

## YOU SHOULD HAVE FOMO

# IF YOU DIDN'T ATTEND THE CONVENTION!



**W**ell, we did it! After a long three-year hiatus, we finally came together in-person as an industry to swap pandemic stories, celebrate our successes, and hug our festival friends again! Thank you to all who showed up for the 65th Annual IFEA Convention, Expo & Retreat, presented by Haas & Wilkerson Insurance. The hospitality from McAllen, Texas was top-notch, the drinks from DFEST Hospitality Suite were ever-flowing, and the education and networking were next level. I enjoyed meeting new industry professionals, and hope many of you did too. Now would be a great time to pen a quick note to a new IFEA friend to say hello. Pro tip: cut through all the email spam chatter and send it via snail mail for more of an impact!

I want to give a huge personal THANK YOU to all who joined us at the IFEA Foundation Fiesta: Una Noche Magica! We had a great night under the stars raising funds to support our industry. Thank you to all who donated auction items, bid on auction items, bid on Ultimate Experiences, and bought 50/50 tickets. I am so proud to say, together, we raised more than \$40,000!! These important funds will be used to provide education for the future "us" – providing speakers for the next convention, technology needs for the IFEA and the Convention, and scholarship opportunities for future industry leaders.

Didn't attend the Convention? You can still be a part of this group effort to support the IFEA and the continued education of its members. When pondering what your end-of-year giving should be, please consider a donation to the IFEA. The IFEA has played an instrumental role in spearheading, supporting, and sharing the transformation our industry has been through due to the pandemic. Over the past years the IFEA has organized Covid Task Forces, held virtual IFEA Days, increased industry Webinars and Affinity Groups, and broadened fundraising efforts. All of these were planned and executed to give you and your organizations tools to survive during such trying times. You can now pay it back by paying it forward and support future educational opportunities for us all.

As we approach the end of the year and the beginning of the next, I encourage each of you to take time to think about your own growth mindset. What can you do personally and professionally to "level up" in 2023? What extra education or networking can you do? Take a moment to look at the opportunities IFEA provides that can assist in your growth. Have you looked into the CFEE Certification? The CFEE (Certified Festival & Event Executive) Certification states to other industry leaders and peers that you have made all the efforts to be a top event professional. As a

CFEE graduate, you will have taken core education classes in: Non-Sponsorship Revenue, Project Management, Operations/ Risk Management, Marketing & Media Relations, Administration & Management, and Sponsorship/Sponsor Service. You will have published a written publication and performed a speaking presentation. You will have the experience necessary to call yourself an industry leader! Did I mention you'll share a bond with your classmates, making new friends and networking contacts along the way? I just graduated with my CFEE, and let me tell you, it was FUN standing up there on stage at the IFEA Convention with all my new friends, accepting our graduation certificates!

Also check out the IFEA Virtual Affinity groups. You can network and learn with other industry professionals in the categories of: Arts Events; CEO; Cities, CVB's, and Tourism; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Marketing & PR; Operations; Parades; Sponsorship; Volunteer Programs. There is no better place to troubleshoot on your troubles and share in your successes than in these groups.

As we close out 2022, from the bottom of my heart, I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as the IFEA Foundation Chair. I also want to take this time to thank the IFEA Foundation Board of Directors and the IFEA staff. You all have made my time as Foundation Chair enjoyable and rewarding. Your determination, support, and willingness to serve allowed us to exceed our goals – and have fun doing it!

A huge kudos to Kevin Grothe, CFEE, past IFEA Foundation Chair, who served this organization for two years during the pandemic shutdown, and who also served as the live auctioneer for this year's Foundation Fiesta Party. I'm not sure which role was more challenging – but you did both with humor, humility, and success!

Lastly, let's all give Cassie Dispenza, your 2023 IFEA Foundation Chair, a huge welcome as she takes over the reins of the Foundation Board. I am confident she will continue to move the Foundation into a period of growth and sustainability. Congrats, Cassie – and best of luck!

**Alison Baringer, CFEE**

IFEA Foundation Board Chair  
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