THE MPISCC NEWSLETTER

Scoop.

FEB '25

As we step into this new term, I am honored to serve as your President and to introduce our guiding theme for the year ahead: **"Make it Memorable. Shaping Tomorrow. Today."**

This theme is more than just words—it's a call to action. It is an invitation to come together, to innovate, and to create lasting impact. Every interaction, every event, every collaboration holds the power to shape the future of our industry and our community. The question is: How will we show up?

I invite us all to challenge ourselves to think beyond the expected. Let's elevate our experiences, inspire bold ideas, and foster a spirit of unity that drives meaningful change. Whether through education, networking, mentorship, or leadership, we have the opportunity to leave a lasting mark—on each other and on the industry we love.

This year, we will focus on actionable change—translating vision into results, ideas into innovations, and connections into collaborations. Together, we will amplify our impact, embrace fresh perspectives, and empower one another to shape a future we can be proud of.

I invite you to lean in, engage, and be part of something bigger. Let's make it memorable. Let's shape tomorrow, today.

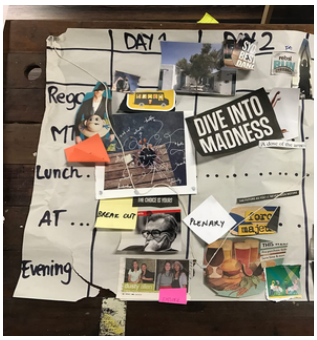
Looking forward to an extraordinary year ahead!

Karly Watson, MPISCC President, 2025

make it memorable

SHAPING TOMORROW. TODAY

RISING FOCUS ON MICRO-EXPERIENCES FOR LARGE EVENTS



As the event industry charges into a new year, one trend is capturing attention: micro-experiences. These thoughtfully curated, intimate interactions are redefining how large events are experienced, offering attendees moments of deep connection amidst the grandiosity of gatherings. Micro-experiences can take many forms. Think private wine tastings tucked away during a sprawling conference, a series of intimate fireside chats at a large industry summit, or an immersive VR installation designed for just a handful of people at a time during an expo. These smaller, intentional touchpoints allow attendees to feel more engaged and valued, creating memories that outlast the event itself.

But why are micro-experiences becoming the industry's buzzword? The answer lies in evolving attendee expectations. Today's audiences crave personalization. They want events to be more than just a packed agenda or a sea of nametags—they want meaningful, tailor-made moments that resonate with their individual needs and interests. In response, the industry is embracing this shift, recognizing that large-scale events don't have to feel impersonal.

These moments of focused engagement also often yield higher ROI by encouraging deeper interaction with brands, fostering connections between attendees, and leaving participants with a positive and lasting impression. By focusing on quality over quantity, industry professionals can create opportunities for authentic conversations and emotional connection, which are invaluable for building loyalty and driving post-event action.

Executing micro-experiences doesn't have to mean an extravagant budget. It's about rethinking the design of large events and breaking them into a series of layered moments that complement the broader program. Small networking lounges, exclusive meet-and-greets, and breakout workshops are just a ways to infuse intimacy into the mix.

Ultimately, the rise of micro-experiences represents a shift in how we measure success. It's no longer just about the size of the event but about the depth of connection and meaning created. As we look ahead, the future of large events is not just big—it's also delightfully small.

Laine Thelian, MPISCC

BE AN MPI!

The "Be an MPI" initiative is a fresh and forward-thinking campaign aimed at redefining what it means to be a part of the MPISCC community. Moving beyond traditional membership, "Be an MPI" empowers young and young-minded event professionals to take on the role of Meeting Professional Influencers—leveraging social media, thought leadership, and community engagement to shape the future of the events industry.

This initiative isn't just about joining MPISCC; it's about elevating your career, developing your personal brand, and gaining recognition as a thought leader. Whether you're a recent graduate or someone with a few years of experience, "Be an MPI" positions you to actively contribute to the conversation through blogs, social media content, or podcast features. You'll have access to exclusive resources, like content creation toolkits and webinars on personal branding, all designed to enhance your influence in the industry.

