

IFEA PRESIDENT'S LETTER

IF YOU TOSS A ROCK INTO A POND...

If you toss a rock into a pond, you can see the very visible and obvious ripple effect created by that action, as it spreads and grows. It may be altered (arguably improved and expanded upon) along the way by unforeseen obstacles and currents, but the ripples are certain to reach many new shores and likely to alter many of them, often without anyone recognizing the effect that the original stone toss was responsible for.

In the past few days and weeks I have recognized that ripple effect theory on a larger scale and on a more personalized level. On April 15th, the world recognized the 10th anniversary of the deadly Boston Marathon bombing. And while the occasion was certainly a somber one, with sad memories and tragic, lasting impacts on many individuals, families, organizations and communities, a remarkable array of positive 'ripple effects' also became very evident. The recognition of so many first responder and civilian heroes who kept the events of that day from being even more tragic; the bonding of an entire city ('Boston Strong') who set an example for us all to follow and emulate in similar circumstances, together with a world of others who stepped up to support however they could; the identification of management and security lessons learned to help prevent/minimize future tragedies; and the creation of many new foundations and initiatives to help others, including, among others:

- A national awareness "[Stop the Bleed](#)" program to educate people on the proper use of tourniquets;
- Recognition of the impact of the trauma (mental health) on first responders, families, and the community;
- The launch of "[One World Strong](#)," an organization that encourages survivors of terrorist-related attacks to help survivors of similar events;
- Development of a "Swarm Leadership" paradigm by [Harvard's National Preparedness Leadership Initiative](#) after it studied the actions and decisions of those who responded to the bombing; and

- Multiple initiatives by and in support of those who survived and in memory of those whose lives were lost.
- Lessons and leaders who will continue to grow and positively touch countless others for many years to come.





On a more personalized level, I learned just days ago that a good friend and member of our common festivals and events industry – Marie Atwell, CFEE ([recognized as part of our IFEA Leadership Legacy program](#)) – had passed away. Over many decades, here in Boise, Idaho and on a much larger scale through her sharing with IFEA peers and friends, Marie had an undeniable and positive ripple effect on her community, her industry and her friends/family, that will continue to be felt and shared for a very long time. Marie was one of the most creative, fun, and energetic people that I have ever known. From original theatrical productions and community parades, to Bowl game events and holiday magic; State Centennial Celebrations, Olympic competitions, and everything in-between; Marie inspired her peers, touched individuals and families, and left behind a legacy of remarkable, magical memories for countless legions of event attendees, families, children, volunteers, sponsors and staffs. A role that I hope we can all emulate in our own worlds.

The festivals and events that we are all responsible for/part of hold immense power to bring about transformation in individuals, organizations, and communities at large; in good times and bad. They have the potential to create a lasting impact that extends far beyond the duration of the event, motivating people to take action; establish fresh partnerships; become inspired; and cultivate a sense of unity and inclusiveness that can stay with them for a lifetime.

At this year's 66th Annual IFEA Convention, Expo & Retreat (October 9-11 in the very event-supportive city of McAllen, Texas) we will delve into the many and various avenues through which

festivals and events can create positive ripple effects, ranging from boosting economic growth and tourism to serving as a catalyst for social and environmental progress. From inspiring creativity to leading the way through inclusivity. From embracing new technologies to the building of new foundations that will last long after we have tossed our own rock into the pond.

I invite you and your staff teams to join us for the 66th Annual IFEA Convention, Expo & Retreat; an inspiring celebration of the power of festivals and events to create positive change in our communities and world.

Our lineup of speakers and presenters will include some of the most innovative and inspiring leaders in the festivals and events industry, as well as experts from a variety of fields who will offer new perspectives and insights as we all celebrate and learn from those whose ripple effects have shaped our industry, and those who represent the next generation of new ideas and possibilities.

We are confident that the 66th Annual IFEA Convention, Expo & Retreat will be an unforgettable experience that will inspire and energize attendees. A gathering that promises to create a ripple effect that extends far beyond the event itself, transforming the festivals and events industry for years to come. Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to be a part of it all.

So go ahead and toss your rock into the pond. Register now to take advantage of early bird pricing and join us in McAllen, Texas from October 9-11, 2023.

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