

**2016**

**PROGRESS  
REPORT**

## Message from the President and CEO



This aptly named Progress Report gives you a sense of the Center for Inquiry's incredible ambition and range of endeavors to promote reason and science. From our two flagship magazines, *Free Inquiry* and *Skeptical Inquirer*, to our work defending secular activists around the world at the United Nations Human Rights Council, CFI is working to bring the values of the Enlightenment—critical thinking, scientific literacy, humanism, and individual freedom—to the 21st century.

The big news for CFI is that we have formally merged with the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science (RDFRS). Throughout 2016, the two organizations worked hand-in-glove. Now, we are one, with RDFRS becoming a division of CFI, and the RDFRS board, including Richard Dawkins, joining the CFI board. All of the premier programs of the Richard Dawkins Foundation are continuing with even more exciting plans on the drawing board, including the Openly Secular campaign and the Teacher Institute for Evolutionary Science (TIES), which last year held dozens of workshops across the country teaching middle school science teachers how to teach evolution.

To add to the excitement of 2016, a nationwide tour with Richard Dawkins in cities where CFI has staffed branches was a near sell-out. Six thousand people filled theaters and lecture halls to hear Richard expound on evolutionary biology and the true nature of reality. CFI staff and local volunteers worked hard at making the events run smoothly. It was my pleasure and honor to meet many people from the CFI family across the country. I look forward to years of shared activism.

Standing by Richard as he signs books, one hears a procession of gratitude. People tell Richard how his books changed their lives, how *The God Delusion* cut through the fog of religion, or how *The Ancestor's Tale* gave them clarity on how evolution operates, spurring them into a career in science. CFI is in the business of amplifying those ideas and spreading them even more widely. Yes, it does change lives—and societies—for the better.

CFI's efforts to stand up for secular people here and abroad were particularly active in 2016. As a multi-year project, we have been challenging the exclusion of secular celebrants from those who may solemnize marriages. In too many states, religious leaders are automatically given the right to solemnize marriages alongside certain public officials, while secular celebrants are excluded. In 2014 we won a lawsuit against Indiana's exclusion, and just at the start of 2017, we heard the good news that an Illinois judge opened the way for secular celebrants there as well.

Another notable CFI victory was the crackdown by the Federal Trade Commission on the marketing of homeopathy, something CFI had urged in formal testimony. Hopefully this will put a dent in the \$3 billion a year that Americans spend on this consumer fraud.

Okay, finally, what do you get when you put 500-plus skeptics together and add in richly informative talks, hands-on workshops, and top-flight entertainment? You get CSICon, an acronym that stands for the best damn time you can imagine. The conference in Las Vegas in October 2016 was exceptional and no doubt the one in 2017 will be even more so. I hope to see you there!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robyn Blumner'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Robyn Blumner



# ADVOCACY

Defending Reason, Advancing Freedom, Saving Lives

There was a time when the persecution of secularists and nonbelievers around the world was a largely invisible problem. But in recent years, the overt scapegoating and targeting of secularist writers and activists has become the focus of global attention. Despite the risks to their safety and the enforcement of laws against blasphemy and apostasy, more and more activists are expressing their dissent, and their calls for support are being heard by the international media, world governments, and the United Nations.

**No organization has been as instrumental in bringing this cause to the forefront of world concern, and no organization has worked as closely and with such determination to solve this crisis, as the Center for Inquiry.**

CFI has been at the center of the human rights emergency in Bangladesh since its bloody beginning in 2015, when freethinking writers and activists were being slaughtered in the streets by Islamist militants, each targeted for their public expressions of dissent against religion and its enforcement by the state.

When the killings spilled into 2016, CFI pushed back against the Bangladesh government’s attempts to blame the victims, through diplomatic channels and in the media, including original op-eds for CNN and *Religion Dispatches*. We assembled a coalition of respected scholars, scientists, and activists that included such luminaries as **Reza Aslan, Sam Harris, Steven Pinker, Richard Dawkins,** and **Salman Rushdie** for a powerful joint statement urging Bangladesh to stop attacking the victims of this murderous campaign, and instead support the people’s right to free expression without fear of violence. In the week leading up to International Blasphemy Rights Day, which CFI established in 2009, we leveraged social media and our Campaign for Free Expression to raise greater awareness of the threats to the freedom of thought, speech, and belief around the world.

We did not rely solely on persuasion and diplomacy, but worked successfully to save individual lives. With threatened freethinkers coming to CFI for help, we formally established Secular Rescue, and with the support of donors, CFI has so far been able to save the lives of almost thirty individuals, relocating activists (and in some cases, their families as well) to safe havens in other countries.

The threats to free expression worldwide are indeed daunting, but with your help CFI has been able to make substantive progress and have a truly global impact.

## QUANTIFIED ACTION AND ADVOCACY

Number of bills lobbied  
by CFI’s Office of  
Public Policy:

16

CFI staff meetings  
with lawmakers  
and diplomats:

31

Action Alerts  
sent to supporters:

25

Actions taken  
by YOU:

8,000

## SCORE ONE FOR SCIENCE: DILUTING HOMEOPATHY'S FALSE ADVERTISING



The Center for Inquiry scored a meaningful victory against pseudoscience in public health in 2016, by helping to change the rules of the game for the marketing of homeopathic products. Americans throw away billions of dollars a year on homeopathic remedies, despite the fact that they are medically useless and based entirely on disproven pseudoscience.

After years of pressing the issue, the Center for Inquiry was invited by the FDA in 2015 to publicly testify on the issue of homeopathy's sale and marketing to American consumers. Not waiting for the FDA, another agency stepped up: the Federal Trade Commission asked CFI to submit comments for its own investigation of homeopathic marketing.

