

CULTURE BRIGHT:

A SUMMER ESSAY SERIES

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

This Is Just the Beginning

Over the past several weeks, we've reflected on the power of arts and culture. The places that shape us. The people who inspire us. The organizations that expand what's possible. The experiences that change us. And the future we're building together..

Today, that future feels a little closer. Yesterday, we opened the doors to a new home for The Cultural Trust. Today, downtown is alive with music, art, film, comedy, and creativity as Alternating Currents continues across the Quad Cities. In just two days, the inaugural Culture Bright Summer Series begins. After months of planning, countless meetings, hundreds of conversations, and years of investment in our cultural ecosystem, the moment we've been working toward has arrived. But this week has never been about a ribbon cutting. It has never been about one festival. It has never been about one organization. It's about what becomes possible when an entire community chooses to believe in the value of arts and culture. When artists are given a stage. When museums spark curiosity. When gardens become gathering places. When music brings strangers together. When history reminds us where we've been. When creativity helps us imagine where we're going. That is the story of the Quad Cities. Not one organization working alone. An entire cultural ecosystem moving in the same direction. Over the next week, thousands of people will walk through the doors of our Legacy Partners. Some will attend for the very first time. Others will return to places they've loved for years. Children will discover something that captures their imagination. Families will begin new traditions. Visitors will experience the Quad Cities in a way they never expected. Some moments will last only a few minutes. Others will stay with people for the rest of their lives. That's the remarkable thing about culture. You never know which experience will become the one someone remembers forever. Maybe it's the concert that inspires a young musician. The museum exhibit that sparks a future scientist.

The garden that becomes a family's favorite place. The painting that changes the way someone sees the world. Or the simple realization that everything they've been looking for has been here all along. That has always been the vision of The Cultural Trust. Not simply funding organizations. Helping create the conditions where extraordinary things can happen. Helping organizations dream bigger. Helping artists find audiences. Helping communities grow stronger. Helping people find one another through shared experiences. Because culture isn't measured by the number of events on a calendar. It's measured by what those experiences inspire long after they're over. This first Culture Bright Summer Series is not a finish line. It's a beginning. A beginning we hope you'll help write for years to come. August 16 – August 23, say yes. Yes to something familiar.



The Cultural Trust



“It’s about what becomes possible when an entire community chooses to believe in the value of arts and culture.”

Yes to something unexpected. Yes to bringing a friend. Yes to supporting an organization you value. Yes to trying something you've never experienced before. Because communities don't become extraordinary by accident. They become extraordinary when people choose to participate in them. Thank you for believing in this vision. Thank you for supporting the organizations that make the Quad Cities unlike anywhere else. Most of all, thank you for showing up. We'll see you this week. 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.





August 16-23, 2026

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SUMMER SERIES

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A CULTURE BRIGHT EXPERIENCE
ACTIVATED BY THE CULTURAL TRUST

CULTURE MATTERS HERE