to review and discuss this year's revisions and share your contributions. Be ready to participate in a collaborative discussion and healthy conflict over ideas. This will be the only opportunity to provide input on the platform at the Convention before the entire delegate body votes on a final draft.

## Evening Events

*7:30pm-9pm*

### **American Spectacle: The Debate, the Election, and 2024 in History**

**Led by:** Adam Garfinkle, Martha Bayles, Peter Skerry, Luke Nathan Phillips

**Description:** Join Adam Garfinkle, Martha Bayles, Peter Skerry, and Luke Nathan Phillips for a panel discussion to make sense of Thursday night's presidential debate. How have elite irresponsibility, infotainment, and an age of decadence led to the spectacle of this election season? What should Braver Angels members do as leaders in this increasingly historic time, if political violence, international conflict, or natural disaster further destabilize our politics and divide us against each other?

### **Debate: "Resolved: Illegal protests are sometimes necessary."**

**Led by:** Sadie Webb

**Description:** Are illegal protests ever justified? Or is it always unwarranted? Bring your perspective and join us to debate "Resolved: Illegal forms of protest are sometimes justified."

### **Mind The Gap: A Braver Angels/New York Theatre Workshop Performance**

**Led by:** Mark Metzger, Mae Rum, Brent Morden, New York Theatre Workshop

**Description:** In partnership with New York Theatre Workshop, come watch an original performance created by Braver Angels members about the political divisions that may or may not exist across our generational divides.

## Late Night Programs

9pm-11pm

### Braver Angels Got Talent!

**Led by:** Ben Caron, Stacie Proctor

**Description:** Step up to the mic and show us what you got! Join us for an evening of inspiration and entertainment as our leaders (yes—we mean you!) share your skills, passions, and creative talents. This won't be your usual song and dance.

### Debate Caucus of the Youngster Angels Society

**Led by:** Youngster Angels Society

**Description:** The Chair invites all millennials, zoomers, and members of adjacent generations to join the national debates team at 10pm for a raucous, unhinged, grandiloquent, incredibly half-serious and importantly unimportant debate about something or other. Practice your oratory, offend and be offended, take a look at the traditions from which Braver Angels Debates emerged, and make new friends in the vast depolarizing conspiracy!

### Film Screening: Civil War

**Led by:** Mark Metzger

**Description:** Presented by A24. Oscar-nominated Alex Garland (*Ex Machina*, *Annihilation*, *Men*) takes us on an adrenaline-fueled thrill ride through a near-future fractured America balanced on the razor's edge. Starring Kirsten Dunst, Cailee Spaeny, Wagner Moura, Stephen McKinley Kenderson, and Nick Offerman. Post-screening discussion to follow.

# **Saturday June 29th**

## **Morning Breakouts**

*10:30am-12pm*

### **Marquee: A Gay Man and a Conservative Christian Walk Into a Culture War...**

**Led by:** Jonathan Rauch, Glenn Stanton, David Blankenhorn

**Description:** During the gay marriage wars, Glenn Stanton, a senior leader at Focus on the Family, was one of America's leading advocates for traditional marriage. Jonathan Rauch, a gay man, was one of America's leading advocates for gay marriage. Then an amazing thing happened: these two ideological opponents began to talk with each other, became friends, and eventually became founding board members of an organization tackling polarization (Braver Angels). Gay marriage is now the law of the land, but controversies about sex and gender and the role of religion continue to divide Americans. Should Americans continue to fight the culture wars over these issues, or is there a better way? This session is moderated by David Blankenhorn, the president of Braver Angels—and a leader who, in an earlier career, found himself on both sides of the gay marriage wars, and a matchmaker to Glenn and Jonathan.

### **Marquee: Is it Racist to Be Colorblind?**

**Led by:** Monica Harris, John Wood Jr.

**Description:** Is it racist to be colorblind? Martin Luther King Jr. called upon Americans to be judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin. But does not seeing color also mean we blind ourselves to the racism against which King fought? Monica Harris (President of FAIR), John Wood Jr., and more confront the arguments for and against colorblindness in this exciting conversation on race in America.

