

# Operations and Orangutans

## Sustaining and Enhancing a Community's Culture

With its Southwestern-inspired architecture, bold sculpture and warm, earth-toned adobe colors, the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art would be a standout anywhere. But in Downtown Indianapolis, the Eiteljorg is a striking, visual break in the Midwestern urban landscape, even more than two decades after its creation. The Eiteljorg is the only museum of its kind in the Midwest and one of only two museums east of the Mississippi that feature art and culture of Native America and the American West.

While it once seemed an unlikely fit for Indianapolis, it is now one of the city's most important cultural amenities, drawing more than 100,000 guests annually to see works by artists such as T.C. Cannon, N.C. Wyeth, Andy Warhol, Georgia O'Keeffe, Frederic Remington and Kay WalkingStick. Developed largely through its Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship program (see sidebar), the institution's contemporary Native American art collection is considered among the world's best. Special exhibitions

on subjects ranging from motorcycles to Jewish life in the West draw an international audience with wide interests.

"In our field, we are recognized as one of the elite few, in terms of the physical dimension of our building and the collection size and its quality," says John Vanausdall, president and CEO of the Eiteljorg.

The museum, of course, would not exist without Harrison Eiteljorg's vast collection of more than 2,000 works, which is the foundation of the museum. The late Indianapolis businessman gave his collection to the



museum, and Lilly Endowment awarded \$12.5 million in funding to construct the building that opened in 1989.

### Keeping doors open

**Unrestricted operating support grants** from the Endowment to the Eiteljorg have continued to bring stability to the budget for everything from staff to maintenance to utilities, “helping us open the doors every day,” Vanausdall says.

“That operating support has allowed the Eiteljorg to raise funds and create new programs. While the Endowment’s operating grants over the years have remained fairly consistent in size, the percentage of the museum’s budget provided by the Endowment has actually decreased,” he adds. In 1992, just a few years after the museum opened, Endowment funding accounted for 43 percent of operating revenue. In 2012 the Endowment’s operating grant represented just 14.7 percent of the museum’s overall budget—still critically important, but also a measure of how the Eiteljorg has grown, according to Vanausdall.

While unique in appearance and mission, the Eiteljorg is not unusual in the support it has earned from the Endowment. For many years, the Endowment has provided a consistent level of unrestricted funding to more than a dozen arts and cultural organizations in Indianapolis, including the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Dance Kaleidoscope, Young Audiences and the Madame Walker Urban Life Center, to name a few. These grants provide stability that helps them maintain and enhance their programming. With general operating support grants ranging from \$100,000 to more than \$1 million and totaling some \$6.2 million annually, the Endowment helps meet the needs of local institutions whose budgets range from modest to expansive.

**Operating support is often the hardest funding** to come by for arts organizations, yet it may be the most valuable, according to Dave Lawrence, president and CEO of the Arts Council of Indianapolis. Having unrestricted funding enables arts organizations to turn some of their attention to building capacity for long-term health and growth.

“Philanthropy is changing,” Lawrence observes. “Donors often want something specific to fund. It can be compelling to fund an after-school program in the arts, but it’s not so compelling to help pay the light bill. While not exciting, general operating funds pay the day-to-day bills.”

### Strategic enhancements

**Endowment grants also have provided for** special projects to enhance the arts and cultural programs in Indianapolis.

In 2002 a \$4 million Endowment grant helped the Eiteljorg encourage the family of George Gund to give its significant Western Art collection to the museum. Gund, a prominent Cleveland banker, had amassed a collection of 54 valuable Western art bronzes, paintings and watercolors during his lifetime, which at the time of the gift was valued at some \$15 million. The Endowment’s grant enabled the Eiteljorg to recruit a Gund collection curator, fund conservation and restoration activities, and produce a book that features the collection and a brief biography of Gund.

Other Indianapolis arts and cultural organizations also from time to time have received Endowment support for compelling special projects, including the Indianapolis Symphony, The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the Indianapolis Arts Center and the Madame Walker Urban Life Center.

Besides supporting long-established arts and cultural anchors, the Endowment occasionally makes grants to emerging organizations that fill a particular arts or cultural niche, such as the Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library.

Founded in 2009 to champion the literary and cultural contributions of Vonnegut, the writer and Indianapolis native, the Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library is using Endowment funding to expand its fundraising and board development capabilities, as well as develop programming and marketing materials.



(opposite) **Public art “enriches Indianapolis,”** says John Vanausdall, president and CEO of the Eiteljorg Museum. Among the museum’s 10 pieces of outdoor sculpture are “Southwest Summer Showers” by Doug Hyde (far left) and “Wisdom Keepers” by Bruce LaFountain.

