

THANK YOU AND YOU'RE WELCOME



Like most of you, I was taught at a very early age that there are some phrases and words that you can never say too often. Included among these were “please,” “thank you” and “you’re welcome.” As this is my last letter as Foundation Board chair, please allow me to share some thank yous, and you’re welcomes.

In the weeks following the recent outstanding IFEA Annual Convention and Expo, presented by atVenu, I have found myself saying thank you in many different ways to many different people.

First and foremost, thank you to the IFEA Foundation Board. As all of you know, a leader without a great team is bound to fail. Everyone on this Board has always said yes to whatever task I put in front of them, and I am looking forward to serving as Past Chair under the outstanding leadership of our next Chair, Kat Paye, CFEE, Executive Director of the National Cherry Festival in Traverse City, Michigan. Special shout out to Dave Bullard CFEE who shared the stage with me at the Foundation Night event as an auctioneer and to Jessica Kaminskas for chairing the Scholarship Committee. Also, thank you to Cassie Roberts Dispenza who as the past chair gave me lots of great advice and guidance.

Thank you to everyone who bought a 50-50 ticket, contributed or bid on a live or silent auction item or bought an Ultimate Experience ticket. The money that was raised from all of these efforts goes directly to support the IFEA’s vision of being the “premier association supporting and enabling festival and event professionals worldwide.”

This year, the Foundation supported a new effort at the annual convention - the first ever IFEA Student Summit, “Igniting the Future of Events.” This event would not have happened without the hard work and support of S. David Ramirez, CFEE and Cindy Lerick, MA, CFEE, so an extra special thank you goes out to them as well as to our sponsors Visit Pittsburgh and David Olivares, CFEE. Also, thanks to all of the students and faculty members who attended the event. Through this effort, we have started to build a coalition of event professors and students throughout the world.

Thank you to our sponsors, expo vendors, speakers and presenters. The energy that you brought to this year’s convention was dynamic. Also, thanks to the team from the City of Pittsburgh for all they did to welcome our attendees and for all your hard work in the midst of a busy event season.

Thanks to the IFEA staff who have been with me every step of the way throughout this year. As someone who has served on a lot of boards, I know the difference between staff and board functions and without this strong understanding and relationship, neither can succeed. It has been a pleasure working with the IFEA staff this year.

Lastly, a huge thank you to all of the sponsors and supporters of the IFEA Foundation Night. Our Irish “May the Rode Rise to Greet You” celebration was one of the most celebratory events of the past

few years. It would not have been possible without a ton of support from our friends at the Pittsburgh Irish Festival who brought so much energy to the event. As the tall leprechaun who had the honor of MCing this event, I cannot express how much your support meant.

Now to the “you’re welcome” side of the equation. To the recipients of the 2024 IFEA Legacy Scholarships, all of whom took the time to thank me for the opportunity to attend the Convention, thanks to the generous donations of our members. The IFEA Foundation helps fund many educational initiatives and our Legacy Scholarship program is one that I am particularly proud of.

Throughout the Convention, many people came up to me to thank me for the efforts that our Board has made on behalf of the advancement of industry education. To each of you a hearty “you’re welcome!”

For anyone who I have helped through my years of involvement with the IFEA, whether CFEE or Event Management School students, webinar or affinity group participants, people who have sat in my presentations or colleagues with whom I have been able to share information, it has been my pleasure, and you are certainly welcome.

Lastly, this is an “anticipatory thank you!” Even though the Annual Convention has passed, you still have an opportunity to contribute to the IFEA through our “Fund for the Future.” The “Fund for the Future” is a joint fundraising effort by the combined IFEA Foundation and IFEA World Board of Directors. Your donation will strengthen IFEA’s programs and services to ensure that we will continue to lead, serve and support our industry, especially when it is in need, for many years to come. If you find it in your means to do so, please donate through this [LINK](#).

I did not get into this business for the thank yous or you’re welcomes. I got into this business and remain in the industry after many decades because of the passion that I have to bring the joy of festivals and events to diverse audience around the world. I never expected to break my arm by patting myself on the back for a job well done or to be thanked by clients, customers or colleagues. But to be perfectly honest, hearing thank you or you’re welcome does give me an energy boost to keep doing what I love to do.

I wish Kat and the incoming Foundation Board nothing but success and I look forward to continuing my support of the IFEA Foundation.

Thank you and you’re welcome!

Ira L. Rosen, MA, CFEE

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President and CEO

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