### **America's Unfinished Work**

**Led by:** Bob Steenstra

**Description:** Eight Score and one years ago Abraham Lincoln made a speech at Gettysburg which was rooted in our past, relevant to his present, challenges us today, and continues to provide inspiration for us as we seek to shape America's future. Join us as we take a deep dive into Lincoln's immortal words uttered at Gettysburg, along with other speeches and documents that help trace the trajectory of America's "Unfinished Work." Last year, Braver Angels member and Gettysburg Licensed Battlefield Guide Bob Steenstra led us on tours of the battlefield. He joins us again this year to lead this presentation.

### **Braver Angels Songwriting Workshop, Part 3 of 3**

**Led by:** Braver Angels Music Team



**Description:** Want to learn to write songs? And then perform them? Guided by professional musicians eager to teach and inspire you? Here's your chance! Led by the BA Music Team, delegates will participate in a three-breakout-long process that involves a fishbowl discussion Friday morning, and reconvening in the afternoon and following morning breakouts to write, record, and rehearse original songs, which will be performed in the concert on Saturday night! Participants in the Songwriting track do not need formal musical or songwriting experience to participate, but must participate in all three breakout sessions in order for the process to work. We can't wait to make music with you!

## **Bringing a Debate to Your Community**

**Led by:** Mae Rum Gary Holland, and Emily Graham

**Description:** Interested in organizing a debate in your community but not sure where to start? This breakout session will guide you through the process, with an emphasis on identifying the needs of your town, state, or community. Delegates will learn the essentials to organizing a debate, including the timeline for preparation, securing the right venue, publicizing your event, and moving from topic to resolution. Participants will leave ready to fill out the Event Request Form (ERF) and assemble a star debate team. *Please note that this breakout focuses on organizing a debate—not on serving as a debate chair.*

## **Common Ground Workshop: Upholding Free Speech and Challenging Hate Speech**

**Led by:** Linda Bidlack, James Paisner

**Description:** This will be a demonstration Common Ground Workshop on one of the top four issues chosen by our membership to be explored at the convention. This demonstration 90 minutes workshop will bring together a small group of Reds and Blues to see where agreements can be reached on values, concerns, and solutions. Observers are welcome.

## **Cultivating Student Leaders in Civil Discourse**

**Led by:** Sadie Webb, Ross Irwin, Kayla Johnston, Lucas Rice

**Description:** How can student leaders at colleges and universities foster a culture of free expression and open inquiry on their campuses? This student-focused session will be led by Sadie Webb and Kayla Johnston, leaders of the College Debates & Discourse Alliance (CD&D), Ross Irwin, Chief Operating Officer of BridgeUSA (BUSA), and Lucas Rice, a recent graduate of Texas A&M Corpus Christi who has served as a CD&D Student Fellow. Participants will learn how to start a BridgeUSA chapter, partner with the CD&D team to launch successful debates and events, and align their efforts with faculty to build a vibrant campus community of discourse practice.

## **Debate: "Resolved: Deport undocumented immigrants."**

**Led by:** Doug Sprei

**Description:** Should undocumented immigrants be deported? Is there an alternate way we should deal with the immigration crisis our nation faces? Bring your ideas to share with your fellow Braver Angels in a debate on “Resolved: Deport undocumented immigrants.”

## **Debate: "Resolved: Populism is a force for good in the Republican Party."**

**Led by:** Luke Nathan Phillips

**Description:** Is populism a positive force in the Republican Party? Or do populist politics do more harm than good in the Republican Party? Join your fellow Braver Angels to debate “Resolved: Populism is a force for good in the Republican Party.”

## **Depolarizing Media Coverage to Depolarize America**

**Led by:** Sue Lani Madsen, Joy Mayer

**Description:** News coverage too often contributes to polarization, when it should instead make us all more empathetic toward and curious about each other. Why is that? What should journalists be doing differently? And what can the public do – both to influence news coverage and to be more cautious consumers of information? Join this conversation with Joy Mayer, executive director of Trusting News, a national nonprofit dedicated to standing “in the trust gap between newsrooms and the communities they aim to serve,” and Braver Angels volunteer and local conservative journalist Sue Lani Madsen, who recently piloted a workshop on Depolarizing Within for Media. They’ll be joined by other working journalists ready to participate with you in a lively discussion on how you can be a part of the solution in depolarizing your own media ecosystem.

