2021 Common Ground Awards

#CommonGroundisEverywhere

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ABOUT SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND

Search for Common Ground celebrates 39 years of working with local communities and national leaders to find common ground. We build safe, healthy, and just societies worldwide. We’ve tested our methods across 50 countries in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and here in the United States, empowering deeply divided people to build trust, collaborate, and uncover breakthroughs.
Phoebe Ferguson and Keith Plessy are the descendants of Judge Ferguson and Homer Plessy, respectively, representing the opposing principals in one of the Supreme Court’s landmark decisions, Plessy v. Ferguson, which upheld the constitutionality of Jim Crow laws mandating segregation under the “separate but equal” doctrine.

Together, they founded the Plessy & Ferguson Foundation. The Foundation is committed to teaching the history of the landmark case, its historic impact on African Americans, and how we can learn from the past to create a more just and equitable future. Plessy and Ferguson visit schools, festivals, and academic or historical institutions, spreading their message that their mutual history can be a tool to create unity and understanding.

Through their partnership and work, Plessy and Ferguson are a beacon of hope and common ground.
J.T. Rogers, recipient of the 2021 Common Ground Award for Outstanding Storytelling for his Tony Award-winning play and Emmy-nominated movie, Oslo

J.T. Rogers is a playwright and screenwriter. His film Oslo, directed by his longtime collaborator Bartlett Sher, is currently available on HBO and HBO Max, and was nominated for two Emmy Awards. Oslo depicts the real-life peacebuilding process behind the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords between Israel and Palestine. Through visionary storytelling, Rogers illustrates how the most intractable conflicts can lead to breakthroughs when the needs and dignity of all citizens are addressed. The film provides a source of inspiration for millions around the world who are grappling with violent conflict.

Rogers is the creator and showrunner for the upcoming series Tokyo Vice for HBOMax, starring Ansel Elgort and Ken Watanabe. His latest play One Giant Leap: The Apollo 11 Moon Landing, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of humankind’s first steps on the moon, debuted on Broadway in 2019 and was live-streamed around the world.

For Oslo, he won the Tony, New York Critics, Outer Critics, Drama Desk, Drama League, Lortel, and Obie awards, and was nominated for the Olivier and Evening Standard Awards. His essays have been published in The New York Times, The Guardian, and the New Statesman. He is a Guggenheim fellow and has received three NYFA fellowships in playwriting. Rogers is an alum of New Dramatists and holds an honorary doctorate from his alma mater, the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.
TIGER 21, recipient of the 2021 Common Ground Award for Outstanding Vision for its unique approach to philanthropy

TIGER 21 is a peer learning community of visionaries, entrepreneurs, investors, and executives from an array of industries. With over 700 members in North America and Europe, TIGER 21 members serve as legacy planning partners who help each other improve their investment acumen, tackle common issues of wealth preservation, manage family-related challenges, understand estate planning options, and share ideas on philanthropic endeavors.

In the summer of 2020, Search for Common Ground and Soliya launched First Year Connect, a new way to orient college students onto college campuses by equipping all incoming students with the skills to constructively engage across lines of difference. TIGER 21 members provided critical support to the program at every step of the way, and the pilot was only possible thanks to the generous contributions of TIGER 21 members.
Laurie Michaels, recognized for her exceptional contribution to finding common ground globally

Laurie Michaels, Ph.D. is a philanthropist based in Aspen, CO. She is a Board Member for Search for Common Ground and has served as an irreplaceable supporter and champion for the organization. She has consistently “stepped up to the plate” and provided uncommon amounts of generosity when the organization has been most in need.

Dr. Michaels is the founder of Open Road Alliance, and maintains a practice in clinical psychology. Through Open Road Alliance, Dr. Michaels and her team provide fast, flexible, and affordable funding—in both grants and loans—to nonprofits and social enterprises facing discrete, unforeseen financing gaps that threaten to derail their impact. Her experience has led her to actively advocate for change within the philanthropic sector by highlighting the need for better risk management in grant making. She is a contributor to the Chronicle of Philanthropy, SSIR, and Forbes as well as a speaker at forums such as Fail Forward, GEO, The Aspen Institute, and Global Philanthropy Forum.

She is a former Board Member of PATH and served on the board of the Aspen Community Foundation for 12 years, including four years as a Board Chair. Dr. Michaels earned a B.A. from Williams College. She holds a Ph.D. in Counseling.
Honoring our work around the world and demonstrating the potential of our new initiative, Common Ground USA

Leveraging 40 years of experience on the frontlines of violent conflict, our new domestic initiative — Common Ground USA — is designed to halt the United States’ slide toward political violence, take on the roots of the conflicts that divide Americans, and accelerate national healing. Common Ground USA is built on three interconnected pillars: Preventing Political Violence, Mobilizing Youth Activism, and Fostering a Healthier Media Ecosystem. This year, we are delighted to honor leaders and activists from around the world who have championed these pillars in their own countries, and lead a path for how Americans can enact that change, too. The Awardees are:

2021 Common Ground Award for Preventing Violent Extremism, presented to Judge Raja Abi Nader and Ahmad Hammoud for their leadership and courage in reintegrating former inmates into Lebanese society.
2021 Common Ground Award for Mobilizing a Healthier Media Ecosystem, presented to the CyberGuardians — accepted by Nimesh Rawanage, original CyberGuardian and social media influencer — and Search for Common Ground - Sri Lanka — accepted by staff member Kiruthika Thurairajah — for combating online hate speech and creating a more inclusive, tolerant, and diverse digital space in Sri Lanka.

2021 Common Ground Award for Mobilizing Youth, presented to Youth Talk’s journalists — accepted by Bintou Traore and Ambroise Kamate, two young reporters from Mali — for giving a voice to the voiceless and inspiring a generation of young changemakers across Africa.
ORDER OF PROGRAM

6:00 PM
Cocktails, Hors d’Oeuvres

7:10 PM
Awards Ceremony, presented by Jeremy Diamond, CNN White House Correspondent

7:40 PM
Dinner Break

8:10 PM
Program Resumes

8:40 PM
Dessert Reception

9:30 PM
End
First Course:
Coconut and Pumpkin Soup
Yuzu spiked palm seeds
Black sesame brittle
Basil emulsion
(vegan, gluten free)

Entree:
Braised Short Rib Gnocchi
Sweet potato and beet gnocchi
Pickled turnips
Ball carrots
Candy cane beets
Piave crisp

Wine:
White: Greystone Cellars Chardonnay
Red: Greystone Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon
Sparkling: Pra’della Luna Prosecco

Dessert Reception to follow on 21st floor

Passed Dessert:
Pumpkin Pie Shooter
Spiced pumpkin pie mousse
Graham cracker crumbs
Whipped cream

Cinnamon Churros
Chocolate dipping sauce
(gluten free)

Pear & Cranberry Tartlettes
Black & White Cookies
Graham Cracker Mallomars
Coffee and Tea Station
HOST COMMITTEE

We warmly thank and recognize this engaged and inspired group of individuals for their generous contributions that have made tonight’s celebration possible. Our 2021 Common Ground Award Host Committee members are:

Beth and Eric Berman
Gloria Joseph
Hassan Murphy
Lisa Kadin and William Spiegel
Nikki Stern
Todd Rechler
Laura and David Ross
Bryna Linett and Peter Shapiro
GLOBAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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