

INSIDE NEWS

from the President

October 2025

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Where Courage Meets Community: Highlights from our College Women's Summit in Scottsdale



More than **113** attendees—including students from **35** colleges and universities and President's Club members from across the country—gathered for a weekend of connection, inspiration, and formation.

The Luce Center hosted its **College Women's Summit** in **Scottsdale, Arizona**, October 10–11, bringing together more than **113** participants, including students from **35** colleges and universities and **President's Club** members from across the country.

Special guests included Luce Center Board Member **Linda Teetz** and **Michelle Arndt**, senior grant director of the **T.W. Lewis Foundation**, which provided every attendee with a copy of ***Solid Ground*** by **Thomas W. Lewis**.

Among the attendees were 12 students from **Texas Tech University's Turning Point USA** chapter, who drove more than **900** miles from **Lubbock** to **Scottsdale** to take part in the weekend. "This experience has been so eye opening. Hearing from different women with the same views and beliefs as me is so inspiring and encouraging." said **Lizzie Babb**, a student at **Texas Tech University**.



(Left) **Grand Canyon University** students **Lindsay Price** and **Jamie Price**, and **Ele Winner** (**James Madison University**) proudly hold their copies of ***Solid Ground*** by **Thomas W. Lewis**, provided by the **T.W. Lewis Foundation**. (Right) 2025 Summer interns **Anastasia Leffas** (**Benedictine College**), **Emilie Santoso** (**Hillsdale College**), and **Virginia Fehrer** (**Virginia Tech**) capture a joyful moment in Scottsdale.

“You Belong Here”

Luce Center President **Kimberly Begg** opened the Summit by welcoming students and emphasizing that it marked “the beginning of a relationship—a pathway to mentorship that can change your life.”

“You’re part of a new generation of conservatives who can be counted on to stand firm in truth and lead with courage,” she said.

She spoke of the challenges facing Gen Z, which has been called “the loneliest generation,” noting how isolation, leftist indoctrination, and cultural pressure have led many young women to suppress their conservative instincts.

“Deep down, you know that real happiness doesn’t come from approval or applause—it comes from living in truth,” she said.

She also honored **Charlie Kirk**, whose example of courage and faith continues to inspire young leaders nationwide. The Summit took place on the day marking one month since his assassination. “Even in our sorrow,” she said, “we see the enduring strength of Charlie’s example. His fearlessness and love for America live on in the young leaders he inspired—young women like you.”

The Summit brought together powerful voices shaping America’s cultural and public policy landscape, challenging attendees to live their conservative convictions boldly in a world that pressures them to compromise.

Courage in Leadership and a New Golden Age for America

KT McFarland, deputy national security advisor for the first Trump administration, opened the Summit banquet with a sweeping reflection on American strength, energy independence, and the power of principled leadership.

She traced the roots of the “America First” foreign policy doctrine, explaining how it sought to rebuild U.S. manufacturing, strengthen alliances, and end “forever wars.”

“We’re really on the cusp of a great renaissance in the United States—a new golden age,” she said. “No more foreign wars. No more getting into wars we can’t win.”



Kimberly Begg opens the Summit with remarks on courage, faith, and community.



(Left) **Mercedes Skidd** of the **University of Dallas** asks a question following **KT McFarland**’s powerful remarks. (Middle) Luce Center Board Member **Linda Teetz** catches up with her longtime friend McFarland. (Right) President’s Club members **Britt Balkcom** and **Linda Tiffany** enjoy conversation with McFarland.



McFarland also reflected on her early years in national security, when few women held leadership positions. “When I was a young woman in college, **I didn’t have any role models,**” she said. “**The great difference now is that with the Luce Center, you have them—and that’s why this work is so important.**”

In a candid Q&A, McFarland urged students to embrace courage, perseverance, and purpose in their professional lives: “Over-promise and over-deliver—because you’re the only ones who can do it.”

The Power of Quiet Influence



Isabel Brown, host of *The Isabel Brown Show* with the *Daily Wire* and author of *The End of the Alphabet: How Gen Z Can Save America*, spoke about influence in an age obsessed with visibility.

She shared her own story of standing firm in college classrooms where truth was unwelcome—and reminded students that real change begins in unseen moments of courage.

“It’s not the viral video or the big platform that changes lives,” Brown said. “It’s sitting across the table with someone over a cup of coffee. It’s raising your hand in class when you know the truth won’t be popular. It’s choosing to keep showing up.”

Brown urged attendees to measure their success not by followers but by faithfulness—to live lives of integrity that quietly transform those around them.



