



Jeffersonian Dinner Format
A Towering Task: A Peace Corps Documentary
Creating A Cause-Centered Community

Why Host A Jeffersonian Dinner?

Keep the Peace Corps relevant on the world stage by honoring its iconic past, while ushering in a *New Era of Possibility*; to create a vibrant network and passionate partners to move a vital mission forward. The dinners:

- Involve potential supporters (particularly those with financial capacity and interest in peace and/or Peace Corps) in an interesting discussion they will find stimulating;
- Enhance the dinner sponsor's reputation as a networker that listens, grows and can connect people with other interesting people and ideas;
- Promote a collaborative, creative environment with a small group of people focused on a common issue;
- Engage passionate partners who are more likely to give time, talent and treasure to the cause.

Attendees: 10 -12 ideally, creating a sense of intimacy that allows for authentic connection and sharing. Attendees include those with an interest in *A Towering Task*, the Peace Corps, global impact, and/or Peace.

Attendees generally include people with no past link to the group, chosen because they are likely to be interested in the project's mission, have supported other related causes, or have background knowledge and connections that will enable them to contribute to an interesting dialogue about the work, and move the mission forward.

Format: Whole table discussion. By talking to the table, instead of one-on-one conversations, it immediately establishes a deeper and richer field of discovery. Everything that is said should be directed to the entire group, just as Thomas Jefferson himself ordained, thus inspiring and stimulating each person's need for learning and discovery of his/her own sources of strength, passion and commitment.

While there is often a "Guest of Honor" there should be no dominant individual who will serve as the complete focal point of the evening. The dinner invitation includes a request for a brief written biography of the attendee. These bios are emailed to the participants a day or two before the dinner, so those who've never met before will have a general sense of the identities and interests of their dinner companions.

Unlike a fundraising event, there's no formal presentation about the project, nor is there a pitch for contributions, yet the host has put a stake in the ground for the mission through hosting the dinner (underwriting all costs), and often makes a lead gift, inspiring others to do the same.



A TOWERING TASK

To launch the conversation at a Jeffersonian Dinner, a pre-announced question is used to elicit personal feelings, stories, and experiences relevant to the evening's theme. Some samples to do with *A Towering Task*:

- “What documentary changed your perspective, and possibly how you live your life?”
- “What early cross-cultural experience did you have in your life that changed your global view?”
- “Give an example of a time when you leveraged your voice, talents, or your checkbook that resulted in immense impact.”

Stories engage those in the room in a very intimate and honest way about sources of hope and possibility in the project and also reminds the story-teller of why he/she is involved in the organization, while creating a self-initiated invitation of how much more might be brought to bear.

The summary comments at the end of every Jeffersonian dinner are the grand finale. This is everyone's opportunity to share what he/she learned through the course of the evening, to cement the commitment of community, and to think through how that might be put into action. The summary is an invitation to make a new or further commitment. The commitment doesn't have to be monetary at first; it often evokes a willingness to give of our most precious resource – our time, our advocacy, and our ability to make things happen.

Post Dinner: Host or ATT staff follows up with each guest to explore what role they'd like to play.
Examples:

1. Host a Jeffersonian Dinner
2. Make introductions to potential funders: individuals, corporate sponsors, foundations
3. Lead a Coalition subcommittee
4. Join a Coalition subcommittee
5. Fund the project!