In November, the FTC established new enforcement policies for the marketing of homeopathic drugs, declaring that these products cannot make claims as to their effectiveness without "competent and reliable scientific evidence" to back them up. If no such evidence exists—and it doesn't—this fact must be stated clearly on

all labeling, and note that the product's claims are based solely on 18th-century theories that have been discarded by modern science. CFI's input was cited in the FTC's full report, and we heralded this as a real win for science, reason, and the health of the American public.

## SECULAR RESCUE SUCCESS STORIES



**Shammi Haque:** Fierce and fearless in her efforts on behalf of secularism and free expression in Bangladesh, 22-year-old Shammi Haque found herself the target of Islamist assassins, and looked to CFI for help. We supplied her with emergency assistance so that she could relocate and eventually be granted asylum in Germany.



**Ahmedur Rashid Chowdhury:** After one attempt on his life, this accomplished writer, who is known by the name of Tutul, came to CFI to help him and his family. We helped get them the resources they needed to relocate to Norway, and in 2016 Tutul was honored by author Margaret Atwood with the PEN International Writer of Courage award.



## REPRESENTING THE NONRELIGIOUS IN THE POLITICAL ARENA

The noble concept of “religious freedom” has been cynically twisted by those who want to use their religion as a means to discriminate against the LGBTQ community, women, and religious minorities. CFI has fought this at every turn, and strongly advocated for true religious freedom: the freedom to believe, think, and speak as one chooses.

Some in Congress tried to shoehorn religiously-based discrimination into a Defense Authorization Bill with the “Russell Amendment,” which would have allowed religiously affiliated contractors to discriminate in hiring, impacting LGBTQ employees and job-seekers, religious minorities, women who use contraception, and anyone else whose lifestyle does not comport with an employer’s religious beliefs. We lobbied Capitol Hill and called upon our supporters to tell Congress to kill this discriminatory measure, and you came through. The amendment died in conference.

Central to real religious freedom is the foundational American ideal that no one can be subjected to “religious tests” when it comes to equal treatment, which is why we strongly opposed the proposals to ban or register Muslims seeking to enter the United States.

But the idea of religious tests hit closer to home during the presidential primaries, when it was revealed that staff members with the Democratic National Committee discussed attacking Sen. Bernie Sanders for his alleged atheism. Sen. Sanders is not, in fact, an atheist, but certain DNC officials considered using the atheist smear to disqualify him in the minds of religious voters.

CFI could not ignore this kind of bigotry against nonbelievers or allow the pernicious stereotype of the “un-American atheist” go unanswered. In a pivotal joint statement by the leadership of the Center for Inquiry, we denounced this destructive and prejudicial attack on American nonbelievers and demanded Marshall’s resignation. Our message was heard throughout the national media, and within days, he and other staffers did indeed step down.

Reaching across the theological aisle has been key to many of CFI’s successes, and we have built a strong reputation as an organization ready and willing to work alongside religious organizations who share our goals. That’s why we were invited to be part of the multi-faith Know Your Neighbor coalition, launched at the White House in December of 2015. This led in 2016 to a series of productive roundtable meetings on combating religious discrimination, held over several months by the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division, in which CFI was the sole organization representing nonbelievers and the religiously unaffiliated.

As 2016 was coming to a close, CFI strongly backed an amendment to the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) of 1998, pushing for new language that included the protection of nonbelievers as well as believers. No American organization was better positioned to make an informed and impassioned case for this change. Working with allies and lobbying Members of Congress, the revised IRFA would explicitly include protections for “non-believers” and “non-theists.” The Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act was signed into law by President Obama on December 18.

# QUANTIFIED

## HUMANISM WITHOUT BORDERS

CFI addresses to  
the UN Human  
Rights Council:

11

People saved by  
Secular Rescue  
since launch:

29

Total raised for  
Secular Rescue  
since launch:

\$101,122



## NO RELIGIOUS TEST



At the height of the Syrian refugee crisis, when several presidential candidates promised to ban Muslims from entering the United States, CFI stood strongly for true religious freedom and against government religious tests. We backed the Freedom of Religion Act, which would have made clear that the U.S. does not deny admission to anyone because of their religion or lack thereof. **Rep. Don Beyer** led the fight for this bill, bringing over 100 other members of Congress on board to cosponsor it. And though it did not pass, Rep. Beyer publicly thanked the Center for Inquiry for our advocacy.

## ANTIABORTION PSEUDOSCIENCE LOSES BIG IN THE SUPREME COURT

The state of Texas was poised to cut off access to abortion services for millions of women with a draconian law that put onerous and unnecessary restrictions on abortion providers. Lawmakers claimed this was for the benefit of women's health, but in fact it would have forced the closing of all but a handful of the state's clinics, overwhelmingly impacting the poor and minorities. The law was put before the Supreme Court in the landmark case of *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*, and in an amicus brief with the Court, we concentrated on a particular area of expertise and focus for CFI: real science versus pseudoscience.

CFI argued that the state's evidence was based on manufactured, unscientific information, coordinated by disgraced anti-abortion ideologue Vincent Rue, a hyper-partisan with no medical qualifications and who has been cited for ghostwriting pseudoscientific testimony for other dubiously qualified expert witnesses in several court cases. Our brief was cosigned by dozens of prominent scientists and public intellectuals including **Steven Pinker, Carol Tavris, Eugenie Scott, Jill Tarter, Lawrence Krauss, and Richard Dawkins**. CFI's General Counsel, Nicholas Little, laid out our case against the cynical use of pseudoscience to restrict abortion rights in a widely-shared op-ed in *Salon*.



On June 27, the Supreme Court struck down the law. "The fight is not over," said Little in CFI's official statement, "and we will continue to work toward the day when the religious right will have to give up on trying to control the lives of women. That will be a good day."