(Top) **Isabel Brown** speaks on the power of quiet influence, reminding students that real change begins in everyday acts of courage. (Middle Row): Brown meets with President’s Club members **Mike and May Hardiman**; **Grace Jenkins (University of Arizona)**, **Ele Winner**, and **Shelby Johnstone (Grand Canyon University)**; **Belmont Abbey College** students **Anna Holt**, **Kaki Williams**, **Maria Martin**, and **Wheaton College** student **Elena Fromm**. (Bottom) **Biola University** student **Isela Becerra** asks a question during Q&A.

Courageous Leadership for a Stronger America

Host of *The Liz Wheeler Show* and author of *Hide Your Children: Exposing the Marxists Behind the Attack on America's Kids*, **Liz Wheeler** invited students to reclaim an authentic vision of womanhood rooted in truth and faith, not trends.

She reminded attendees that womanhood is not a social construct or a role to perform, but a divine calling—one that reflects God’s creative design and carries eternal purpose. She noted that women are targeted culturally because of their formative influence in the first and most fundamental institution: the family.

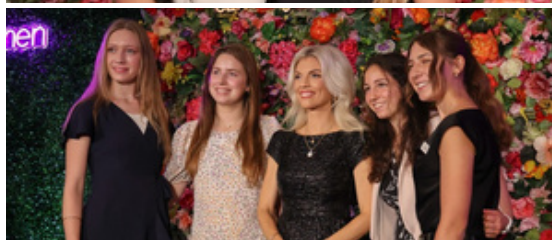
“Your presence is required,” she said. **“If you want to be truly influential, the most influential you can be is the formation of your own family.”**

Wheeler urged students to make career and life choices through this lens—protecting their capacity to be present to the people entrusted to them.

Her remarks echoed a central Summit theme: conservative women are the trustees of a free and flourishing America. They must lead with moral clarity, faith-filled purpose, and courage.



Liz Wheeler speaks about the formative influence of women and their essential role in shaping families and culture.



(Left) **Alex Clark** shares her inspiring personal story, challenging students to anchor their lives in truth rather than comfort or approval. (Middle Top) Clark meets **Kayla King** from **Grand Canyon University**. (Middle Bottom) Wheeler connects with **Bridget O’Hearn** and **Mara O’Hearn** from **Johnson County Community College**, **Lucy Evich** (**Luce Center fall intern**) and **Adalie Tuman** (**University of Dallas**). (Right) Wheeler signs a copy of her bestselling book for **Aliza Hopkins** of **SUNY Oswego**.

Alex Clark: Conviction Over Comfort

Turning Point USA’s **Alex Clark**, host of *Culture Apothecary*, offered a personal testimony of conviction over compromise. Once on track for a mainstream media career, she recounted how she gave up her dream radio job rather than betray her values.

“I had everything I thought I wanted—until I refused to go along with the lies,” Clark said.

“Calling is costly—it might take your comfort, your reputation, even your safety. But **when truth is your anchor, you’ll have peace no matter what.**”

Clark encouraged students to find their purpose not in the applause of others but in the security of living truthfully, even when it requires sacrifice. Her story reminded listeners that courage often costs something—but the peace it brings is priceless.

Standing Firm in a Confused World

Reagan Conrad, host of *The Comments Section* at **The Daily Wire**, framed her talk with a simple question: “How did we get here?” She pointed to falling women’s happiness, mail-order chemical abortion, and the pity often shown toward stay-at-home mothers, urging students to ask, “Who do you follow?” Conrad described how she intentionally reshaped her own social media feed—following mothers and family-builders—to counter fear-based narratives about womanhood.

In the wake of Charlie Kirk’s assassination, Conrad said social media’s vanity felt newly exposed. Her takeaway: conservatives shouldn’t blend in and “sprinkle beliefs later,” but speak plainly and consistently—especially about the Gospel—so that algorithms are “flooded with truth.”

She held up the **Proverbs 31 woman as a model of strength and dignity**—a woman who works hard, builds with her own hands, and leads with wisdom and purpose, proving that godly femininity and fortitude are not opposites but inseparable.

