



# Global Philadelphia Association: Meet the World Here

**Global Philadelphia Association is dedicated to promoting and enhancing the region's global profile and heritage through collaborative leadership.**

**Philadelphia is one of the most historic and inclusive places in the United States:** a place where the past and the present merge, where people from a vibrant variety of cultures live and work together. The Global Philadelphia Association (GPA) is dedicated to showing the world everything that makes our city special: its centuries of history, its thriving businesses and institutions, and its diverse communities.

**“ Global Philadelphia is a prestigious network of partners who see the beauty and richness of this city and share their love for Philadelphia with...the world. *Dr Amid Ismail, Temple University***

## **Our Mission**

In 2015, Philadelphia became the United States' first World Heritage City, honored for its significance in a pivotal chapter of world history – the birth of American independence. GPA draws on this prestigious designation in our local and international engagement efforts, working with globally-minded individuals and organizations across the region and beyond.

Our educational resources and community outreach initiatives help people of all ages to both connect with Philadelphia's rich history and to better understand how our city is shaped by global issues. Our cultural events celebrate Philadelphia's heritage while recognizing citizens who enhance our city's profile. And our international engagement efforts serve to strengthen Philadelphia's global standing while developing close ties with other World Heritage Cities.



## **Our Work** *Connecting Locally*

**GPA's local programs encompass both the past and present.** Alongside educational resources that help teachers share Philadelphia's heritage with their students, we offer exciting opportunities for young people looking to forge careers in global fields, and support community groups building a more sustainable future for our city.

Our [Emerging International Journalists Program](#) (EIJP) is a platform for undergraduate and graduate students from local universities, as well as recent graduates, to create original content about world heritage and global issues in Philadelphia. EIJP participants develop and write fascinating pieces on topics such as historic preservation and international cooperation related to world heritage, and they interview prominent Philadelphians in the global space. The program is overseen by an advisory board with expertise in media and journalism.



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**As a World Heritage City, Philadelphia is being officially recognized on the global stage for its wealth of contributions to the world as the epicenter of American democracy and for its enduring commitment to preserving the unique historical and cultural assets in our diverse community.**

*Michael Nutter, Mayor of Philadelphia  
(2008-2016)*

**Our educational initiatives make Philadelphia's heritage tangible with a wide range of free resources:**

- [LearnPHLHeritage.org](#), a dedicated website for educators and students, brings together materials on topics such as African-American history in Philadelphia, the story of the city's founding, and more;
- [National Historic Landmarks Map](#) of 67 historic sites spanning the city, from the Wagner Free Institute of Science to the Edgar Allan Poe House;
- [World Heritage Toolkit](#) on the events, people and cultures that have shaped Philadelphia, created by teachers, for teachers, alongside a variety of [lesson plans](#).

“ **Our heritage is not just something we preserve. It is something we live everyday.** *Daecia Borgia, Visit Philadelphia*

**We also work with communities to raise awareness of global megatrends – such as climate change and inequality – shaping Philadelphia today.** Our [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\) Campaign](#) – aligned with [the United Nations' initiative for a more sustainable world by 2030](#) – works closely with artists, communities, and sponsors to create meaningful and beautiful public artworks in neighborhoods across Philadelphia, each one highlighting a particular SDG. In tandem with the creation of each SDG mural, GPA's SDG Advisory Council grants funding to local nonprofits, community groups, or educational institutions working towards that goal. Over \$50,000 in grants have been made since 2020, supporting sustainable development efforts by Philabundance, Samuel Gompers School, and the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, among others. Sponsors who have made this incredible impact possible include Temple University, TD Bank, and the GIANT Company.

GPA also maintains an active presence at community events across the city, such as the Johnson House Historic Site's Juneteenth Festival, the PHL Latin American Book Fair, Wawa Welcome America, and the Subaru Cherry Blossom Festival. At these events, we share our work on world heritage with the public while strengthening our ties with other globally-oriented organizations in Philadelphia.

## Celebrating Our City

Throughout the year, GPA organizes and runs dynamic events celebrating Philadelphia, its heritage, and its incredible global impact. These events also provide opportunities for individuals and organizations working on global issues to connect and collaborate.

Our flagship event is the [World Heritage City Celebration](#), now entering its tenth year. Marking the anniversary of the World Heritage City designation, this event recognizes not just our city's historical importance, but the efforts of everyone working to build a better future for Philadelphia. Similarly, our annual [Globy Awards](#) honor outstanding individuals working on global issues across the region, with past recipients including Erika H. James, Dean, The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Ala Stanford, Founder, Black Doctors COVID-19 Consortium; and John Fry, President, Temple University.

“**The Globy Awards [spotlight] individuals and organizations whose efforts have transcended borders, demonstrating Philadelphia's role as a city of innovation, culture, and global connection.**

*Aziza Schuler, CBS Philadelphia*

We also host public events to raise community awareness of historic preservation and world heritage in Philadelphia. Each April, in coordination with ICOMOS, we host the [International Day of Monuments and Sites](#): a jam-packed schedule of exciting public events at Philadelphia's 67 National Historic Landmarks, offering residents and visitors alike the chance to learn more about the city's past. In May, we partner with organizations across the city to host [World Heritage Week](#), a selection of events celebrating Philadelphia's history and international ties. Recent World Heritage Week events have included talks on diplomacy, networking and recruitment fairs, tours of historic sites, and an art exhibit for Philadelphia schools.



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**I approached the topic of gender equality from a concept of radiance and illumination...the ideal of equality... spread out to reach everybody for the betterment of society.**

*Barbara Smolen, Artist,  
Sustainable Development  
Goal 5: Gender Equality*



## Engaging Internationally

**GPA represents Philadelphia not just at home, but also on the world stage.** In partnership with the City of Philadelphia, we guide engagement with the Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC), a nonprofit network of over 300 cities with the World Heritage designation. Each year, we take leaders from Philadelphia's tourism, heritage, and government sectors to OWHC convenings, bringing back crucial insights on areas such as sustainability and historic preservation.

“ **Global Philadelphia has become one of our city's important backbone organizations.**  
*David Seltzer*



## Our Future

**2026 is shaping up to be an exciting year for Philadelphia and for GPA.** Our city will mark 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, an event that is set to bring visitors from across the country and the world. We are planning bold new initiatives to take full advantage of this unique opportunity to boost Philadelphia's global profile, including an updated National Historic Landmarks Map and the return of our GlobalPhilly Expo, a month-long extravaganza of events hosted by international organizations across the city. The role of our sponsors — whose guidance and contributions shape and sustain our programming — will be more crucial than ever.

“ **I've always considered GPA the key accelerator and leader in representing the historical value and heritage of our city. Being [at the OWHC Conference], we were the only American city represented, with key input, which is an unbelievable role for GPA.**

*Daisy Van den Hooff-Mertens,  
Flemish in the World*

“ **Philadelphia is the cradle of American democracy and industry. [GPA] reminds us of our storied past and highlights the bright promise of our future.**

*Omar Woodard, HRS  
Management*

To learn more about how you can make a difference to our World Heritage City in 2026 and beyond, contact our team:

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Stay connected for updates and news about our upcoming programs and initiatives:

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ORGANIZATION OF  
WORLD HERITAGE CITIES