### JOANNA BUTLER, CFI NORTHEAST OHIO:

"I feel that CFI represents my interests in women's issues that affect me and other women. And while I respect other people's religious beliefs, I believe firmly in separation of church and state."



## SUPREME INACTION ON RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGE

CFI joined with American Atheists in an amicus brief to the Supreme Court in the case of *Zubik v. Burwell*, a case involving religious nonprofits looking for an exemption from the contraceptive mandate of the Affordable Care Act. We urged the court to reject the imposition of an employer's religious beliefs upon employees, calling the case "ludicrous" and "a transparent attempt to legislate from the pulpit." Unfortunately, the Court in May passed the buck to the lower courts, refusing a crucial opportunity to take a stand against the privileging of religion.



## QUANTIFIED COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTARY

2016 blog posts at  
*Free Thinking*:

390

Press releases  
sent to media:

42

Subscribers  
to CFI emails:

29,000

Subscribers  
to RDFRS  
emails:

34,000

# COMMUNITY

## Connecting Hearts and Minds with Incredible Events



Eddie Tabash at the 2016 Reason Rally



Richard Dawkins and Julia Sweeney



Carol Tavris at CSICON Las Vegas

A vibrant and dynamic community of skeptics, humanists, and other freethinkers is what powers the Center for Inquiry, and 2016 was a banner year for the members of this community to connect in person, with major conferences and events that inspired, enlightened, and empowered thousands with fresh ideas, rejuvenated energy, and a renewed sense of a shared mission.

A furiously busy summer and fall kicked off with an event of truly mammoth scale, the 2016 Reason Rally, which took place at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., and where CFI played a central, leading role. Our outreach team had the opportunity to personally meet and interact with hundreds of attendees, as they helmed the most prominent display on the grounds of the Rally, thanks to the combined presence of CFI, the Richard Dawkins Foundation, and the Openly Secular campaign. Three of CFI's leaders were featured speakers for the Rally: CEO **Robyn Blumner** and Board Chair **Edward Tabash**, and by video presentation, **Richard Dawkins**. But American admirers of Prof. Dawkins would soon have wonderful opportunities to see him in person.

In October the Center for Inquiry was proud to sponsor Richard Dawkins's U.S. tour, where thousands of people in select cities watched and listened as Prof. Dawkins engaged in fascinating conversation with a truly remarkable slate of special guests. Former *Saturday Night Live* star **Julia Sweeney** joined him for his appearances in Indianapolis and Grand Rapids, Michigan; philanthropist and technologist **Charles Simonyi** joined him in Portland, Oregon; *Point of Inquiry* co-host **Josh Zepps** served as interviewer in Philadelphia; and **Sam Harris** joined Prof. Dawkins for two appearances in Los Angeles, both of which sold out almost immediately.

Hundreds of skeptics flocked to the desert in October for CSICON Las Vegas, one of CFI's most successful conferences ever. The four-day event featured an amazing roster of speakers that included **Lawrence Krauss**, **Eugenie Scott**, **Maria Konnikova**, **Jill Tarter**, **Elizabeth Loftus**, special on-stage conversations with the amazing **James Randi** and **Richard Dawkins**, performances by illusionists **Banacek** and **Jamy Ian Swiss**, and all these ceremonies were mastered by musician and comedian **George Hrab**. Taking place at the dazzling Excalibur Hotel, there were of course battling knights to witness, as well as an unmissable Halloween party, complete with a skeptical karaoke parody contest. Most important were all the personal connections made between speakers and attendees alike (over 500 of them!) and the big ideas that were discovered and exchanged. As soon as it was over, attendees began to clamor for the next one. Stay tuned in 2017.





Ashley Miller and Rebecca Newberger Goldstein at Women in Secularism 4.  
Photo Josiah Mannion

On the other side of the country in September, CFI proudly presented the fourth Women in Secularism conference, a truly meaningful event that fostered impassioned discussions and charged debate on a wide variety of issues, including religion's role in the subjugation of women, how different communities can interact and support each other's causes, and state of free speech on college campuses. **Rebecca Goldstein, Maryam Namazie, Diane Burkholder, Kayley Whalen, Katha Pollitt, Wendy Kaminer,** and keynote speaker **Bonya Rafida Ahmed** were just some of the courageous, brilliant, and accomplished speakers at this remarkable conference.

# QUANTIFIED

## CFI EVENTS

Women in  
Secularism 4  
attendees:

114

CSIcon 2016  
Las Vegas  
attendees:

500

Total Audience for  
Richard Dawkins  
tour:  
approximately

6,000

### CFI On Demand

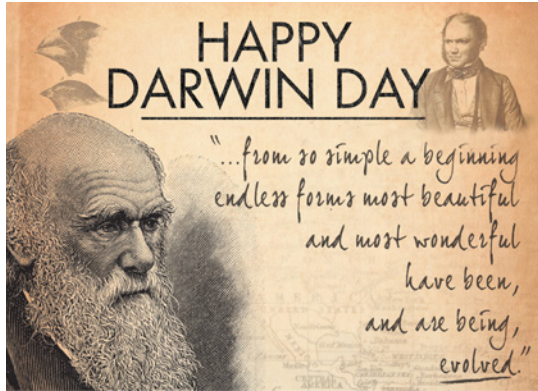
In 2016, CFI began an experiment that would allow anyone to experience something of CFI's great events, whether or not they could attend in person. With CFI Live (at [centerforinquiry.live](http://centerforinquiry.live)), our communications team delivered real-time, on-the-ground commentary, summaries, and personal impressions of the Reason Rally, Women in Secularism 4, and CSIcon.

The complete two-part video of Richard Dawkins' Los Angeles event with Sam Harris was made available for purchase, or as a benefit of "Planet Level" membership and above.

Reasonable Talk, CFI's special series of fantastic talks by great freethought luminaries, entered its second season with Paul Offit, Matt Dillahunty, Melanie Brewster, and more.