The goal? To build a vibrant, connected community of professionals who are recognized for their expertise, creativity, and innovative ideas. Being part of this movement allows members to build their personal brand, share their voice, and help guide the future of the meetings and events space. This is the new era of MPISCC, where being influential is more than just a title—it's a lifestyle.

Being an MPI isn't just about joining an association (although starting on September 23 and for a month, new members can join at a 20% discount) or attending meetings or events—it's about elevating your professional presence, connecting with a dynamic community, and sharing your experiences with the world. And we're here to help you do that! We've created an exclusive "Be an MPISCC Toolkit" designed to give you everything you need to share your journey with your network. The toolkit includes social media post templates, blog outlines, email signatures, and more!

Ready to make your mark? Get your toolkit today and start influencing your peers, colleagues, and the industry. Email us at admin@mpiscc.org for more info!

Whether you're passionate about thought leadership, building community, or highlighting innovative event trends, "Be an MPI" is your opportunity to take the lead.

WELCOME NEW MPISCC BOARD!!!

JANUARY 1 – DECEMBER 31, 2025

Mai Lim | Immediate Past President
Karly Watson | President
Carlos Murillo | President Elect

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Braidy Lee | VP, Membership
Debra Mategrano | VP, Finance
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Latrice Lawson | Director, Special Events
Gaetan Mousseau | Director, Member Recruitment
Lucy Roberts - Director, DEI
Libby Zarahy | Director, Member Care

UPCOMING EVENTS

Follow us for announcements, updates & reminders for our upcoming events!

SAVE THE DATE

OTHER EVENT DATES COMING SOON

FEBRUARY 2025
AFTER 5'S

APRIL 2025
[WE]CON

We are proud to partner with SEARCH FOUNDATION

ASSISTING EVENT PROFESSIONALS IN CRISIS

and support their efforts for our industry.

MPI | SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

RESOURCES

If you are impacted by the devastating Southern California fires, there are resources for you. We've compiled as extensive a list as we could.

IMMEDIATE RELIEF & SAFETY

Emergency Services:

- 911: For life-threatening emergencies.
- LAFD (Los Angeles Fire Department): Non-Emergency: (800) 755-1450 or (213) 978-3800; Website: https://www.lafd.org/
- LACoFD (Los Angeles County Fire Department): Non-Emergency: (323) 881-2411 Website: https://www.fire.lacounty.gov/
- California Highway Patrol (CHP): Non-Emergency: (323) 980-4600 (Los Angeles Area); Website: https://www.chp.ca.gov/

Evacuation Centers & Shelters:

- American Red Cross Los Angeles Region: Phone: (800) RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or (213) 739-5200; Website: https://www.redcross.org/local/california/los-angeles.html; They maintain a current list of open shelters during disasters.
- LA County Emergency Operations Center: Public Information Hotline: (213) 974-1234 Website: https://lacoa.org/; Check their website or call for updated shelter information.
- Project Camp: Website: https://projectcamp.co/; Offers pop-up camps for children who have been displaced or are out of school.

Air Quality Information:

- South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD): Phone: (800) 288-7664 or (909) 396-2000; Website: https://www.aqmd.gov/; Provides real-time air quality updates and health advisories.

Road Closures & Traffic:

- Caltrans (California Department of Transportation): Phone: (800) 427-7623 Website: https://dot.ca.gov/ Use their QuickMap for real-time traffic and road closure information: https://quickmap.dot.ca.gov/

FINANCIAL AND HOUSING AND ASSISTANCE

FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency):

- FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency): Disaster Assistance Helpline: (800) 621-3362 (TTY: 800-462-7585) Website: https://www.disasterassistance.gov/; Register for potential financial assistance, including housing, personal property loss, and other disaster-related expenses.
- California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES): Phone: (916) 845-8510; Website: https://www.caloes.ca.gov/; Provides information on state-level disaster relief programs.
- Small Business Administration (SBA): Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center: (800) 659-2955 (TTY: 800-877-8339); Offers low-interest disaster loans to businesses and homeowners.
- 211 LA County: Phone: 211 or (800) 339-6993 Website: https://www.211la.org/; Connects individuals with a wide range of social services, including housing, food assistance, and other disaster relief resources.
- The Salvation Army: Phone: (800) 725-2769 Website:https://www.salvationarmyusa.org/usn/; Provides emergency financial assistance, emergency housing, food, and other disaster relief services.
- Housing Is A Human Right: Phone: (213) 986-5757; Website: https://www.housinghumanright.org/; Provides information on local and state housing relief and connects individuals with resources.
- Hotel Association of Los Angeles: Website: https://www.discoverlosangeles.com/hotels/wildfires; Identifies properties offering relief accommodations for those displaced by the ongoing wildfires.
- San Diego Area Hotels: Website: https://www.sandiego.org/about/fire.aspx; San Diego-area hotels are contributing to fire relief by offering special accommodation rates and offers.

