



THERE IS A LITTLE HERO **IN ALL OF US!**

Good things can come from bad times. No one wants to go through hard times or see the world shut down to a pandemic, but it is always so powerful to see the touching acts of goodness that come from these defining moments in time. Whether it is the high school senior that gives her prom money to feed nurses or a simple wave and applause to the trucks leaving the farms. How about those cheers for the doctors and nurses as they head to work that we have all seen?

There are so many new heroes appearing in our world as well that we may have been taking advantage all of this time such as grocery store employees, farmers, truck drivers, delivery drivers and those in retail that help keep us all going. We have of course always welcomed all of these heroes at our events, but now it will be an honor to recognize and reward them as we find our “new normal”. We can be and will be there for these frontline workers with celebrations, recognition, discounts and appreciation!

The USNS COMFORT is a United States Navy mercy-class ship that departed Virginia for New York at the end of March with an enormous, heart-felt salute to the men and women serving aboard from around the nation. Many locals here lined our waterways to see the ship pass, wave and hold signs high for this tanker-sized mobile hospital with the hopes that those aboard would feel the appreciation. It was an unplanned, socially distant event that took place with no preparation, no live music and no food served. Though I did keep thinking of how we need to make the ship's return a welcome home festival, it was extremely moving how these gestures of gratitude could be so touching and memorable.

The role of the special events industry has always been to unite our communities, in the bad times and the

good times. To take defining moments in time and come together for the greater good, economic impact and for charitable causes. Through all of the tough financial times we face, it is good to be in a business that connects people, ignites the human spirit and supports community.

So much is unknown - will we now be taking our guests temperature before they enter our events? What is known is that simple ideas will have great impact. Passion is always powerful. The ordinary will now be extraordinary! Small acts of good, together, will be as beneficial to us all as going back to a regular day.

One of the best ideas from our team came from some new event brainstorming and was as simple as “6 Feet Together”. Instead of six feet apart, let's be six feet together – it is designed as a pet-friendly happy hour event ... Two human legs + four paws = 6! A hopefully high-yield low-cost way to bring people back together and put our event season back into action.

We have a lot of work to do, and that is a good thing! Soon, and more importantly than ever, we will all need to come together and celebrate the human spirit and all that is good in the world. We need to be ready and do our heroic part in bringing people back together safely. We need to celebrate those that have kept us going through this tough time. And, we need to recognize the small acts of goodness that have huge impacts!

Ted Barody, CFE

IFEA World Board Chair

President

Norfolk Festevents

Norfolk, VA