## CFI BRANCHES: BASTIONS OF REASON AND INQUIRY



CFI takes pride in the communities it has organized and supported across the United States, as well as around the world. Whether it's a weekly Sunday morning Coffee and Conversation group in Indianapolis, a community Darwin Day event in Austin, or a stage performance in Los Angeles, CFI brings reason, science, secular humanism, skepticism, and critical inquiry to thousands of people through hundreds of different events and meetings.

CFI branches create bastions of reason and inquiry in big cities and small towns, from those who have been involved in humanism and skepticism for decades to those who are just starting to find their way out of religion.

Popular at many branches are educational lectures, where scientists, philosophers, and other people with interesting things to say are given the opportunity to enlighten and challenge the views of those in the audience. Highlights from 2016 include theoretical physicist and *New York Times* bestseller **Sean Carroll** in Los Angeles, engineer and STEM advocate **Barbara Oakley** in Michigan, and a tour with popular atheist speaker **Matt Dillahunty** who visited branches in Western New York, Northeast Ohio, Pittsburgh, and Austin.

CFI branches also hosted a variety of opportunities for interesting conversation to take place outside of a formal setting, whether it was a Drinking Sceptically event at a local pub on a Friday night, or just an outing to take advantage of some good weather, such as CFI-Michigan's annual camping retreat and CFI-Pittsburgh's annual canoe trip.



Volunteer award winners with CFI Indiana

While building community for skeptics and nonbelievers is vitally important, CFI branches know that our movement cannot exist within a bubble; they worked hard this year to find cooperative opportunities with other like-minded organizations and people in their areas, such as participating in LGBTQ pride parades, cohosting educational activities with local science organizations, and joining in interfaith social activities to foster understanding and acceptance.

And especially in a time where science, secularism, and humanist values are under attack at all levels of government, CFI branches stepped up and made themselves known to their state and local governments. CFI-Northeast Ohio and CFI-Michigan both hosted lobbying days where they visited their respective statehouses to inform their representatives about issues that are important to secular humanists and skeptics.



CFI Michigan's Lobbying Day

## FOSTERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF FREETHOUGHT LEADERS

CFI On Campus continued to serve its host of college and high school affiliate groups across North America and around the world by sending packages of promotional materials such as pamphlets, stickers, and magazines; providing a monthly email newsletter, the *Campus Inquirer*; awarding grants for large speaker events and conferences; and guiding group leaders as they learn how to run successful campus freethought organizations. The year's highlights include Darwin Day celebrations, the Southeast Secular Student Regional Conference (S3RC) co-hosted by three affiliate groups, Freethought Festival 4 at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and International Blasphemy Rights Day events that educated campus communities about issues involving free expression and blasphemy rights.

### LONDON SNEDEN:

#### Sam Houston State University

“As a leader of a student organization in rural Texas, it is so relieving to know that CFI is working to better not only small communities and the larger society on the domestic front, but on an international level as well. Between its community organizing programs, educational magazines, legal office, public policy office, and involvement at the UN, CFI is a truly well-rounded organization that finds ways to really encompass every aspect of its mission. CFI represents all the potential that the secular movement should be aspiring to and utilizing, and for me personally, it has been both an honor and privilege to work with them as a student leader, intern, and supporter.”



## QUANTIFIED CFI COMMUNITIES

CFI branches, U.S.  
and International:

19

CFI On Campus  
affiliate groups:

93

Events held by CFI  
branches in 2016:

1,500



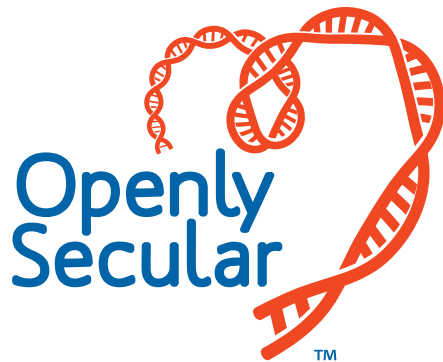


## CFI-KENYA BRINGS HOPE AND INSPIRATION TO KIDS IN NEED

Half a world away, a light of reason and compassion shines bright. There, CFI-Kenya is engaged in deeply meaningful work to educate and care for vulnerable children, promote science and critical thinking, and combat superstition. The impact that these devoted humanists are having on the lives of real people is truly inspiring.

Among its many good works, CFI-Kenya operates the Humanist Orphans program, where children without parents or sufficient family support are provided with the resources they need to attend school, including fees, uniforms, and supplies. Led by George Ongere, CFI-Kenya also runs educational programs to teach things like computer literacy, HIV/AIDS prevention, and the dangers of belief in witchcraft. They coordinate with campus groups to run workshops, debates, and exchange programs. They even help feed children in need.

In 2017, CFI-Kenya will establish the Ron Lindsay Library, named for CFI's previous president and CEO, whose support for CFI-Kenya was incredibly meaningful to Ongere and his colleagues, and students of the Humanist Orphans program who were moved and inspired by Lindsay's visit with them in 2015.



## WE ARE OPENLY SECULAR

With the merger between CFI and RDFRS, the Openly Secular campaign became a project of the Center for Inquiry. With an aim toward reducing the stigma and discrimination still faced by many nonreligious Americans, Openly Secular invited people across the country to share their personal stories of navigating life as someone with a secular identity, and were joined by rapper Killah Priest and bluegrass musician Pete Wernick (better known as “Dr. Banjo”).

And on November 15, we celebrated Openly Secular Day with a flagship conference event in Milwaukee that featured Julia Sweeney and Hemant Mehta and a call for secular Americans to take the “Tell One Person” pledge, with hundreds participating by finding one new person with whom they could safely talk about their secular identity.