EVENT INDUSTRY SPECIFIC RESOURCES

- The SEARCH Foundation: Phone: (877) 477-4709; Website: https://www.searchfoundation.org/; Provides financial assistance to event professionals impacted by crises. Their application process is streamlined during major disasters.

- Events Industry Council (EIC): Phone: 202-355-2424; Website: https://www.eventscouncil.org/; Offers resources and guidance for event professionals navigating disaster-related challenges.
- Meeting Professionals International (MPI): Phone: (972) 702-3000; Website: https://www.mpi.org/; Offers various resources for members impacted by disaster through their chapter network.
- Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA): Phone: (312) 423-7262 Website: https://www.pcma.org/; Offers resources for members impacted by disaster through their chapter network.
- Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE): Phone: (312) 321-5148; Website: https://www.siteglobal.com/; Offers resources for members impacted by disaster through their chapter network.
- International Live Events Association (ILEA): Phone: (312) 321-6853; Website: https://www.ileahub.com/; Offers resources for members impacted by disaster through their chapter network.

INSURANCE & LEGAL ASSISTANCE

- California Department of Insurance: Consumer Hotline: (800) 927-4357; Website: https://www.insurance.ca.gov/; Provides information on insurance claims, policyholder rights, and assistance with disputes.
- United Policyholders: Phone: (415) 393-9990 Website: https://www.uphelp.org/; A non-profit organization that advocates for insurance consumers and provides resources for disaster recovery.
- Disaster Legal Services (DLS) Program (Through the State Bar of California): Website: https://www.calbar.ca.gov/ (Search for "Disaster Legal Services"); Connects low-income disaster survivors with free legal assistance for insurance claims, landlord-tenant issues, and other legal matters.
- Bet Tzedek Legal Services; Phone: (323) 939-0506; Website: https://bettzedek.org/; Offers free legal services to low-income individuals in areas like housing, and public benefits, that could be impacted by the disaster.

VOLUNTEER & DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

- LA Works: Phone: (323) 224-6510 Website: https://www.laworks.com/; Connects volunteers with various organizations, including those responding to disasters.
- California Volunteers: Phone: (916) 323-7646 Website: https://www.californiavolunteers.ca.gov/
- GoFundMe: Wildfire Relief Fund Website: https://www.gofundme.com/f/wildfire-relief-fund-2025
- California Community Foundation (CCF): Wildfire Recovery Fund Website: https://www.gofundme.com/f/wildfire-relief-fund-2025

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

- Disaster Distress Helpline: Phone: (800) 985-5990 (TTY: 800-846-8517); Text: TalkWithUs to 66746 Website: https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline; Provides 24/7 crisis counseling and support for individuals experiencing emotional distress related to disasters.
- Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health: Access Center 24/7 Helpline: (800) 854-7771 Website: https://dmh.lacounty.gov/; Offers mental health services and referrals.
- The California Peer-Run Warm Line: Phone: (855) 845-7415; Website: https://www.mentalhealthsf.org/peer-run-warmline/; Provides non-crisis emotional support and connects individuals with resources.

FOOD ASSISTANCE

- Los Angeles Regional Food Bank: Phone: (323) 234-3030; Website: https://www.lafoodbank.org/ Provides food assistance through a network of partner agencies.
- World Central Kitchen: Website: https://wck.org/ Activates during disasters to provide meals to those in need. Check their website for current deployments.
- California Association of Food Banks: Phone: (510) 350-9911; Website: https://www.cafoodbanks.org/ Can connect individuals with food banks throughout California.
- Ristorante Per L'Ora: Phone: (213) 358-000; Website: https://hotelperla.com/ristoranteperlora/; Offering lunch for firefighters and those displaced by the fires on January 20-21 @11am-4pm.

