

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



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THE GLOBAL ROLE WE MUST PLAY

We opened our IFEA 60th Anniversary Convention & Expo in Tucson, Arizona - just a few short weeks ago - with a centuries old, traditional Native American ceremony called Mitakuye Oyasin (Mee-tah-koo-yay Oh-yah-seen), a Lakota Sioux term literally translated as "All My Relations." Mitakuye Oyasin is meant to remind us that we are all connected in the intricate web of existence and that each of us is affected by the actions of all the others. Everything and everyone is interrelated and interconnected and nothing exists in isolation. We chose to highlight that message and the IFEA's global outreach, by inviting representatives from each of our global regions to participate in the ceremony on stage. It was a simple, but powerful image. Celebration, bringing the world together, in so many positive ways.

Today, as I write this letter, that image stands in stark contrast to the devastating images that have been broadcasting around the world following the horrific attacks on Paris, France; the 'City of Light'. While our gathering at the IFEA Convention underlined and celebrated our global diversity and the many positive events that are being and have been produced to bring our world closer together, the tragedy in Paris reminded us of the polar opposite and just how few it takes to

divide us; to strike fear into our hearts; to disrupt our communities and homes and cities; to take away those that we love and to dim the light of our celebrations.

Fortunately, we live in a world that does not accept that counterbalance as equal, nor embrace the fear and division that those who carried out the attacks in Paris and multiple other locations around the world in recent months and years, would have us do. To be certain, we must now take judicious precautions that we would rather have no need for, just as we must step beyond our comfort zones to avoid building new walls and barriers out of broad-stroked fear. Our world is resilient, but needs to be reminded that they are not alone; that they and others like them (of every nationality, religious and cultural background) stand in solidarity as the majority. A role that our industry is uniquely equipped to play.

Mitakuye Oyasin reminds us that we are affected by the actions of all and not only those that we choose. If that affect ultimately serves to motivate us, to strengthen our resolve, and to bring us closer together, then it has had a positive impact. Especially now, I hope that all of those in our industry will use this moment-in-time to reimagine how our events - individually and collectively -

might work in concert to help reinforce and reassure our communities, our cities and our world. How we might use our events to help educate and enhance understanding; to lower barriers and reduce fears; to celebrate our diversity and bond those diverse backgrounds together; to stand as legacies to those whose lives have been lost so needlessly and to keep the light of celebration burning bright in every corner of the world.

As we prepare to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday here in the United States, I am thankful to be a part of an industry that can have such a global impact. To have friends in many countries and on every continent who have shown me who and what the world can be like when we are at our best...embracing, respecting and celebrating our differences. And to understand how we can all affect our common Mitakuye Oyasin, extending outward, through the events that we create and produce.

As we look to the New Year ahead, on behalf of IFEA World and our friends and affiliates around the globe, I wish for each of you...your families, your teams, your communities and your countries...much to be thankful for, much to look forward to, much to celebrate and the power of events to bring our world closer together.