**Coming to the Stage in 2017:  
*Caught in the Pulpit***

This past spring there was a small invited reading in New York City for the play *Caught in the Pulpit* by Marin Gazzaniga, adapted from the book by Daniel C. Dennett and Linda LaScola and sponsored by the Richard Dawkins Foundation. Eight actors including J. Smith Cameron, John Ellison Conlee, Glenn Fitzgerald, and William Hill took part in the reading directed by Michael Sexton. Gazzaniga has been submitting the play for development opportunities with various theater companies and producers with the hope of getting a production scheduled in 2017.

# QUANTIFIED

## SOCIAL MEDIA

CFI YouTube  
subscribers:

**12,500**

CFI Twitter  
followers:

**38,000**

CFI Facebook  
likes:

**52,000**

RDFRS Twitter  
followers:

**71,000**

RDFRS YouTube  
subscribers:

**267,000**

RDFRS Facebook  
likes:

**1,500,000**



# INQUIRY

Respected Journals of Freethought Enter a New Era



In 2016, *Skeptical Inquirer* celebrated four decades as the foremost publication for the advancement of scientific skepticism and critical thinking. *Skeptical Inquirer* was launched as *The Zetetic* in 1976, at the founding of what was then the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, or “CSICOP,” led by figures such as Paul Kurtz, Carl Sagan, Isaac Asimov, James Randi, Ray Hyman, and other brilliant thinkers. For forty years, it has remained deeply inspiring and intellectually nourishing to new generations of skeptics, and profoundly influential in the ever-changing debates over extraordinary claims about pseudoscience, conspiracy theories, science denial, and of course, the paranormal.

This milestone was honored with two special 40th anniversary issues of *Skeptical Inquirer*. The first, featuring contributions from such luminaries as **Neil deGrasse Tyson**, **Bill Nye**, and **Lawrence Krauss**, took a critical look at the state of the skeptic movement, celebrating its substantial progress, and assessing how it must adapt for the challenges of the next forty years. The second anniversary issue focused on personal journeys to skepticism, in which contributors shared stories and reflections of their individual odysseys that led them to the skeptic movement—a movement that grew in large part from the pages of *Skeptical Inquirer*.

Of course, *Skeptical Inquirer* continued to publish standard-setting investigations and features from leading skeptics like **Joe Nickell**, **Benjamin Radford**, **Carrie Poppy**, **Massimo Polidoro**, **Harriet Hall**, **Matt Nisbet**, and more. And in the mobile space, *Skeptical Inquirer* debuted as a standalone digital publication in 2016, available for the first time on its own in the app stores of Apple, Google, and Amazon.



## An Award for a Skeptic Ally

Julia Belluz, a science and health reporter for Vox, was awarded the 2015 Balles Prize for Critical Thinking. Belluz’s work pushed back against the misuse of science and the promotion of pseudoscience in policy and popular culture, bringing refreshing clarity to complex issues. She was presented with the award at CSICon 2016 Las Vegas.



Also taking new steps into the digital realm was *Free Inquiry*, the premier journal of humanist thought and the critical examination of religion. Once limited to print subscriptions with a web component for subscribers, *Free Inquiry* introduced digital-only subscriptions for the first time in its 36-year history.

And just in time, as *Free Inquiry* tackled a wide array of crucial and forward-focused subjects in 2016, such as the dueling essays on existential threats by **Michael Shermer** and **Phil Torres**; predictions for the secular movement’s continuing growth from scholars such as **Phil Zuckerman**, **Barry Kosmin**, and **Ryan T. Cragun**; and even a special issue all about death, guest-edited by *VICE* “death reporter” **Simon Davis**, with contributions from **Caitlin Doughty**, **Massimo Pigliucci**, and **PZ Myers**.

*Free Inquiry* also took a crucial look back, as **Leah Mickens** chronicled the crucial and often-forgotten role that humanists and freethinkers have played in the major social advancements of the past century.



### WELCOMING THE TEACHER INSTITUTE FOR EVOLUTIONARY SCIENCE

With the merger of the Center for Inquiry with the Richard Dawkins Foundation, a very special initiative was brought under the CFI banner: the Teacher Institute for Evolutionary Science (TIES), a professional development resource to train middle school science teachers in the most up-to-date concepts of evolutionary science, a truly distinctive program with the potential to inspire and energize young minds, and spur a life-long embrace of critical thinking.



In 2016, an incredible 27 workshops were presented by 18 different TIES Teacher Corps members, for a total of 37 workshops nationwide in less than two years of TIES’s existence. TIES also opened new avenues of opportunity and learning, starting with a new Online Learning Page for teachers and homeschooling parents who may not be able to attend TIES workshops in person, complete with training videos, activities, slide presentations, test materials, and even an evolution page entirely in Spanish for English Language Learners.

The fall of 2016 saw the launch of the TIES Partnerships project, an ambitious and vital undertaking that matches middle school science teachers with scientists in the field of evolutionary biology to help their classroom presentations on evolution come alive with real-world scientific discovery.

## QUANTIFIED THE MAGAZINES

**FREE INQUIRY  
CIRCULATION**

**18,000**

**SKEPTICAL  
INQUIRER  
CIRCULATION**

**30,000**



### **Sonia Veuga**

**7th Grade Science Teacher, St. Lucie County, FL:**

“As a teacher without a formal science background, I really appreciated your presentation. ... I am happy to say that your knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject have made me feel more prepared and excited to teach this subject to my students.”

### **Mary Martinez**

**Middle School Science Teacher, Miami Dade, FL:**

“I am very concerned about parents calling me when I teach evolution. I needed to know more about evolution so I could defend it. My degree is in elementary education, not science. That’s why I attended the [TIES Workshop]...I left with more knowledge, more confidence, and plenty of classroom resources.”

