

Dear Friends,



The interrelatedness of it all ...

Early in my career as an orchestral conductor at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, I had the privilege of leading our annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebration with the DSO's Civic Orchestra. As part of that concert, I commissioned a new three-part orchestral work by composer Patrice Rushen—"Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory"—inspired by the seminal writings of Dr. King.

During a recent set of meetings at our Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, I lifted up one of those key writings to emphasize our need to recognize and nurture the delicate interrelatedness of our vast array of work. Please take a moment to read this excerpt from King's *Letters from a Birmingham Jail*:

"Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

As a community leader and world-class cultural destination leading art, culture, and nature experiences that influence families for generations to come, we are fervent in our need to understand the interrelatedness of all we do. There's innovation in our unique combination of disciplines. There's a spirit of the profound in our curated programmatic offerings. There's a special and generational stewardship of a campus that frames sculpture with nature as cultural enlightenment bursts forth.

In my innermost leadership thoughts—the things I think about early in the morning—I often reflect on our internal interrelated areas, in many ways our institutional Venn diagram. I think about our newly developed and innovative programming, our refreshed commitment to engaging in the community, our desire to think holistically for a profound and growing campus, our unwavering operational work to build authentic accessibility for all, our regional economic impact, our philanthropic sustainability and the invitation for our members to build a legacy, and our outreach to new and undiscovered "concepts" of communities. All these thoughts drive our continual state of evolution, with the heartfelt goal to build institutional interrelatedness for you, our members, donors, patrons, volunteers and stakeholders. In many ways, it's that aforementioned journey "From Excellence to the Remarkable."

As I walk our 158-acre campus, I'm inspired by small examples of interrelatedness each and every day—experiencing the warmth of friendship of our volunteers **and** exploring our latest world-renowned art exhibition **and** hearing the birds chirp happily in our Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory. Or seeing children and families enjoy the Curiosity Courtyard **and** learning of our outreach workshops during the Confluence Festival at Rosa Parks Circle **and** learning of our many curated day trips to unique destinations. Or enjoying our *Fifth Third Bank Summer Concerts at Meijer Gardens* series **and** learning of a traditional tea ceremony in *The Richard & Helen DeVos Japanese Garden* **and** taking a meaningful pause for reflection at the Holocaust memorial sculpture *Ways to Say Goodbye*. We are a place of **and**—connected in our interrelatedness in all we do.

As you explore the pages ahead, my invitation is at the forefront: Discover your interrelatedness in all we do. If you come for one thing, discover something new and spend more time. Don't rush. Visit for multiple hours. Spend time to "be." Have a date night. Take a photo. Listen to the waterfalls. Look for koi. We, you, all of us are happily caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. Our future "single garment of destiny" is determined by you. Share your thoughts and engage online with us, via our multiple social media channels and newly refreshed website. Tell your friends and families of a new discovery you made at your Meijer Gardens. *"Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."*

This is our community's cultural destination. Together, our interrelatedness builds a lasting legacy of joy—welcoming to all—and a world-class institution. It's **where we all grow ...**

Gratefully,

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

P.S. Summer is coming and our lineup is being fine-tuned. We look forward to a fun-filled *Fifth Third Bank Summer Concerts at Meijer Gardens* announcement, with tickets on sale for members beginning April 20.

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