“If you know what’s true, don’t apologize for it,” she said. **“The world needs people who are steady when everything else is shaking.”**



***Reagan Conrad** draws on her media experience to inspire students to live their values with courage and consistency.*



*(Left) **Erika Donalds** underscores the power of education to renew culture and calls on students to lead as future shapers of society. (Top Middle) Donalds meets with **Aliza Hopkins** of **SUNY Oswego**. (Bottom Middle) Conrad connects with **Elise Johnson** (**Arizona State University**), **Megan Vitale** (**Ave Maria University**), **Macy Brookhouser** (**University of Arkansas**), and **Biola University** students **Isela Becerra**, **Grace Blankenship**, and **Rose Kelly**. (Right) **Kady Bedard**, special assistant at the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC), an independent bureau of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, and a 2022 Luce Center summer intern, meets with Conrad.*

Transforming Education and Building a Legacy

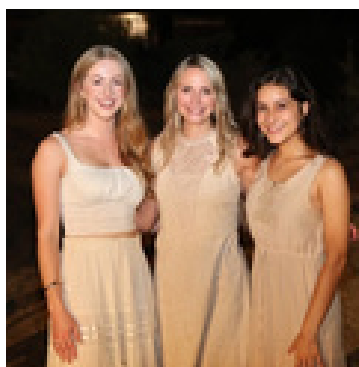
Erika Donalds, founder and chairman of OptimaEd and wife of **Congressman Byron Donalds**, who represents Florida’s 19th District, spoke about the importance of restoring freedom and virtue in education. Drawing from her journey as a businesswoman, school founder, and mother of three, she offered practical wisdom for those called to lead in policy, family life, or faith communities.

“Education is ground zero in the fight for our culture,” Donalds said. “When you become a mother, a mentor, or a policymaker, you have the chance to shape generations.”

She shared how her own experiences as a mother—fighting for better options for her children—sparked a lifelong passion for reforming America’s schools. Today, through her work in charter education and school choice policy, she helps empower parents and restore classical learning across the country. She urged students to prepare now for leadership that begins at home and extends to every sphere of society.

Under the Arizona Stars

The Summit concluded with a western-themed cookout beneath the Arizona stars. Participants enjoyed home-cooked barbecue, live country music, line dancing, lasso lessons, and s'mores by the fire. The evening captured the essence of the weekend—camaraderie, joy, and renewed purpose, as **students and supporters celebrated the friendships and mission that unite them through the Luce Center.**



*(Clockwise from the top left) **Kerry and Kady Bedard; Anastasia Leffas, Kimberly Begg, and Anastasia Shanahan; Macy Brookhouser, Elise Johnson, Megan Vitale; Luce Center Vice President Cindy Rushing and Luce Center Board Member Linda Teetz; Fiona Williamson (Christendom College) and Luce Center Chief of Staff Lauren Husmann; Alexis Alexander (Biola University) and Shelby Johnstone; Kasia Alexander (Biola University) and Kylie Van Duyne (Biola University); Luce Center Social Media Officer Rachel Hurley** enjoy dinner, line dancing, and lassoing with new conservative friends.*

Student Reflections

Students described the weekend as transformative and inspiring. “This was my first time attending, and it was phenomenal!” said **Nicolena Crisologo**, a student at **James Madison University**.

Satya Paulin of the **University of Denver** called it “a fantastic experience with a kind and welcoming atmosphere for everyone.” **Charlotte Rhodes** of **James Madison University** said, “CBL fosters such a strong and resilient community of young conservative women.”

Aliza Hopkins from **SUNY Oswego** shared, “It was such an incredible experience where I was able to make even more connections with women from all over the country.” **Macy Brookhouser** of the **University of Arkansas** said, “This was such an amazing event! I loved getting to hear from such inspiring women!”

Grace Tabor of the **University of South Florida** said the summit “gave me the chance to meet incredible women,” and **Abby Sahid** of the **Herzog Foundation** added, “I am so grateful that I attended this incredible event!”

As they returned to campuses across the country, many students expressed interest in deepening their involvement—by hosting campus speakers, participating in firearms training, or applying for the Luce Center’s summer internship—continuing their leadership journey that began in Scottsdale.

KT McFarland and Reagan Reese Speak at UC-Berkeley



*KT McFarland speaks to hundreds of UC-Berkeley students, spending time after the event with **Walter Keenan** (to her right), **Keith Work** (to her left), **Kimberly Begg**, and **Susan Keenan**.*

The Luce Center sent speakers to **UC-Berkeley** for back-to-back events in October with **KT McFarland**, deputy national security advisor in the first Trump administration, and Luce Center Board of Advisors member **Reagan Reese**, White House correspondent for *The Daily Caller*.

KT McFarland Calls for Strength at Home to Restore U.S. Leadership Abroad

Through the generosity of our good friend, **Keith Work**, UC-Berkeley students heard from KT McFarland on October 8. Speaking to hundreds of students, McFarland shared insights from her experience “at the president’s elbow all day long,” describing how she worked to “take whatever the new president’s ideas were—often bumper stickers from a campaign—and put meat on the bones.”