## **THE LONG AND WINDING FREETHOUGHT TRAIL**



In the 19th century, Western New York state (home to CFI’s headquarters) was where some of the most important events in America’s social and political movements took shape and changed the world. The Council for Secular Humanism has been devoted to bringing this history to life with the Freethought Trail, a collection of locations in West-Central New York important to the history of freethought, women’s rights, abolitionism, and other progressive and radical movements. Over 100 new sites were added to the Trail in 2016, as well as new stories and discoveries about the people and ideas during this unique period. The Freethought Trail can be visited in person, and there is a wealth of information and new research available at the Trail’s website at [freethought-trail.org](http://freethought-trail.org).



A crown jewel of the trail is of course the Robert Green Ingersoll Birthplace and Museum, honoring “The Great Agnostic” who blazed new trails for secularism with his soaring and brilliant oratory. In 2016, thanks to the help of the James Hervey Johnson Charitable Educational Trust of San Diego, renovations and improvements to the museum continued with the reconstruction of the Ingersoll house’s original porch. And in the spring, Ingersoll’s mother, Mary Livingston Ingersoll, was properly memorialized as her newly-discovered gravesite was finally dedicated with a new gravestone at Cazenovia’s Old South Cemetery in a Memorial Day ceremony.

## FOR GREAT CONVERSATIONS, GET TO THE POINT

Tackling a wide range of crucial subjects, CFI's flagship *Point of Inquiry* featured fascinating conversations with authors, activists, and experts in 2016. With brilliant and charming cohosts **Lindsay Beyerstein** and **Josh Zepps**, each interview was entertaining and enlightening, always framed in a rational, humanist perspective.

### Point of Inquiry 2016 highlights include:

The *New Yorker's* Maria Konnikova discussing the subtle art of con artistry

Journalist and author Rebecca Traister exploring the changing conventions for women and marriage

Former white supremacist leader Arno Michaels' journey to overcoming hate and fear

Susan Jacoby unpacking the secular components to religious conversions

Author Jessica Valenti revealing her struggles against sexism and the future of feminism

Michelle Vines opening up about her late in life diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome

Speculations about the end of the world with Phil Torres



And of course, there was a lot to say about Donald Trump. Before the election, Trump biographer David Kay Johnston exposed some of Trump's dirty laundry, and David Neiwert explored the Trump movement's connections to the "alt-right." After Trump's unexpected victory, Amanda Marcotte braced us for the implications of Trump's policies, and in the year's most-downloaded episode, the Secular Coalition for America's Larry Decker looked at why the election went the way it did, as well as the role of secular voters then and in the future.



# QUANTIFIED

## POINT OF INQUIRY

2016 Streams  
on Spotify

# 30,000

Downloads

# 1,600,000

Growth over 2015

# 7.1%



# Media Highlights: A Timeline

## JANUARY

### **Samar Badawi Arrested**

In January, Saudi Arabia inexplicably arrested human rights activist Samar Badawi, sister of imprisoned dissident Raif Badawi, taking her baby away from her in the process. CFI spoke out strongly and she was soon freed.

Coverage: *Associated Press, The Independent, The Guardian*

### **The “Royal Wedding”**

The merger of the Center for Inquiry and the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science in January wasn't just big news to our community. It was *big news*.

Coverage: *Religion News Service, Chronicle of Philanthropy, WBFO Radio, Christian Post, The Buffalo News, Salt Lake Tribune*

JAN 28: CFI's Paul Fidalgo talks to Nick Wing at the *Huffington Post* about Bernie Sanders and nonbelievers in the 2016 campaign.

## FEBRUARY

FEB 5: Susan Jacoby notes her connection to CFI in *New York Times* op-ed.

FEB 15: Benjamin Radford talks to *PBS Newshour* about conspiracy theories.

FEB 15: WCPO in Cincinnati talks to CFI-Northeast Ohio's Monette Richards about marriage equality.

FEB 19: *Christian Post* talks to Michael De Dora as CFI is the only nonreligious group among 100 organizations to call upon the State Department to classify the Islamic State's killings of Christians as a genocide.

## MARCH

MARCH 2: CFI General Counsel Nicholas Little pens an op-ed for *Salon* on the milestone Texas abortion case before the Supreme Court.



### **Bangladesh: End the Madness**

The murders of three more secularist activists in Bangladesh in April, the latest targets of Islamist militants in their years-long campaign of terror against freethinkers, sparks new outrage. CFI demands an end to the slaughtering, and for the Bangladesh government to stop blaming the victims, and to protect its people. In a scathing op-ed for CNN, Michael De Dora and Paul Fidalgo call the government response “shameful,” accusing them of “coddling the killers and chastising the dead.” Also, De Dora tells the full story of this crisis in a piece at *Religion Dispatches*.

Coverage: *Religion News Service, Chronicle of Philanthropy, WBFO Radio, Christian Post, The Buffalo News, Salt Lake Tribune*

## APRIL

APRIL 3: *The Daily Beast* covers Christian persecution around the world and checks in with Paul Fidalgo.

APRIL 14: CNN talks to Paul Fidalgo about Bernie Sanders and the role of religion in the election.

APRIL 22: Tennessee fails to make the Bible its state book, and ABC News gets commentary from Michael De Dora.

APRIL 22: In a *National Geographic* feature story, CFI's Stephanie Guttormson discusses how organizing the nonreligious is like “herding cats.”

## JULY

JULY 15: *Free Inquiry* editor Tom Flynn talks to *Religion News Service* about the nonreligious and belief in life after death.

