

A Note from Executive Director, Lisa Zimmers

Independence

This year, our country marks the 250th anniversary of the United States of America being an independent entity. What a remarkable journey. Most of us have witnessed 20-40% of that timeframe. We've seen a lot of change and progress. I'm certainly not a historical expert, but I do enjoy learning about American history, world history and local history. It fascinates me to learn more about innovators, leaders, investors, movers, and makers.

Independence is something we are built to aspire to from birth. It doesn't happen immediately. We're initially dependent on those around us for everything except breathing (and even that can require assistance depending on the circumstances). We slowly learn to stand on our own two feet and feed ourselves. Transitioning from infancy to toddler stages and adolescence, there is a great deal of physical growth as well as brain development.

As adults, most of us strive to do our own thing. Drawing on our early years' experiences, we begin to discover our own interests, physical abilities, cognitive gifts, and intrinsic desires to pave our path. Exerting our abilities to provide for ourselves, our families and contribute to society in an impactful way. Fortunately, our gifts and paths are different. Although we operate independently, the contributions of others make our lives more fruitful, enjoyable, and livable. If we had to be our own everything, we likely wouldn't be great at anything. Imagine the most skilled surgeon having to do their own house repairs and raise, grow, and process all their own food. That might be a reality in someone's world, but most of us have one or two lanes that we excel in; matters beyond that we need the effort and skill of others.

Our country's 250th birthday is a time to reflect on our own independence as well as the interdependence we have on others. Each of our networks is unique. Leaning into the community around us and accepting that we actually need the support of others doesn't reduce our individuality or reduce our independence. When we come together to help one another and accept help, we grow stronger, live better, and thrive together. Embrace your independence by having the courage to lean into your community, recognize the things you need help with, and lend a hand to help others.

Have a safe and happy holiday! Happy Birthday America!

-Lisa Zimmers