She defined “America First” as a policy rooted in restoring strength at home. “The whole America First plan was to say, we’re going to stop subsidizing the world and put American foreign policy interests first,” she said. **“It’s not just peace through military strength—it’s peace through economic, technological, and political strength.”**

Discussing energy policy, McFarland explained how innovation such as horizontal drilling, 3D mapping, and hydraulic fracturing positioned the United States as “not just energy independent, but energy dominant.” That dominance, she argued, gave America global leverage: “Every country needs to sell to the United States. We’re the only market that’s big enough. That gives us enormous economic and political leverage.”

McFarland thanked Work, who attended the event, for his leadership and generosity, recognizing his support for bringing crucial discussions to college campuses.

Reagan Reese Examines How Media Incentives Shape the Nation's Soul



Reagan Reese shares insights from her work in Washington during a Luce Center-sponsored lecture at UC-Berkeley.



Reagan Reese 
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I just got done guest lecturing at the University of Berkeley. The topic was the State of the Nation. Every semester, this professor brings in a conservative speaker to offer a different perspective on one of the most liberal college campuses.

The professor shared with me that some faculty worried about my safety ahead of the trip. But this professor was insistent his students would be respectful and opened minded.

And they were. I made the case that the State of our Nation is not great. Politicization is too high. We talked about the role, I, the media and the students play in fixing it.

The students wanted to know more of how the White House press corps missed President Biden's decline. They wanted to know about how Trump has opened up the White House to new media.

Some students asked me after class how to get involved in politics. In journalism. And how to be brave and express their conservative beliefs to their liberal peers.

There's hope for our high education institutions. Even Berkeley. And there is always hope for our country.

Thank you to @cblwomen for sending me. My full remarks will be with posted with @DailyCaller soon!

Reese shares highlights from her visit to UC-Berkeley on X, thanking the Luce Center for bringing open dialogue to campus.

Reagan Reese spoke to hundreds of UC-Berkeley students on October 18, urging them to think critically about how the media influences the national conversation. “When we talk about the state of the nation, I want to talk about the soul of the nation,” she began. “I would argue that the state of the nation today is not great. Politicalization is at an all-time high.”

Reese explained that the pressures of the modern news cycle often reward speed over accuracy. “The most important thing to recognize about the media is that it’s a business,” she said. “This drives the media to make poor choices—to be first to a story rather than correct. It creates this never-ending news cycle that can feel suffocating.”

She gave students a glimpse inside the White House briefing room, where she is often “the youngest one in the room.” “They’ve tried to bring in new voices,” she said. “It’s now a very, very busy White House briefing room. I sit on a booster seat and wave my hand like a maniac.”

Reese told students that intellectual honesty begins with self-awareness. “It means being honest about my bias,” she said. “That doesn’t make you a bad journalist. It makes you a transparent one.” She encouraged them to resist cynicism and engage others with curiosity and respect. “Talk to as many people as possible,” she said. **“The solution to making our nation better is having civil conversation—exchanging ideas compassionately and civilly.”**

Reese closed by challenging students to see their youth as an advantage rather than a limitation. “Young people are in such high demand in Washington,” she said. “Embrace your age. There’s a real hunger for new voices and honest dialogue.”



Reese takes time after her lecture to speak with a UC-Berkeley student, embodying the Luce Center’s commitment to cultivating mentorship and meaningful dialogue on campus.

Equipping the Next Generation: How Gen Z Can Navigate Today's Economic Realities



(Middle) **Rachel Greszler** addresses a standing-room-only crowd at the Luce Center's Conservative Network luncheon. (Left) Greszler meets with fall intern **Lucy Evich** after the luncheon. (Right) President's Club member **May Hardiman** enjoys a cup of coffee with **Nica Marin**, the Luce Center's events and marketing officer.

With a standing-room-only crowd and live coverage from **C-SPAN**, **Heritage Foundation** economist **Rachel Greszler** delivered a practical roadmap for Gen Z at the Luce Center's Conservative Network luncheon, *Equipping the Next Generation: How Gen Z Can Navigate Today's Economic Realities*.

Greszler framed the economy in terms of headwinds and tailwinds. Among the headwinds, she cited a declining fertility rate and a rapidly aging population that will, by 2034, leave the U.S. with more older Americans than children; a federal debt trajectory that functions like “a second mortgage” for young workers; and regulatory burdens that act as a hidden tax on jobs and wages.

She warned that entitlement spending, especially Social Security, is on an unsustainable path: without reforms, younger workers will never receive full benefits under current law.

Yet she emphasized that smart, early reforms—pairing a smaller government footprint with greater personal ownership—could strengthen both retirement security and long-term growth.