ANIMAL WELFARE

- Los Angeles County Animal Care and Control: Phone: (562) 940-6898 Website: https://animalcare.lacounty.gov/; Provides information on animal shelters, lost and found pets, and evacuation procedures for animals.
- ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals): Website: https://www.aspca.org/; Offers disaster preparedness tips for pet owners and may deploy resources during major disasters.
- The Humane Society of the United States: Website: https://www.humanesociety.org/; Offers disaster preparedness tips for pet owners and may deploy resources during major disasters.

Planning sustainable events doesn't have to be overwhelming. Small changes can have a big impact on reducing your environmental footprint while enhancing attendee experience. Here are five easy ways to make your next event more eco-friendly.

1. Go Digital: Skip the printed materials and opt for digital alternatives. Use apps, QR codes, or online platforms to share schedules, tickets, and event programs. This reduces waste and provides attendees with easy access to event details. Plus these options can be updated in real time for last minute changes.

2. Eliminate Single-Use Plastics: Provide reusable or compostable alternatives for items like cups, plates, and utensils. Encourage attendees to bring their own water bottles by offering convenient refill stations throughout the venue. This also provides great branding and sponsorship opportunities for something like a reusable water bottle.

3. Offer Plant-Based Catering Options: Incorporate more plant-based dishes into your menu. Plant-based meals require fewer resources to produce and are a delicious way to cater to diverse dietary preferences.

4. Use Eco-Friendly Décor: Avoid disposable decorations and opt for items that can be reused or recycled, such as fabric banners, potted plants, or LED lights. If you are using live elements like flowers or plants, consider what will be done with them following the event (for example, can they be donated to senior centers in the local area so as to not go to waste).

5. Focus on Waste Management: Set up clearly marked recycling and compost bins throughout the venue. For those hosting expos consider donation bins as well for vendors that have leftover pens, notepads, etc. that can be donated to those in need.

By implementing these small changes, you can host events that not only benefit the environment but also set a positive example for your attendees.

Deanna Zercher, MPISCC

5 SMALL CHANGES TO MAKE EVENTS MORE SUSTAINABLE

CELEBRATING
MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Maria Rosa-Madruga | 30 years
Marlene Blas | 15 years
Gerry Rothschild | 10 years
Gaetan Mousseau | 5 years

and Celebrating 1 Year

Noune Bagdasarian
Charina De La Cruz
Evette Fergerson
Jayce Guillen
Manuel Hernandez
Sarah Karpeles
Gaelle Kazadi
James Lordon
DanielleMancha
Katrina McDowell
Mara Parker
Elsie Rodriguez
Gabe Romero
Traillan Suthers
Dana Twyman
Lindsey Wade
Kerrie Wilkie
Eddie Zaratsian

WELCOME
NEW MEMBERS!

Christine Backman
Charles Behnke
Sepideh Eivazi
Danica Genners
Dave Leong
Angelique Stephens
Dianna Sutton Brown
Rachel Ugay
Nija Vaughn
Ashley Verzijl

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CR+a custom A VISUAL SOLUTIONS COMPANY
SANTA ANITA PARK
Rose Bowl AMERICA'S STADIUM
KOOZA
CIRQUE DU SOLEIL
BUZZ
Anchor Collection
cvent

MPI SoCal is searching for dedicated volunteers to join our community

MPI is looking for enthusiastic volunteers to join our team and help us elevate our experience. As a volunteer, you will have the opportunity to contribute to the growth and success of our organization while gaining valuable experience and networking with industry professionals.

We are currently seeking volunteers for various roles, including Marketing & Communication, Membership, Finance, Education & Programming, Regional Events and for Leadership. Whether you have years of experience in the industry or are just starting out, there is a place for you on our team.

