

WE CANNOT **DO THIS ALONE!**



“METAMORPHOSIS”... what a perfect theme for IFEA’s 65th Annual Convention, Expo & Retreat this September. This is what all of us are experiencing, in so many different areas, as we bring our events back in person (not to mention in our personal lives as well).

As we wrap up the 2022 National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, DC, bringing an iconic springtime tradition back to an in-person celebration, I have to tell you it felt amazing! The joy and gratitude that we felt throughout the local community, region, nation and even across the globe, has been remarkable. A clear change of mood and spirit! Of course, there were many challenges and bumps in the road during the past year as we transitioned back and faced continued uncertainty. We recruited and rebuilt the festival’s staff; took key learnings and successes from the past two years to incorporate them into new and innovative Festival programs and experiences; while taking into consideration the comfortability levels of attendees to participate; all while keeping safety and health as a key priority.

These past few months reminded me, once again, why we do what we do...why it is so important to bring festivals and event back in person, connecting our communities from near and far. Local residents engaged more than ever these last few years and we continued to build on that community spirit to encourage this participation in 2022, communicating that the National Cherry Blossom Festival is not just for tourists, a perception we have been working on changing (starting pre-Covid). As residents and visitors started to come back, the Festival played an important role in the road to Washington DC’s economic recovery bringing businesses together for this city and region-wide springtime celebration. In addition, national brands aligned with us to be a part of this positive sense of renewal and transformation.

We could not do this alone. This was my 22nd year leading an amazing team to present the National Cherry Blossom Festival, but still each year comes with new challenges and so much to learn as the world of events

continue to evolve, especially through the current environment. I am grateful for our IFEA colleagues who were there to serve as sounding boards, exchange ideas, and provide experience and advice as we worked to navigate through challenges....staffing, vendors, new types of agreements, volunteer programs, unique sponsor needs, logistics, operations, budgets (with increased pricing of EVERYTHING) and keeping safety and health as a first priority!...pew!!! Many times our Festival team and I reached out to our counterparts in the IFEA world for their input and guidance. This is one of the major values of being an IFEA member...the amazing network of rich experiences and backgrounds in which to draw upon.

My team and I very much look forward to attending the 65th Annual Convention, Expo & Retreat, presented by Haas & Wilkerson Insurance in McAllen, Texas this September 19 - 21. Yay! Back in person! We look forward to sharing some of our learnings with you and hear from you as well! This is my favorite part of the Convention. Now more than ever, the importance of bringing together industry leaders as well as those new to events to share experiences and challenges, to discuss future vision and how to get to that vision, is critical to our success (and sanity). The workshops and seminar sessions promise to touch on current, relevant and state-of-the-art topics, hearing from leaders across the country and the globe. There is no better place or time to meet and network with event colleagues. We look forward to seeing you in Texas this September! In the meantime, feel free to reach out to any of us on the IFEA World Board, or the IFEA Team, at any time.

Diana Mayhew, CFE

IFEA World Board Chair

President

National Cherry Blossom Festival

Washington, DC