

Dear Friends,



From Excellence to the Remarkable: Rediscovering our every day ...

As seasons begin shifting, apple cider pours, leaves change hues, and the majesty of football is emerging—Go Green, White and Blue! (we’re a divided house)—I’ve been purposefully rediscovering the obvious at our beloved Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park in new and delightful ways. Why, you may ask? Earlier this summer, after my family finally moved to the area, our 21-year-old daughter visited from her internship program in Indianapolis. She spent the day exploring Meijer Gardens—the first time since being in a stroller. Her comments, journey, and care-filled thoughts and opinions were eye-opening and incredibly helpful: Rediscovering the power of Meijer Gardens.

Our daylong adventure was remarkable! We did **EVERYTHING**—in a different experience pattern. We admired Marshall Fredericks’ Ram’s Garden art, in the Daniel and Pamella DeVos Ticketing Center at the farthest corner, and enjoyed George Segal’s *Circus Acrobats* from new and wonderful angles—juxtaposing morning light and visual interactions with Jaume Plensa’s *Utopia* in the Garden Pavilion ... Watched our orientation film in the O-A-K Theater ... Discovered wonderful books in the Peter M. Wege Library and looked upon Mimi’s Garden ... Spent long, quiet moments in the *Cristina Iglesias: Under and In Between* exhibition ... Experienced the Tassell-Wisner–Bottrall English Perennial Garden’s beauty and Iglesias’ *Pozo XI (in and arounds the walls) (Version 2)* first—strolling to the end of the pathway and back to the Green Gateway entrance ... Lunched in the James & Shirley Balk Café, sitting at the farthest reaches of the Grand Rapids Press Terrace, listening to the gurgling of the Marshall Fredericks *Night and Day* fountain, enjoying Meijer Gardens Chicken Salad—Fred Meijer’s favorite sandwich ... Wandered the Sculpture Park counter-clockwise, first experiencing Ariel Schlesinger’s *Ways to Say Goodbye*—an important, poignant piece in partnership with the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids ... Walked the Harvey Lemmen Sculpture Gallery and saw yellow sedum blooming like the sun as they framed Tony Smith’s *For J.W.* ... Headed to the Lena Meijer Children’s Garden, veering right to avoid the Great Lakes Garden splashing while rediscovering Bill and Mary Buchen’s *Telephone Tubes* ... Ambled the Wege Nature Trail and Frey Boardwalk over the water ... Smelled herbs at Michigan’s Farm Garden ... And stopped upon leaving at the DeVos-Keeler Gift Shop—gazing at the beautiful Chihuly glass for sale. What a time. I was pooped!

It’s become my daily routine to walk the grounds, greet and thank our valuable volunteers, and joyfully welcome members, society members, and daily visitors. Yet human nature patterns may become ingrained. That visit with my daughter was a delightful invitation to see our world-class institution in new and remarkable ways—which is my invitation to you! Come and be, wander, change your experience as seasons shift, attend an event perhaps outside your comfort zone, park somewhere new, enter the campus differently. Enjoy the intentionality of our parking lot Urban Garden. There’s much to experience, enjoy and rediscover!

In coming weeks and months, you’ll begin seeing subtle shifts in our institutional work—truly From Excellence to the Remarkable. As you experience us in person or online, we hope you enjoy the refinements, sparked by your feedback and the preliminary stages of our strategic and long-range planning work. But do not fear! Our tweaks, adjustments, nips, and tucks are all anchored and inspired by the warm faces of Fred and Lena—their spirit of joy, aspiration for the world-class, and welcoming all people from all places.

It’s a time of Excellence to the Remarkable! Thank you for your continued partnership, friendship and support. Enjoy the pages ahead. We hope you discover something new and remarkable at our Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park.

Warmly,

Charles Burke, President & CEO,
Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

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