### **Atheists Demeaned in Leaked DNC Emails**

Among the emails hacked from the Democratic National Committee by Wikileaks was a discussion among high ranking staffers that Sen. Bernie Sanders could be hurt by spreading rumors that he is an atheist (which he isn't). In a July 25 statement jointly signed by members of CFI's leadership team—Robyn Blumner, Eddie Tabash, Ronald Lindsay, and Tom Flynn—we denounced the anti-atheist bigotry displayed by the staffer, and called for his resignation. The following week, he did just that. Blumner later published an op-ed in the *Miami Herald* on the failure of Democrats to reach out to their largest demographic: the nonreligious.

Coverage: *Huffington Post, Reason, Washington Times, The Daily Dot, Deseret News*





**Whether the subject is violence in Bangladesh or the 2016 election, alternative medicine rip-offs or attacks on women's rights, the global struggle for free expression or the paranoia over scary clowns, the Center for Inquiry is an invaluable source for the media, bringing a uniquely informed, skeptical, and secular perspective to the news of the day.**

## OCTOBER

## NOVEMBER

## DECEMBER

### Blasphemy Rights Day

Several Christian publications were particularly interested in CFI's call for an end to blasphemy laws during the week of International Blasphemy Rights Day. The Catholic League's Bill Donohue lashed out at CFI in a tantrum, calling the idea a "farce" and comparing Richard Dawkins to the KKK.

Coverage: *CNS News, Christian Post, Joe My God, The News-Recorder*

### Fierce Courage from Black Atheists

Several outlets explored the particular experiences of black nonbelievers in the U.S. in pieces that featured CFI's Debbie Goddard, director of the African Americans for Humanism program.

Coverage: *VICE, Daily Beast, Huffington Post, Aeon*

### Who You Gonna Call? Skeptics.

With the release of the new *Ghostbusters* movie, there was a lot of interest in real-life "ghost hunters" and the technology they employ in their fruitless pursuits. Journalists looked to CFI's Benjamin Radford and Joe Nickell for the skeptical point of view.

Coverage: *Today, Wall Street Journal, Popular Mechanics, Baltimore Sun, Huffington Post, Forbes, Business Insider*

### Attack of the Clowns

Leave it to a year like 2016 to be the year America believed itself to be terrorized by evil clowns. Luckily, CFI had on staff *Skeptical Inquirer* deputy editor Benjamin Radford, who literally wrote the book on the subject, *Bad Clowns*, and the press sought him out in droves.

Coverage: *On the Media, Vox, Afternoons with Bob Breakenridge, Santa Fe New Mexican*

OCT 11: Joe Nickell discusses Bigfoot sightings in Oregon on NPR station KLCC.

OCT 20: CFI-Pittsburgh member Jeff Prebeg Jr. wins his bid to get an atheist license plate approved and is interviewed in the *Pittsburgh Tribune*.

OCT 29: After the editorial board of *The Oklahoman* criticizes CFI's Council for Secular Humanism on the issue of church-state separation, they in turn publish a response by Tom Flynn calling on Oklahoma voters to reject a bill to repeal the state's "Blaine Amendment."



NOV 9: *Religion News Service* wonders what comes next for the atheist movement after the "body blow" of Trump's unexpected election, and talks to CFI's Paul Fidalgo.



### No Politicking from the Pulpit

*The Deseret News's* Billy Hallowell was fascinated by the battle over the Johnson Amendment, which prohibited clergy from endorsing political candidates, and Donald Trump's promise to repeal it. In four separate stories, he included insight from CFI's Michael De Dora: July 19, July 22, September 13, October 3.

DEC 12: The popular political blog *Little Green Footballs* recommends a *Skeptical Inquirer* subscription as a holiday gift. No arguments from us.

DEC: CFI-Los Angeles executive director Jim Underdown debuts in a news series for WGN TV News debunking paranormal claims, "That's Bull\*\*\*\*!"

### FTC Takes On Homeopathy

CFI was instrumental in spurring the new regulations placed on homeopathic products in November by the Federal Trade Commission, mandating that they be clearly labeled as unproven and unscientific.

Coverage: *Vox, Snopes, Business Insider, Smithsonian, The Buffalo News*



# INSIDE CFI

The People at the Center of it All



In April, CFI was proud to welcome veteran activist, organizer, and master gardener **Y. Sherry Sheng** to the Board of Directors, bringing a wealth of experience in nonprofit advocacy and leadership in areas as varied as wildlife and environment to telecommunications and financial regulation.



As part of the merger with the Richard Dawkins Foundation, on December 31, 2016 the CFI Board of Directors also welcomed three additional members: venture capitalist **David Cowan**; psychiatrist and author of *Why We Believe in Gods*, **Dr. Andy Thompson**; and of course RDFRS's founder and namesake, **Prof. Richard Dawkins** himself.

Coming in from the Richard Dawkins Foundation, **Stephanie Guttormson** took on the role of Director of Public Engagement for CFI, as well as Program Manager for CFI's Washington, D.C. branch. CFI also gained **Dave Churvis**, previously RDFRS's Program Manager, and now doing yeoman's work as CFI's Database Administrator.

**Matt Licata**, who had served as CFI's Webmaster since 2011, was promoted to Director of Digital Product and Strategy. More than building gorgeous websites, Matt is now in charge of designing CFI's online presence, crafting strategies, and developing the tools needed to execute those strategies.

**Cody Hashman**, an indispensable member of the outreach team since 2012, became CFI's Program Manager, which includes coordination of the Openly Secular campaign.

**Nora Hurley**, the woman behind the scenes of *Point of Inquiry*, booking guests and engineering the show, was promoted to Executive Producer of the program, taking full creative and managerial leadership of CFI's flagship podcast.

Former President and CEO **Ronald A. Lindsay** continues to bring his invaluable insight and intellect to our mission in his new role as a CFI Research Fellow.

CFI-Portland welcomed **Nicole Orr** as its new administrative assistant. Nicole is a freelance children's author and previously worked with the National Novel Writing Month organization.



