

CULTURE BRIGHT:

A SUMMER ESSAY SERIES

Reflections on art, culture, and the future of the Quad Cities from **Jennifer Lewis-Snyder**, President & CEO of The Cultural Trust.



Make It a Habit

What makes a community thrive?

Is it the skyline?
The roads?
The newest development?
Those things matter.
But I've come to believe the strongest communities are shaped by something less visible.
Their habits.
Do people gather together?
Do they support local businesses?
Do they volunteer?
Do they invest in one another?
Do they make time for music, museums, gardens, science, theater, and history?
Those choices, repeated over time, become the culture of a community.
This week, the Quad Cities has an opportunity to build a new habit.
For eleven consecutive days, our region will come alive through arts and culture.
The week begins with free experiences through our friends at Alternating Currents August 13 – August 16.
Then, the Culture Bright Summer Series carries that momentum forward with ticketed performances and experiences presented by The Cultural Trust and our six Legacy Partners August 16 – August 23.
Some experiences are free.
Others require the purchase of a ticket.
Both matter.
Because arts and culture aren't free, although sometimes admission is.
Every concert begins long before the audience arrives.
Every exhibition is planned months, sometimes years, before it opens.
Every garden is tended every day, not only when visitors arrive.
Every artifact is preserved.
Every instrument is practiced.
Every performance is rehearsed.
Every educator prepares.
Every volunteer gives their time.
Every donor chooses to invest.
Every sponsor chooses to believe.
Every ticket purchased helps fuel the missions that make our community the most inclusive creative capital in the Midwest.
That is the cultural economy.
It isn't sustained by one source of support.
It is strengthened when philanthropy, sponsorships, memberships, volunteers, and audiences all play a part.
That's where The Cultural Trust comes in.
Our work has never been about replacing the extraordinary organizations that already exist.
It has always been about strengthening them.
Helping them innovate.
Helping them collaborate.
Helping them reach new audiences.
Helping them build a future that no single organization could create alone.
Because when one organization succeeds, our entire community benefits.
A child discovers a passion for science.
A teenager sees themselves on stage for the first time.

A family creates a new tradition.
An artist decides to build a career here instead of somewhere else.
A visitor leaves believing the Quad Cities is more creative and entertaining than they ever imagined.
Those moments don't happen by chance.
They happen because someone invested before anyone else arrived.
That investment isn't simply financial.
It's belief.
Belief that arts and culture make communities stronger.
Belief that creativity belongs to everyone.
Belief that the experiences we share today shape the community we leave behind tomorrow.
So over the next several days, I hope you'll do more than attend an event.
Support one.
Buy a ticket.
Become a member.

“But every time we choose to show up, we strengthen the organizations that strengthen all of us. And that’s a habit worth building.”

Thank a volunteer.
Make a donation.
Bring someone who has never experienced one of our cultural organizations before.
Because habits don't change overnight.
Communities don't either.
But every time we choose to show up, we strengthen the organizations that strengthen all of us.
And that's a habit worth building.
Explore the full Culture Bright Summer Series schedule at CultureBright.org.
Because culture matters here.
And it always will.

Come see why Culture Matters Here. And why it always will. To learn more about the Culture Bright Summer Series go to CultureBright.org.