## **How Can Organizations Help Fuel The Social Movement? A Braver Network Gathering**

**Led by:** Karly Behymer, Vee Cangiano, John Saunders, David Lapp, Braver Network Team

**Description:** In this session, we’ll hear how organizations in Braver Network– from conservative groups to progressive groups to nonpartisan groups, from advocacy groups to religious groups to political groups—are contributing to the social movement for depolarization and civic renewal. We’ll also ask, how can your organization be part of the solution? Come join this wonderful opportunity to meet leaders from other organizations. Note: Leaders from all organizations are welcome to this session; your organization does not currently have to be part of Braver Network.

## **How to Become Politically Antifragile**

**Led by:** Barbara Farmer, Zander Keig

**Description:** Take a deep dive into how colliding worldviews separate us, how our brains trick us into seeing those that disagree with us as enemies. and how these very same brains can create new constructs in which "they" become part of "us." Join us to discuss strategies

for gaining emotional control, reframing difficult conversations, and building strength by meeting challenges head-on.

### **One Small Step by StoryCorps: Conversations Across Differences**

**Led by:** StoryCorps Staff

**Description:** This breakout brings together convention delegates with different political views for one-to-one conversations—not to debate politics, but to learn who we are as people. Participants are encouraged to share their lived experiences in order to understand the origins of their beliefs. The goal is to remind the country of the humanity in all of us, even those with whom we disagree.

### **Reduce the Rancor, Minnesota**

**Led by:** Bill Doherty

**Description:** Get a hands-on description of how Minnesota organized 30 major organizations and obtained the cosponsorship of the Republican and Democratic state chairs. Learn how to apply this success to your state.

### **Trust in Public Health Initiative - Moving Forward from Listening to Action**

**Led by:** Beth Malow, Leslie Lopato, Lincoln Earle-Centers, Wilk Wilkinson, Craig Diamond, Edward Strickler, Travis Tripoldi

**Description:** The BA initiative on restoring Truth and Trust in Public Health was formed in response to the deep societal fractures and erosion of trust in public health institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing. This breakout session will review current activities of the initiative, consider future directions and discuss ways to move from workshop settings into real-world engagement, including disseminating our work and developing policy recommendations. We seek and welcome input from BA community members with different perspectives about the pandemic experience, including public health workers and medical professionals.

### **Trustworthy Elections Report: Exploring the Details**

**Led by:** Bill Carberry

**Description:** This workshop will provide an opportunity for delegates to explore the question of how to achieve elections that can be trusted by Reds and Blues, with a panel of members of the Braver Angels Trustworthy Elections Leadership Team. Their Report, released in February of this year, includes 23 recommendations for electoral reform. What questions do you have about these recommendations? Were there solutions that you wish were included? Everything is open for discussion.

## Afternoon Breakouts

*1:30pm-3pm*

### Marquee: Can We Really Do Nothing About Immigration?

**Led by:** Peter Skerry, Theresa Cardinal Brown, Jim Robb, Diego Sánchez

**Description:** Immigration is now the number one issue on voters' minds. But is it really an unsolvable issue? What if we started with leaders from different sides talking with each other? In this session, we'll hear how leaders in Washington, D.C. on different sides of the immigration debate have begun doing just that in an effort to build trust and see what's possible. Speakers in this session will include Theresa Cardinal Brown from the Bipartisan Policy Center, Jim Robb from NumbersUSA, and Diego Sanchez from The Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration. This session is moderated by Peter Skerry, a professor at Boston College and a leading scholar and writer on immigration issues.

### Marquee: The Values We Share

**Led by:** Terry Szuplat

**Description:** Terry Szuplat, one of President Obama's longest-serving White House speechwriters and author of "Say It Well," shares how we can connect with our families, coworkers, neighbors, and fellow citizens by communicating with civility and empathy and appealing to the common values we share as Americans.

### A Braver Way Podcast: Behind the Scenes

**Led by:** Mónica Guzman, David Albright

**Description:** Join us for an exclusive peek behind the curtain of A Braver Way Podcast as Executive Producer & Host Monica Guzman and Senior Producer David Albright share the intricate process behind each episode, all in service of our mission to confront political polarization. Then, contribute your ideas and feedback during a roundtable discussion, shaping the future of the podcast with your input on potential guests and topics. Perfect for fans and storytelling enthusiasts alike, this session offers a unique opportunity to engage with our mission of fostering constructive dialogue in divided times.

