

FOUNDATION

All IFEA Has Given Me



I hope you all have had the chance to share the knowledge with your organization that you obtained while attending the IFEA's 60th Anniversary Convention & Expo this past September in Tucson, AZ. I hope you have begun the process of not only implementing your newfound ideas to your events and guest experiences but have also reached out to your new contacts and are experiencing opportunities you never thought you would. Personally, I am very excited about the new friends I met and am prioritizing all of the new enhancements I learned!

As my time as Chair of the IFEA Foundation Board ends, I reflect on all IFEA has given me during my time as a member. I wanted to touch upon a few.

Connections and Friendship: Some of my best friends I have met through IFEA and many of which I communicate with weekly. Additionally, my family has reaped some of the benefits too. My daughter, Alex, was able to work with the Disney Princesses at the San Jose Holiday Parade, through Ed Bautista; and Devin, my other daughter, interned with the Chicago Festivals and Events Association with Phil Purevich as well as having the opportunity to share some time with two remarkable women, Jean McFaddin and Susan Falk during her summer in New York. Even during this past Convention, I had the opportunity to book the IFEA Foundation Live Auction Package to Dubai, UAE with fellow industry professional, Cindy Lerick (Cultural Festivals). Lastly, my roommate during the Convention, Pam Sartory (SunFest) is one of the only people that has ever seen me without makeup, scary! These are just a few of the endless amount of people within the organization that have made a huge impact on both my professional and personal life.

Knowledge: How many of my event enhancements were "stolen" from other events? The Sword and Stone and the Squirt Pad, both from the Boise River Festival; box marketing signage from the Main St. Fort Worth Arts Festival; Point of Sales cash register systems from the IFEA Expo; RFP's from Memphis in May, sponsorship proposals

from Des Moines Art Festival; posters from Addison, Texas; and logos from Disney are just a few of the items I have "researched" and "confiscated"!

Compensations: The research IFEA has done on compensation for event experts, helped determine my financial income at each of my careers. Having the statistics of industry standards armed me in negotiating my compensation and benefit package. This obviously impacted my career and family.

Sponsorship and Partnership: The sponsorship and partners IFEA have secured, on behalf of all of our organizations, have ensured us quality partnerships. Partnerships including but not limited to: insurances, flagging, fireworks and shipping rates. Use them often and with the assurance IFEA has done the research to find us the best in the industry!

Credentials: Obtaining my Certified Festival Event Executive showed my sponsors not only did I invest in myself, but gave them the reassurance I was an expert in my field. I am confident it raised my proposals to the top of the pile and opened doors quicker to hear my pitch first! Additionally, the classes I participated in, showed me how to effectively present and deliver information; making me truly an expert in the field!

The Bookstore: Yes, I have my own personal event library and a lot of it has come from the IFEA online bookstore. I use these resources daily. They make great gifts and are perfect for your staff and interns!

IFEA Staff: How many of you have had a question and have turned to the IFEA staff? At one point in my career, I was asked to research an opportunity to produce a jazz festival. I called an expert at the IFEA World Headquarters to supply a list of contacts for the best Jazz Festivals in the world. After touching base and building a case study, I was able to decide that due to our demographic, competition, and resources, other opportunities would be a better fit for our organization. Their knowledge and connections are second to none.

Webinars: Thursday noon Webinars (yes, I am central time zone) have given me an opportunity to share national

experiences with my team in Oshkosh, WI. This time creates an environment for creativity and brainstorming. These sessions lead to ideas that enhance our event and/or our guest experience. It helps us find the time to get away from the day-to-day "to do list" and problem solve around the challenges of another event. This exercise will ensure we are prepared when similar challenges present themselves at our events. Additionally, this time gives us invaluable team bonding opportunities.

There are numerous other benefits IFEA has not only given me, but to you too. Therefore, I must ask, what can we do for IFEA? Well, we can help recruit new members through our connections within our state. Perhaps you or your organizations can make a donation to the Fund for the Future to invest in future leaders in our industry. Or possibly be willing to share our time and talent when it is needed by the organization. Maybe just find out what the IFEA team or organization needs to continue to grow and serve the membership and future members of our industry. Whatever you feel you can do, it will enhance the experience for all of us. It can make a positive impact on our communities through the events we produce. We are all in the business of making memories; we are the memory makers. With the help of IFEA, let's make our industry the best it can be!

MARY ANN DILLING, CFEE
2015 IFEA Foundation
Board Chair
Director of Business
Development
Experimental Aircraft
Association (EAA)
Oshkosh, WI
Email: mdilling@eaa.org