



**Zambelli**  
FIREWORKS

**Ray Griffin**  
**2004 IFEA/Zambelli Fireworks International**  
**Volunteer of the Year Award**  
**Nominated by Cityfolk**  
**Dayton, Ohio**



Ray Griffin's enthusiasm is evident in every aspect of his life, but it is most visible in the amount of time he gives as a volunteer for Cityfolk. Griffin essentially made the festival what it is today by volunteering for the difficult task of Festival Director.

In the fall of 2000, Cityfolk's Executive Director resigned, leaving the organization and the festival in a precarious position. The Executive Director was also serving the dual role of Festival Director, which left a huge void in leadership that needed to be filled. Griffin approached the Cityfolk board of trustees, offering his services as the Festival Director, as well as the interim Executive Director of the entire organization. During the months he was the interim Executive Director, he united the staff (which had been cut by 50% and were emotionally exhausted) and put policies, accounting and contract management procedures into place to greatly improve the day-to-day operations of the organization.

Most importantly, as Festival Director, Griffin established the volunteer structure that is still in place today and is the only way the festival could continue, having endured such a significant reduction in work force. Last year, the festival engaged over 1,000 volunteers, without whom the festival could not exist. Griffin also established the first ever festival volunteer appreciation event to further punctuate his commitment to a volunteer structure. The volunteer structure that Griffin established has now been successfully producing the largest multicultural festival in Ohio since 2001.

For the first time in years, Griffin not only produced a festival that satisfied every portion of Cityfolk's mission and core values, but he made a \$125,000 financial contribution to Cityfolk that offset all operational deficits and allowed the organization to carry out its regular season series of jazz, world, Celtic, and traditional music concerts and educational activities.

While he primarily dedicates himself to the Cityfolk festival in the role of Festival Director, Griffin is also extremely committed to their year-round season of activities as a volunteer Board Member, ticket buyer and committee volunteer. Griffin works an average of thirty to forty hours a week during the festival season.

Griffin's professional background is a perfect fit for the Festival Director position. He arrived at Cityfolk after he retired from the City of Dayton, where he managed the region's largest public facility - the Dayton Convention Center. Griffin brings his understanding of city departments and their hierarchy to his volunteer role as Festival Director. His ability to engage the right people needed to coordinate the festival, which attracts nearly 100,000 attendees and involves 1000 volunteers and dozens of sponsors and partners, has proven invaluable over the past years. Griffin's professional expertise has netted many positive results, including 2003's record-setting profits, a significant increase in in-kind contributions, a successful move of the festival's home, the largest family of sponsors and partners in the festival's history and the subsequent merger of two events under the Cityfolk festival's umbrella.

No matter how hectic the day's schedule is during the festival season, Griffin always takes time to discuss ideas with the staff and thank people for their time and efforts. He also exemplifies a great attitude during the festival by handling issues calmly and efficiently. His high priority on producing a quality event for families and the community enables him to rise above the inevitable problems.

In addition to being the Festival Director, Griffin has served on the Board of Trustees (two terms) and is currently serving on the Development and Finance Committee. He is a major donor to the organization and solicits corporate and individual contributions. Griffin also volunteers with other local/regional organizations. He is a Past National Board Member and Present Volunteer for Neighborhoods USA and he is currently volunteering for the Oregon Historic District Society, the Southwest Priority board, and Dayton's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration.

It is no exaggeration to state that the Cityfolk festival would not have happened, or be in existence today, if it were not for Ray Griffin's work. He made a real difference in the organization's future, building the Cityfolk festival into the organization's largest fundraising event. Without it, the organization would have a difficult time surviving. Thanks to Ray Griffin, the 2004 Cityfolk festival promises to be the most exciting in the history of the organization.