



THE CULTURE BRIGHT EFFECT

When you see the words “Culture Bright” attached to an upcoming Quad Cities’ holiday event, consider it a signal — something unforgettable is about to happen. Moments you can’t find anywhere else: rich with art, music, light and community. The kind people talk about afterward with, “You should have been there.”



It started with a festival — a community gathering built on glitter, generosity and good will. But Quad City Art’s Festival of Trees didn’t just raise funds; it raised a standard. It proved that art and generosity could move an entire city and activate an entire ecosystem.

Forty years later, that same energy has evolved into something bigger — what they now call Culture Bright.

Culture Bright is what happens when a single event like Festival of Trees evolves into a year-round rhythm of collaboration. It’s the thread that connects the Festival of Trees Parade to Riverfront Pops, Winter Lights and the exhibitions that fill the Figge Art Museum and Putnam Museum. It’s the shared belief that joy, when well organized, becomes infrastructure — that a rising tide lifts all boats, and that we are stronger together.

Last year’s Festival of Trees proved it again. For the first time in several years, the Premiere Party reintroduced a live auction — featuring just one item: The Culture Bright Package. With support from The Cultural Trust, all six Legacy Partners came together to offer a year of arts and culture experiences. The result? The most successful Premiere Party fundraising night in Festival history — until, of course, 2025 (manifesting that now).

Why call it Culture Bright? Because when individually exceptional organizations come together and lean into their mission and expertise, the result is the brightest sparkle possible — the same one that’s defined Festival of Trees for four decades.

That success sparked something bigger. Plans are already underway for the 2025-26 Culture Bright Package — expanding the collaboration and deepening the ties between partners. It’s not just a fundraiser; it’s a showcase of what happens when generosity and imagination work in harmony.

And the ripple continues. Across the region, Legacy Partners are collaborating in new ways — from The Putnam’s dinosaur excavation and Quad City Symphony Orchestra’s Jurassic Park collaboration to Figge’s cat exhibition, Common Chord’s Alternating Currents Family Site and The Botanical Center’s Winter Lights series. Each one carries the same spark.

The Cultural Trust exists to make that spark permanent — to turn seasonal cheer into cultural infrastructure that sustains jobs, visitors and imagination year-round. Beyond funding, it offers strategic planning, fundraising support and nonprofit excellence fuel — because partnership shouldn’t end with a check.

So when you see the words Culture Bright, mark your calendar. Show up. It will be unique, unprecedented and one-of-a-kind.

You’ll want to be able to say, “I was there, you should have been there too.”

Because culture matters here — and it always will.