If you are passionate about the meetings and events industry and are eager to make a difference, we would love to have you on board. Please consider volunteering with Meeting Planners International and help us shape the future of the industry.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities and how to get involved, please fill out our volunteer form here:

(https://www.mpi.org/chapters/southern-california/get-involved/volunteer-opportunities/volunteer-form)

We look forward to welcoming you to our team! Thank you for your support and dedication.

MPI | SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

HOTEL EL GANZO

Where art, music, and relaxation meet

Tucked away in Puerto Los Cabos, this boutique hotel is a haven for the creatively inclined. Imagine walking into a place where every corner tells a story through art, music, and relaxation. From the moment you step into the lobby, you'll notice that El Ganzo is a pure celebration of creativity. With its artist-in-residence program and underground recording studio, El Ganzo merges luxury with artistic flair.

The 70-room hotel offers stunning ocean views that can make even the most jaded traveler swoon. The rooftop infinity pool? Pure bliss. The private beach club is equally impressive, offering a secluded spot to soak up the sun or try your hand at paddle boarding. Dining here is an experience in itself, with farm-to-table options that showcase the best of local produce. And the spa? Let's just say you'll walk out a different person than you walked in...

But let's get to the nitty-gritty: why is this place so perfect for incentive trips? El Ganzo stands out for its unique blend of creativity and luxury, making it ideal for fostering innovation and out-of-the-box thinking. The resort's emphasis on art and music creates an inspiring environment that can fuel creativity and team bonding. Plus, the meeting spaces are anything but boring. Think rooftop terraces perfect for cocktail receptions, intimate meeting rooms for brainstorming sessions, and outdoor event spaces at the beach club for those more relaxed gatherings.

THIS MONTH: CABO SAN LUCAS

When it comes to planning unforgettable incentive trips, Los Cabos often sits at the top of the list. Known for its stunning beaches, luxury resorts, and endless activities, it's a no-brainer destination. But if you're looking to go beyond the usual suspects, we've got you covered -- dive into our top five under-the-radar resorts!

THE CAPE, A THOMPSON HOTEL

Mid-century cool with a side of dramatic ocean views

The Cape offers a stylish, mid-century modern escape on the iconic Monuments Beach. It is the epitome of cool, with sleek lines, panoramic views, and a vibe so effortlessly chic you'll feel like a celebrity. Each of its 161 rooms has a private balcony with stunning views of the Sea of Cortez, making it perfect for those VIP incentive trips where you really want to impress.

The property's design is a masterpiece, seamlessly blending indoor and outdoor spaces to create an environment that's both luxurious and inviting. The unique architecture and minimalist yet sophisticated design elements make every corner Instagram-worthy.

The lobby sets the tone with its mid-century modern décor and floor-to-ceiling windows that frame breathtaking ocean views while the rooms are a haven of comfort and style. With sleek furnishings, locally sourced art, and expansive views of the Sea of Cortez, each room feels like a private retreat.

For events, the rooftop terrace with its breathtaking views is no doubt the place to host an evning gathering, while the modern private dining room suits exclusive events.

Our favorite place to gather is the beachside fire pit. It's intimate, elegant, and unique – and the perfect spot for real human connection.

MAR DEL CABO

Boutique elegance with a nod to traditional Mexican charm

Mar del Cabo is a boutique resort that combines modern luxury with historic Mexican charm. Nestled along the Tourist Corridor, this 46-suite gem offers a tranquil escape from the bustling tourist spots. You'll feel like you've stepped into an oasis where time slows down and every detail invites you to relax and unwind. And, come on, who doesn't love walking down cobblestone paths lined with bougainvilleas...

But let's get to the nitty-gritty: why is this place so perfect for incentive trips? El Ganzo stands out for its unique blend of creativity and luxury, making it ideal for fostering innovation and out-of-the-box thinking. The resort's emphasis on art and music creates an inspiring environment that can fuel creativity and team bonding. Plus, the meeting spaces are any-thing but boring. Think rooftop terraces perfect for cocktail receptions, intimate meeting rooms for brainstorming sessions, and outdoor event spaces at the beach club for those more relaxed gatherings.

The blend of elegance and authenticity at Mar del Cabo makes it a standout choice for incentive trips focused on cultural immersion and relaxation. The cozy atmosphere and above and beyond personalized service make guests feel like they're in a private oasis, ideal for fostering deeper connections and meaningful experiences.