### Campaign for Kindness in Your Community

**Led by:** Cathy Bien (Resurrection)

**Description:** In the midst of polarizing political campaigns this fall, a "campaign" with a simple message to "Vote for Kindness" has the power to inspire people to treat one another with kindness and respect, and offer hope for uniting our country. This workshop will provide practical tips and resources for organizations and individuals to bring a Kindness Campaign to your community.

### Common Ground Workshop: Addressing Abortion

**Led by:** Reena Bernards, John Fletcher

**Description:** This will be a demonstration Common Ground Workshop on one of the top four issues chosen by our membership to be explored at the convention. This demonstration 90 minutes workshop will bring together a small group of Reds and Blues to see where agreements can be reached on values, concerns, and solutions. Observers are welcome.

## **Conversations with Cameras – A Practical Tool for Addressing Polarization with Your Smartphone**

**Led by:** Roman Williams

**Description:** Cameras are everywhere and everyone seems to be snapping and uploading photos. Too often these pictures build walls between us, only adding to the problem of polarization. What if there was a way to use photos on your smartphone in conversations that build relationships across our differences? During this workshop you will be paired up with someone from a different political point of view to talk about your hopes by sharing photographs. At the end of the workshop you'll have a new tool to take back to your local alliance, one that will help address polarization one photo at a time.

## **Crossing Silos to Model Democracy: An Interdisciplinary Experiment**

**Led by:** Danny Morales, Ryan Echols, Jennifer Hall-Witt, Tabatha Pilgrim-Thompson (SHIFT)

**Description:** The SHIFT Action Lab is a collaboration powered by the SHIFT Foundation (a Braver Network partner) that has brought together practitioners from bridge-building, organizing, and governance. Since its inception in 2022, the Lab has navigated defining its core mission and values, key initiatives, and a successful participatory grant-making process. We invite you to hear about our journey and imagine what political life and civic engagement could look like in your community if practitioners left their silos and started working together towards civic renewal.

## **Debate: "Resolved: Cancel culture is a threat to American democracy."**

**Led by:** Cynthia O'Brien

**Description:** Is cancel culture a threat to American democracy? Join your fellow Braver Angels to discuss the implications of the culture around free speech in our country today in a debate on "Resolved: Cancel culture is a threat to American democracy."

## **Debate: "Resolved: Vote Third Party."**

**Led by:** Luke Nathan Phillips

**Description:** Many Americans feel inadequately represented by the two-party system. Do you and, if so, is voting third party the solution? In the wake of the first 2024 Presidential Debate, join your fellow Braver Angels for a better debate, the BA Way, on "Resolved: Vote third party."

## Heartland Convention Initiative

**Led by:** Matt Hausman, Cameron Swallow

**Description:** This breakout will be an information session for people willing and able to travel to Milwaukee, WI, before and during the Republican National Convention (July 12-18) and/or to Chicago, IL, before and during the Democratic National Convention (August 13- 22) in order to support planned Braver Angels activities as part of the Heartland Initiative. Delegates who could host political convention volunteers in their homes or neighborhoods are encouraged to connect with this group.

## How to Organize a Braver Angels Caucus in Your State Legislature

**Led by:** Elizabeth Doll, Bill Doherty, Maury Giles, Doug Teschner, Alicia Gregg, Patricia Higgins

**Description:** Three states (MN, NH, and WA) now have Braver Angels-inspired civility caucuses or commissions in their state legislatures and others are working in that direction. Braver Network member Future Caucus, has cross-partisan caucuses filled with young legislators in other states. Public officials like to talk and it's very possible to organize them to talk with each other! However, it takes vision, planning, & perseverance to get there. In this session, those who have done it will walk you through how they made it happen.

## How to Partner with the College Debates and Discourse Alliance

**Led by:** Doug Sprei, Mae Rum, Nancy Cunningham

**Description:** The College Debates and Discourse Alliance (CD&D) has launched 275+ campus debates, classroom debates and workshops, engaging more than 10,000 students across the nation. We have frequently partnered with BA volunteers and field leaders – including several with deep professional experience as educators and/or strong connections to their local college communities. This breakout session is ideal for Convention delegates who wish to help us bring vibrant debates and discourse events to campuses in their local area. CD&D leaders Doug Sprei and Mae Rum will be joined by Nancy Cunningham, a BA Alliance leader in North Carolina who has collaborated with the team to launch successful programming at institutions like UNC Wilmington and Cape Fear Community College. Participants will examine the CD&D team's playbook and best practices for organizing events with students and faculty, and explore emerging opportunities for drawing local community members to collegiate events.

