

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.

The Moment Everything Changes

Most of us can't remember every museum we've visited.
Every concert we've attended.
Every performance we've seen.
But almost all of us can remember one.

The one that stayed with us.
The one that made us think differently.
The one that quietly changed the way we saw ourselves or the world around us.
Those moments rarely announce themselves.
At the time, they feel ordinary.
Years later, we realize they weren't.
Sometimes that moment happens beneath the skeleton of a dinosaur.
Sometimes it's standing in front of a painting that leaves you speechless.
Sometimes it's hearing an orchestra perform a song you've loved your entire life.
Sometimes it's watching an actor tell a story that feels strangely familiar.
Sometimes it's hearing live music and thinking, "I want to do that."
No one can predict which experience will become someone's turning point.

We only know those moments can't happen unless they exist.
That's why arts and culture matter.
Not because they entertain us for an afternoon.
Because they have the power to change the trajectory of a life.
I've watched children walk into a cultural experience unsure of themselves and leave standing a little taller.
I've watched families discover places they never knew existed in their own community and leave with new traditions.
I've watched adults reconnect with creativity they hadn't made time for in years.
I've watched complete strangers begin conversations simply because they shared the same experience.
Those moments don't make headlines.
But they build stronger communities.
That is the work happening every day across our Legacy Partner organizations.
The Botanical Center nurtures wonder while they connect plants and people.
The Putnam sparks curiosity while they hold our history.
The Figge invites us to see the world through a different lens with world renown art exhibits.

The Quad City Symphony Orchestra reminds us what can happen when individual talents come together to create something extraordinary.
Common Chord gives people the confidence to find their own voice.
Quad City Arts brings creativity into the places we live, work, and gather.
Each organization does something different.
Together, they expand what people believe is possible.
That is why The Cultural Trust invests in all of them.
Not because buildings need funding.
Because people need opportunities.
Opportunities to wonder.
To question.
To create.
To connect.
To belong.
And sometimes, to discover something about themselves they didn't know before.



“Culture is what happens when a child sees a symphony for the first time.”

Over the next several days, you'll have the opportunity to create one of those moments.
Maybe for yourself.
Maybe for your child.
Maybe for someone you invite along.
You may not remember every detail years from now.
But you just might remember how it made you feel.
And sometimes, that's the moment everything changes.
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.