ESPERANZA, AUBERGE RESORTS COLLECTION

Ultimate luxury with an intimate touch

Esperanza, the only private beach resort in Los Cabos, is where ultimate luxury meets intimate, personalized service. Located in Punta Ballena, this resort offers stunning ocean views, world-class dining, and a host of bespoke activities tailored to your group's desires. From the moment you arrive, you'll understand why Esperanza is a favorite among those in the know.

Esperanza's impeccable service and attention to detail, secluded setting, and high-end amenities make it an ideal location for exclusive incentive trips. The award-winning spa offers treatments that will leave guests feeling rejuvenated and ready to conquer the world (more on that later). And with five pools, there's always a perfect spot to relax.

The high price might be a consideration and securing bookings can be challenging due to its popularity, but for those who want to deliver the best of the best, Esperanza is worth every penny.

MONTAGE

Mid-century cool with a side of dramatic ocean views

Montage Los Cabos epitomizes modern elegance, offering luxurious accommodations on the pristine shores of Santa Maria Bay. With 122 expansive rooms, suites, and casas, Montage combines contemporary design with natural beauty, making it an ideal spot for incentive trips that want to prioritize wellness, relaxation and rejuvenation.

The resort offers an impressive 15,000 square feet of event space, making it the ideal choice on our list for larger gatherings and conferences. The event spaces are designed to be as flexible as they are beautiful, with state-of-the-art facilities that can accommodate any caliber of event.

The resort boasts several gourmet dining options, each offering a unique take on local and international cuisine. The culinary team at Mezcal, the signature restaurant, takes pride in showcasing the flavors of Baja California, and every dish is a celebration of local ingredients and innovative techniques. It combines traditional Mexican flavors with contemporary techniques to create dishes that are as visually stunning as they are delicious.

If a luxurious escape that blends relaxation and adventure is top of mind, here's your answer.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY IN DRIVING EVENT INNOVATION

Let's face it, the events industry is one big family—a family that gets dressed up, throws spectacular parties, and loves to swap stories about their "problem children" (looking at you, Wi-Fi outages). But at the heart of every dazzling event or jaw-dropping activation lies one constant: community.

Community isn't just the secret sauce—it's the entire meal plan. It's what takes a good event and transforms it into something unforgettable, buzzing with ideas, connections, and those "Did you see that?" moments. Here's the thing: innovation thrives in the spaces where people feel heard, supported, and inspired. Leaning into community is the ultimate power move for event planners in 2025.

No one innovates in a vacuum (and if they do, we hope they're getting paid extra). A strong sense of community encourages collaboration, where ideas can bounce around like ping-pong balls in a conference breakout room. It's in these think tanks—be they in person, virtual, or hybrid—that revolutionary ideas like sustainable catering trends or holographic keynote speakers are born.

When planners tap into their communities—whether it's industry peers, attendees, or even vendors—they're not just asking for input; they're inviting a creative collective into the process. Community-driven innovation has given us everything from silent discos (thank you, quirky Gen Zs) to AI-powered matchmaking apps at networking events. Spoiler alert: people love to share their brilliance when they know they're part of the story.

Communities aren't just idea factories; they're also the megaphones that amplify your event's buzz. A strong community will champion your event, talk about it, share it, and post all the selfies once they get there. The ripple effect is real, and it starts with creating spaces that people genuinely want to be part of.

And while it's tempting to chase trends and lean on tech, community reminds us that human connection is the ultimate currency in this industry. Think about the innovation that springs from a cocktail hour or the spontaneous ideas born in a post-panel discussion. (Pro tip: The magic often happens after the scheduled programming ends.)

When you create a community-centric approach, your events stop being one-off experiences and start becoming movements. And isn't that what we're all chasing—a reason for people to keep coming back year after year, excited to see what you'll do next?

So, if you're looking to "Make It Memorable" this year (wink), don't just think about what you're creating. Think about who you're creating it with and for. Remember, the strongest innovations don't happen because of one brilliant mind—they happen when a community comes together to dream big, think bold, and act audaciously.