Among the tailwinds, Greszler highlighted a still-resilient labor market over the past decade, broader access to paid family leave, and the explosion of independent work that allows Americans—especially parents and those with disabilities—to design work around family life.

She urged policymakers to elevate career and technical education and apprenticeships rather than pushing one-size-fits-all four-year degrees, and to remove barriers that keep first jobs out of reach.

Throughout, Greszler paired policy analysis with personal advice. Quoting **Thomas Sowell**—“equip yourself with skills that people are willing to pay for”—she encouraged students and young professionals to stay resilient, keep learning, live within their means, and avoid high-interest debt. She also challenged attendees to “buck the trend” on declining conscientiousness by practicing habits that build reliability: **show up on time, focus deeply, keep commitments, and do the work whether or not anyone is watching**.

Her outlook on technology was measured optimism. Artificial intelligence, she argued, is the next chapter in a long story of productivity-boosting innovation. Like past waves of automation, AI will change tasks and eliminate some roles, but it will also create new industries and better jobs—especially if policy keeps opportunity open and individuals keep their skills sharp.

Greszler closed on a hopeful note: a smaller, more sustainable government isn't merely an accounting fix—it's a path to greater opportunity and flourishing. “Dependency didn't make America great,” she said. “Reducing dependency increases personal opportunity.”

Confidence and Camaraderie: Texas A&M Students Take to the Range



(Left) **Jolie Jackson** celebrates a successful round. (Right) Texas A&M students gather for the Luce Center's fifth annual Day at the Range—learning, connecting, and growing together.

Eleven young women gathered at **Texas A&M University** on October 19 for our fifth consecutive Day at the Range held near the College Station campus. The program, a long-standing Luce Center tradition, blends marksmanship and firearms safety instruction with education on the rights and responsibilities guaranteed by the Second Amendment.

For several young women, the Day at the Range marked their first time handling a firearm—an experience that left them feeling both empowered and at ease in a supportive, all-female environment. They joined returning participants who came back to sharpen their skills and deepen their confidence, united by a shared commitment to safety, responsibility, and friendship.

“I gained a few new friends and learned what a godly, healthy community looks like,” said **Jackie Diamond**, a sophomore at Texas A&M. “I also have a new interest in firearms because of this event. I appreciate it a lot because as women, it’s hard to find opportunities to gain experience with firearms.”

Students expressed interest in continuing their training through concealed carry certification and other opportunities to become responsible, well-educated firearms owners. The Luce Center is proud to stand beside these young women as they grow in knowledge, confidence, and courage to live out their Constitutional rights.



(Left) An instructor reviews safety and technique as **Alexis Marks** prepares to take her first shots at the range. (Middle) Students practice under close supervision, applying lessons in focus, patience, and precision throughout the live-fire exercise. (Right) **Jolie Jackson** takes aim from behind cover, demonstrating new skills and confidence built through careful instruction and practice.

On a Personal NOTE

What a wonderful month October has been! From our College Women's Summit in Scottsdale to our campus events at UC-Berkeley and our standing-room-only Conservative Network luncheon at the Luce Center in Virginia, it has been a joy to share these inspiring moments with President's Club members and friends from across the country.

Everywhere we go, we see the impact of what we are building together. As America's mentorship institution for conservative women, the Luce Center is forming a generation of leaders who understand that **conservative women are the trustees of a free and flourishing America**. We love meeting men and women who share this conviction—and who believe, as we do, that **when young women are supported, mentored, and encouraged to live in truth, the whole nation is strengthened**.



It is an honor to mentor the next generation of courageous conservative women.

We are especially grateful to those who sponsored students to attend our Scottsdale Summit. Your generosity gave these young women the opportunity to learn from courageous role models like KT McFarland, Liz Wheeler, Isabel Brown, Alex Clark, Erika Donalds, and Reagan Conrad, and to form friendships that will sustain them as they return to their campuses and communities as confident voices for truth. You made that possible, and we cannot thank you enough.

Looking ahead, we're excited to continue this momentum in November with campus events at Hillsdale College, Muhlenberg College, and Belmont Abbey College—three schools where our message is taking root in the hearts of young women who are eager to lead with truth and integrity.

Thank you, as always, for standing with us. You are helping build the foundation for a stronger, freer America—one courageous young woman at a time.

In Friendship & Freedom,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K. Beegs". The signature is stylized with a large "K" and a long, sweeping underline.

President

P.S. We are deeply grateful for the friendship and support that make this work possible. Every day, courageous young women are finding their voices, standing firm in truth, and preparing to lead with strength and purpose. **I would love to hear from you anytime at 703-507-9999 or kimberly@cblwomen.org.**