# QUANTIFIED

## WEB STATS

**CFI websites (including CSI and CSH) average monthly pageviews:**  
approximately

**446,000**

**CFI websites total pageviews:**  
approximately

**5,300,000**

**RDFRS website average monthly pageviews:**  
approximately

**748,000**

**RDFRS website total pageviews:**  
approximately

**9,000,000**

## A BRAIN TRUST LIKE NO OTHER

The Center for Inquiry is an institution that benefits from the talent, intellect, and dedication of an incredible roster of directors, fellows, consultants, and advisors. Together, CFI and the Richard Dawkins Foundation have brought together an unmatched assembly of scientists, educators, activists, journalists, philosophers, investigators, and other luminaries who have put their names, energies, and efforts to advancing our shared mission. Richard Dawkins, Neil deGrasse Tyson, Susan Jacoby, Carolyn Porco, Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, Norman Lear, Lawrence Krauss, Steven Pinker, Eugenie Scott, Bill Nye, and E.O. Wilson are just a sampling of the brilliant thinkers and activists that have associated with the Center for Inquiry.

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As the so-called “post-truth” and “fake news” era of 2016 indisputably proved, there has never been a greater need for an organization like the Center for Inquiry, championing facts, reason, truth, science, and secularism, all at a time that they are all under threat by the changing tides of national and global events. Everyone who shares these core values will be needed. CFI needs you to be part of the solution, to join the good guys.

In 2016, CFI made becoming a part of this vital movement easier and better than ever with its revamped membership program. The new program has upgraded its member benefits and made them apply everywhere CFI is. Membership levels are cosmically improved, with options for Planet, Star, Galaxy, and Universe-level status in the Center for Inquiry firmament. Monthly membership options were added to the existing yearly memberships as well.

To stand up for reason, to defend science from deniers, to protect the secular character of government, to advance free expression and belief around the world in 2017, become a member of the Center for Inquiry right now.



## A QUARTER MILLION DOLLAR SUCCESS

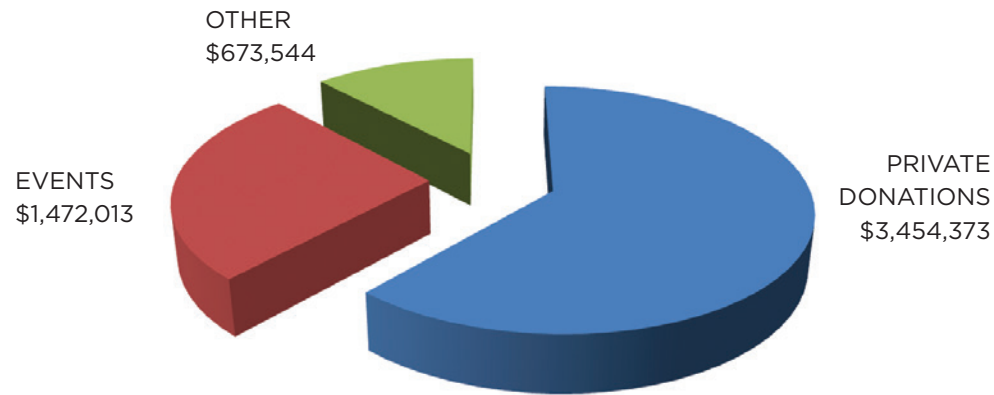
Freethinking philanthropist Louis Appignani put a challenge before us in 2016: Raise a quarter-million dollars before the end of the year, and he'd match it. We asked you to take him up on his challenge in October, and by December we had crossed the finish line! We couldn't be more grateful to you and to Louis for your generosity and devotion to this cause.



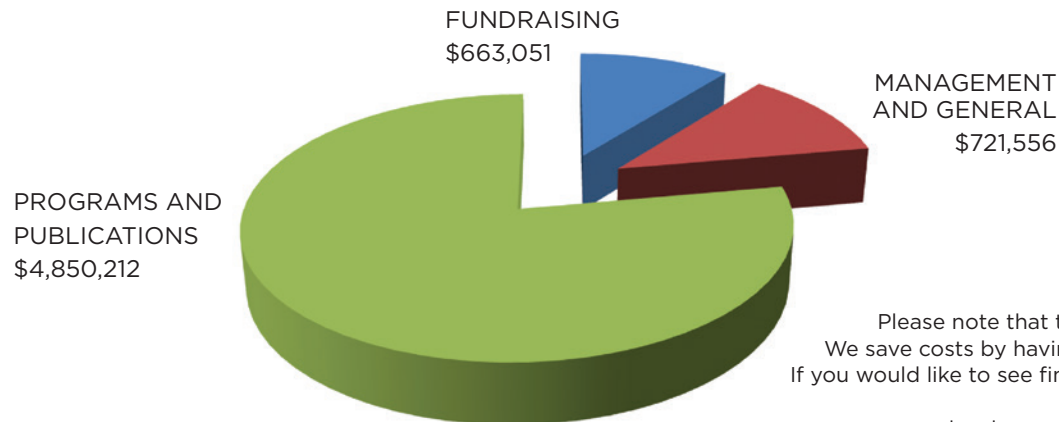
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We take accountability seriously. When you give to the Center for Inquiry and the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science, you trust us to use your funds diligently to advance our shared mission. This trust is crucial, and we are dedicated to stewarding your investment with the utmost diligence.

In 2016, we raised a total of \$5,599,930, 88 percent of which came from donors and event attendees. As you know, we receive no government funding and very few grants. So individuals are crucial to our success.



When we spend our funds, we are keenly aware of the responsibility we have to our donors. Our program expenses reflect that commitment to accountability.



Please note that these are not final, audited figures. We save costs by having our audit done later in the year. If you would like to see final, audited figures, please contact the Development Department at [development@centerforinquiry.net](mailto:development@centerforinquiry.net) in August.

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