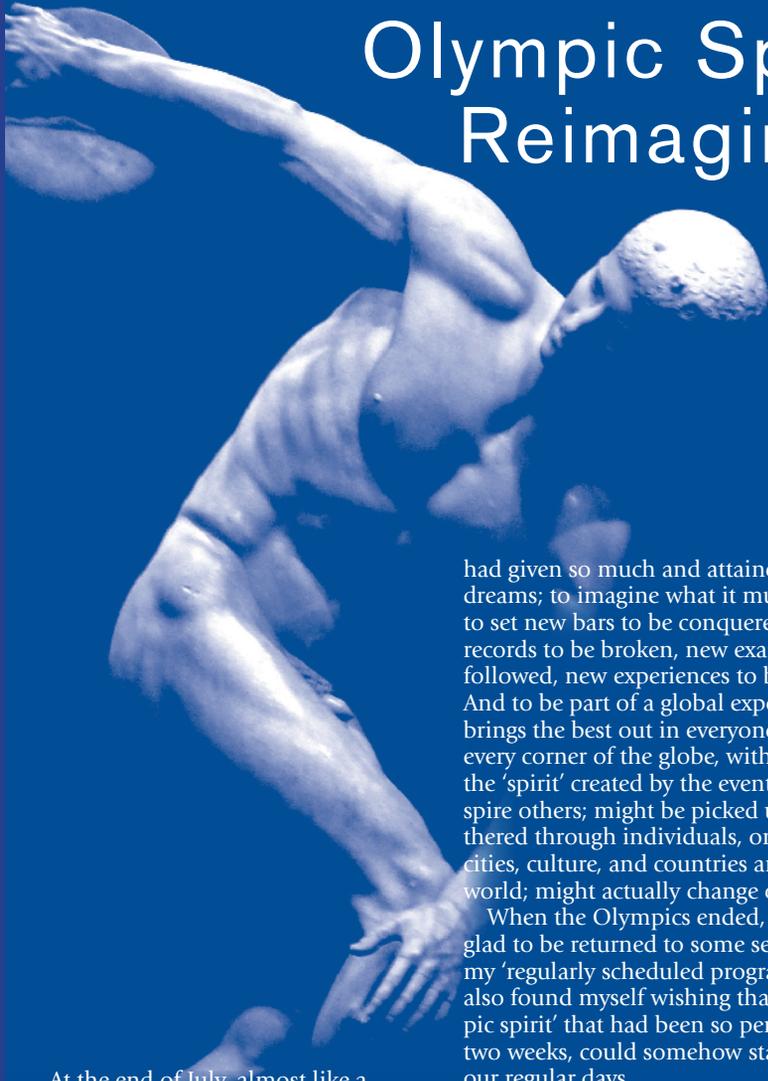


# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

## The Power of the Olympic Spirit Reimagined



STEVE SCHMADER, CFE

At the end of July, almost like a vintage episode of the *Twilight Zone*, I regained control of my television set. For the previous two weeks, beginning with the Queen's jump from a helicopter with James Bond to the lowering of the torch 'leaves' as the flame was extinguished, the Olympic Games had burned their image into my television screen, calling me to watch; to cheer; to feel empathy and admiration for those who had trained so hard, come so close, missed their dreams by mere hundredths of a second and - in the next virtual heartbeat - declared themselves ready to do it all again without hesitation. To feel pride for those who

had given so much and attained their dreams; to imagine what it must be like to set new bars to be conquered, new records to be broken, new examples to be followed, new experiences to be topped. And to be part of a global experience that brings the best out in everyone, from every corner of the globe, with hopes that the 'spirit' created by the event might inspire others; might be picked up and furthered through individuals, organizations, cities, culture, and countries around the world; might actually change our world.

When the Olympics ended, while I was glad to be returned to some semblance of my 'regularly scheduled programming,' I also found myself wishing that the 'Olympic spirit' that had been so pervasive for two weeks, could somehow stay a part of our regular days.

In the weeks since the Olympics we have pretty much been heads-down getting all of the details ready and in-place for our upcoming IFEA 57th Annual Convention & Expo, scheduled for September 21st - 23rd, in Denver, Colorado. During that process of securing speakers, planning events, prepping for meetings, judging awards, working with sponsors and vendors, and marketing our plans - like any event - it is easy to get caught up in the details; assuring that everything is in place; while missing the bigger picture.

Much like the Olympics, we have the unique opportunity to bring together the best people in our field; people who have

trained to be the best; people who are excited by the challenges laid before them and appreciative of those peers who press them to do more than they think they can do; to imagine new possibilities; and, most importantly, who are willing to share their successes and failures so that others can learn from them. People who, whether they exceed expectations or fall a little short of their ultimate goals, are ready in the next heartbeat to do it all again, without hesitation.

And, we have the opportunity to bring the world closer together. The IFEA Convention & Expo will welcome representatives from every global region (Africa, Asia, Australia/New Zealand, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and North America), coming together to build new friendships and networks; to imagine new partnerships; to reset the bar...until the next time.

And I know that, all the work and preparation aside, when the IFEA Convention & Expo ends on September 23rd and we resume our regularly scheduled programming, we will all wish that we could somehow maintain that 'IFEA spirit' for just a little while longer; that we might transfer some of that energy and vision to our own events and communities; that we might inspire others in our organizations, cities, cultures and countries; that we might play just a little role in changing the world.

Given those goals, and knowing our industry very well (one that proudly includes the Olympic Games), I would fully expect that we stand a very good chance of securing a place on the medal podium.

I look forward to seeing you in Denver.