

# IFEA FOUNDATION BOARD



THE “I” IN IFEA

**IT MEANS INTERNATIONAL,  
BUT LET’S ELABORATE  
A LITTLE.**



home country of South Africa and she would graciously host our summer meeting. After only a few texts and emails, the board members quickly consented to this invitation and I was soon on a plane going to my INTERNATIONAL Festival and Events Association board meeting.

**“I” means INSPIRE**

It is not surprising that the World Board members voted Janet Landey as the 2019 chair, as she has put much of her life’s work into building out a “Skills Village” in Johannesburg, South Africa where she works with the disadvantaged youth (well really anyone, not just youth) of Johannesburg to build skills in the event profession so that they can provide for their families and most importantly their communities. For years we have heard her passionately tell us about her work and honestly it was hard to grasp and keep up with this extremely fast moving “Mother Teresa” of South Africa. To see this work first-hand, is something I know none of us will forget and will INSPIRE my work going forward.

**“I” means INTENSITY**

While in South Africa, both boards held our IFEA board meetings and then we participated in a one-day professional exchange at “Skills Village.” Janet invited many South African political and civic leaders, in addition to her students and supporters of Skills Village to a day of sharing with the board members of IFEA. This was the day that I know none of us will forget. While we all went

**“I” means INTERNATIONAL**

As I write this article, I am on an 18-hour plane ride on my way back from South Africa reflecting on what I would consider a trip of a lifetime (sorry for the cliché). I just spent a week with my fellow IFEA Foundation and World Board members in South Africa for one of our three annual board meetings. This trip really put the “I” in International Festival and Events Association. Typically, we have had our meetings in North America, as that is where a majority of the board members are located. However, since Janet Landey is the current Board President of the IFEA World Board, she encouraged and invited us all to visit her



there to share our knowledge, mentor and encourage these youth to keep working towards being the best at their area (décor, catering, management, marketing, sanitation, to name a few), what we did not expect was the gift they gave all of us in return. The intensity, drive and hope that I experienced from these few short conversations with these individuals was so refreshing. Like you, we all come from the event world, where we are surrounded by deadlines, problems and thousands of tasks that can be overwhelming much of the time and often the center of our focus.

However, when you speak with these youth, their problems are so much bigger. Many of these students got up at 4 am that morning to begin their journey to get to the Skills Village, because something as simple as transportation is a challenge. Simple necessities of food, shelter and infrastructure are sparse or non-existent and yet that is not what they are intense about. Instead you are swept up in their excitement and hope that they have when it comes to their desire to put on something special for their family, village or community. Their challenges are way bigger than what many of us see in our daily events business and I left with a new appreciation for the basics of what we do and a reminder to mentor those just getting in the industry. Sure, we have challenges everyday with what we do, but that should not be our focus, rather our focus should be on the fact that we are bringing joy to hundreds and thousands that can choose to participate in your festival or another one tomorrow and not think twice about it. Let's be INTENSE about that.

#### **"I" means INVEST**

Janet Landey's South African Skills Village is a remarkable undertaking and great reminder to us all that it is our job to give back and mentor others in our profession. It is important for us to make sure that the event profession is made up of intense people that are dedicated to nothing but the best level of professionalism in our industry, and really understand FUN. While we are not doing the depth of work that my friend Janet Landey is doing at Skills Village, the IFEA Foundation does have the same mission.

The IFEA Foundation depends upon the generous support of those who are active in the industry to play a larger role – beyond their own events and markets – to ensure both the present and

the future success of our profession. The money raised by the foundation goes towards the following and more:

- Providing Legacy Scholarships that allow recipients the chance to attend IFEA Annual Convention
- Provide funding for the Certified Festival & Event Executive (CFEE and CFEA) Program to continue raising the level of professionalism in our industry
- Funding of top-quality speakers
- Funding educational publications
- Provide Technology and electronic training services
- Perhaps we all do not have the time or need to build a Skills Village in our communities, so I have listed a few ways you can INVEST in our profession!
- Cash donations to the IFEA Foundation
- Gift bequeaths to the IFEA Foundation
- Provide In-kind support of critical services and products to the IFEA Foundation
- Donate an Item/Package to our Annual IFEA Foundation Auction event (Learn More Here.)
- Bid on the unique and valuable items and packages at the IFEA Foundation Auction event that will take place at the Annual IFEA Convention in September
- Donate your time and expertise to support IFEA's many professional programs
- Bring someone new to the Annual IFEA Convention
- Encourage others to join IFEA

Please note: The IFEA World and Foundation Board members are non-compensated and pay for their own travel and lodging to attend board meetings.

IFEA Foundation Board Chair  
President/CEO  
O'Neill Events and Marketing  
Kansas City, MO  
keli@oneillevents.com