

As We Turn the Corner, We Reflect Back on an Exciting Year

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Before the summer is over we'll both have experienced the rite of passage associated with turning 40 and anticipating the challenges that a new decade brings. Time flies when you're creating change, and for two outsiders turned Philadelphians—one from Denmark and the other from New Mexico—it has been a great ride so far. This summer marks the *Philadelphia Social Innovations Journal's* one-year anniversary, prompting us to reflect on the idea behind creating the only regional journal about innovations in the country as well as on our own local leadership journeys.

As a way to challenge Philadelphia to live and celebrate its greatness, we co-founded the *Philadelphia Social Innovations Journal* by creating a community of innovation among local foundation, university, and community partners. Our hope was that the *Journal* would generate positive energy in the region and give traction to local and new ideas and innovators. And just a year later, we're pleased that our hopes have rung true. Today over 7,500 targeted leaders receive the quarterly electronic version

of the *Journal*, along with monthly updates.

The *Journal* has evolved into a vibrant idea incubator. By describing the process of local innovations in the social sector, the *Journal* creates a knowledge lab, challenging current social sector thinking and preserving valuable ideas from leaders in the philanthropic, private, and government sectors for future generations. The result is a common understanding of how to develop innovation, disseminate local best practices, and learn directly from practitioners in the region.

As is evident from the articles we have published over the past year, the Philadelphia region has so much to offer—and it's hard not to be smitten by Benjamin Franklin's entrepreneurial legacy, which, after all, is the backbone of this great community. When each of us first came to Philadelphia, the freedoms and opportunities we were offered as young leaders were invigorating. Now, with the perspective that comes with time, we appreciate that those opportunities are not without challenges.

Philadelphia is rich and diverse because it is fundamentally a "city of neighborhoods" with distinct boundary lines that preserve cultural and ethnic traditions within individual communities. It is the next great city because a growing number of us possess the skills to cross those boundaries, embrace challenges, and turn them into strengths. Philadelphians are not against change, but just like immigrant families they guard their richness of neighborhood and culture. Anyone who

understands that can create social innovation.

Philadelphia has taught us the importance of community, trust, and building and leveraging relationships—key ingredients for any leader’s success in Philadelphia. We have both been in a position to live and work across multiple worlds—socioeconomic; education attainment; ethnic and cultural; government, private, and community. We want the *Journal* to shed light on the innovations that inhabit these multiple and complex but still local worlds.

Philadelphia is also a city of connectors, and we’ve learned to use these connections to build trust and to broker and create change. Through the *Journal* we try to make these connections happen more broadly by taking complex cross-boundary issues and framing them in a common language that allows others to benefit and learn from them. Similarly, we’ve reached out to national and regional experts on innovation to utilize this knowledge and share it with our reader community.

By embracing the city’s and region’s strengths, the *Philadelphia Social Innovations Journal* is in a position to move across boundaries, thereby preserving valuable innovative ideas and solutions for future generations ... and future Ben Franklins.