## The Human Library: A Place for Courageous Conversations

**Led by:** Ben Caron (The Human Library)

**Description:** A worldwide movement in over 80 countries, Human Libraries are conversational events where trained volunteers offer themselves as "open books" to answer questions about their fascinating and diverse life experiences. Designed to foster greater understanding and authentic sharing, these events invite us all to get curious about our fellow human beings and look beyond stereotypes and assumptions. Join this breakout

session to sit in dialogue with both your fellow delegates and local guest volunteers who have volunteered to be "open books" for the session. All are welcome. Braver Angels delegates who are interested in being an "open book" in the breakout session can apply here: <https://bit.ly/HLBA2024> or email [ben.caron@humanlibrary.org](mailto:ben.caron@humanlibrary.org).

### **One Small Step by StoryCorps: Conversations Across Differences**

**Led by:** StoryCorps Staff

**Description:** This breakout brings together convention delegates with different political views for one-to-one conversations—not to debate politics, but to learn who we are as people. Participants are encouraged to share their lived experiences in order to understand the origins of their beliefs. The goal is to remind the country of the humanity in all of us, even those with whom we disagree.

### **Winning Bigly: The Urban Underdog's Secrets to Success**

**Led by:** New York Young Republican Club

**Description:** How did the reddest Young Republican club in the country score key wins in the bluest city in America? From flipping local City Council districts red, to building a robust and diverse Caucus network, to attracting crowds of hundreds at their socials and Speakers Series – how did they do it? What did it take to secure President Donald J. Trump as the Keynote Speaker at their 111th Annual Gala and to organize Trump's landmark South Bronx rally? Hear from members of the board of the New York Young Republican Club (NYYRC), the nation's oldest and largest Young Republican club, on the lessons they've learned growing the NYYRC into a key player in the New York political landscape – against all odds.

## **Special Activities**

*3pm-4pm*

### **Braver Lens Gallery**

**Description:** This past year, Braver Angels partnered with Interfaith Photovoice to pilot our new program Braver Lens, where participants explore their political divides through photography. Come see our gallery showcasing photographs taken throughout the project.

### **Exhibit Hall**

**Description:** Step into the Exhibit Hall and immerse yourself in a celebration of our movement's progress, showcasing the remarkable achievements of Braver Angels alliances and field leaders alongside organizations in the Braver Network.



## Evening Events

*7:30pm-10pm*

### Closing Night Concert

**Led by:** Braver Angels Music Team, Sons of Serendip

**Description:** A Celebration. Organized by Micah Hendler and John Carroll, co-chairs of the Braver Angels Music Team. The Opening Act includes a variety of Braver Angels musicians performing covers, original songs, and, most notably, the songs written during the Common Ground Songwriting Workshops. Afterward, Sons of Serendip will perform a headline set.

## **Sunday June 30th (Post-Convention)**

### **Interdenominational Service**

*8am-9am*

**Led by:** Mark Beckwith

### **Fireside Chat with Founders**

*9:15am - 10:15am*

**Led by:** David Blankenhorn, Bill Doherty, David Lapp

### **Morning Breakouts**

*10:30am - 12pm*

### **Citizens Think Tank Training: How to Help Lead Our Next Issue Initiative**

**Led by:** Reena Bernards, Bill Carberry, David Lapp

**Description:** Learn how you can get involved in the Citizens Think Tank Initiative on our chosen issue. Based on the work of the Trustworthy Elections Campaign, we will discuss the volunteer roles needed for an effective campaign, such as Project Lead, Communications Coordinator, Data Manager, Leadership Committee member (6 Reds and 6 Blues,) Pre-read and Report writers, Common Ground workshop organizers, moderators, and Zoom managers. We will discuss the timeline, as well as how to disseminate the Report on the findings through the media and how to effectively reach political representatives.

### **How Do We Get Technology Right at Braver Angels?**

**Led by:** Andrew Stillman

**Description:** This session focuses on the critical issue of how we use technology at Braver Angels. You will learn about how our national team of paid staff and die-hard volunteers serves a wide range of users, running a team that solves knotty problems “The BA Way.” You will meet the team of creators and supporters and see demos of a variety of tools. You’ll also be given time to ask questions and provide feedback on unmet technology needs or concerns.