## Human capital, economic impact

### At the Indianapolis Repertory Theatre (IRT),

audiences may have little inkling that onstage and backstage, 100 seasonal and year-round employees are fine tuning productions, making costumes, building stage sets and working as actors, playwrights and directors.

“There is a lot of human capital here,” says IRT Managing Director Steven Stolen.

That human capital, in turn, benefits the community. The IRT provided 124,700 live professional theater experiences for its audience in 2012. Among its patrons were 49,300 students and teachers from 60 of Indiana’s 92 counties, making the IRT one of the most youth-oriented professional theaters in the country.

One-third of the nonprofit IRT’s operating income comes from contributors, including the Endowment, according to Stolen. “Without that support, it’s unlikely that the IRT could keep ticket prices affordable or offer stage performances for school groups, not to mention keeping the IRT operating as a landmark arts venue,” Stolen says.

The historic 3,000-seat former movie palace was saved from the wrecking ball in 1980. Over the years, preservation efforts have included cleaning and maintaining an architectural style Stolen affectionately calls “Hoosier exotica,” which crazily—but effectively—combines colorful Spanish baroque and Asian influences. But until recently, the IRT’s grand interior



**As chief advocate for the arts in Indianapolis,** Dave Lawrence (right) applauds the variety of performances available to patrons. As examples: Students from Crestview Elementary School brought a little Mistletoe Music to the Artsgarden and Grammy winner Sylvia McNair—shown in rehearsal (below)—brought “A Little Night Music” to the IRT.

was hidden behind three inconspicuous entry points. The box office “always looked closed,” Stolen says.

A campaign launched in 2008 drew community support, including the Endowment’s lead gift of \$3 million, to raise funds for the StreetFront Project, creating one patron-friendly foyer and ticket office facing Washington Street. Thanks to the capital investment, the IRT is more visible than ever before. “It’s a very open, very public space that invites the public in,” Stolen says.

Just down the street and hovering 17 feet above the intersection of Washington and Illinois streets, the seven-story, glass-enclosed Artsgarden is a visual statement about the importance of arts and culture to Indianapolis, according to the Arts Council’s Lawrence.

**Owned and operated by the Arts Council,** the Artsgarden was built in 1995 with a \$12 million grant from the Endowment as a centralized arts venue, with a kiosk providing arts calendars, free maps, visitor guides, and other information about Indianapolis arts and cultural events. This year 12 arts exhibits and more than 300 live performances were held in the Artsgarden. “It’s so great that an arts venue has become such an Indianapolis icon,” Lawrence says.

Besides managing the Artsgarden, the Arts Council serves as the unified voice and leader for the arts and cultural community in Indianapolis, reallocating nearly \$2 million annually in public and private arts funding to the community through numerous programs, such as the Endowment-sponsored Creative Renewal Arts Fellowships and public art projects such as the IDADA (Indianapolis Downtown Artists and Dealers Association) Fine Arts Pavilion project, which featured Indiana artists’ work in the Old City Hall during Super Bowl XLVI in 2012.

“The arts are sometimes seen as nonessential extras,” Lawrence says. But a 2012 Americans for the Arts report revealed that the Indianapolis nonprofit arts and cultural venues and events are a \$384.2 million industry that supports 13,136 full-time equivalent jobs and generates \$42.5 million in local and state government revenue. Nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, which spend \$192.9 million annually, leverage a remarkable





## Freedom to focus

**Ranked as one of America's 10 best zoos** and attracting more than a million visitors annually, the Indianapolis Zoo is one of the largest in the country that operates without taxpayer dollars.

That gives it a measure of freedom to focus on its mission to encourage people and communities locally and globally to advance animal conservation, according to Michael Crowther, the facility's president and CEO.

More than 70 percent of the zoo's annual revenue is earned revenue, through admission fees and other visitor spending. Beyond that revenue, it relies on donations and grants from private sources, including the Endowment, which has provided more than \$1.1 million in annual operating support grants for many years.

"With regular unrestricted support, we can maintain our mission focus," Crowther says. "At the Indianapolis Zoo, we believe the greatest gift we give our children and grandchildren is a future we would choose to inherit, not one they are forced to inherit."

Rob Smith, president of Eli Lilly and Company Foundation concurs. "Eli Lilly and Company has long been supportive of the zoo," says Smith. In recent years, the Company has helped fund the zoo's biennial Indianapolis Prize, the world's leading award for animal conservation. The winner receives the Lilly medal and a \$250,000 cash award. "Through the Prize, the zoo advances the cause of animal conservation around the world and brings international attention to it and Indianapolis," adds Smith.

\$191.4 million in additional spending by arts and cultural audiences, "spending that pumps vital revenue into local restaurants, hotels, retail stores, parking garages and other businesses," according to the report.

"I would argue, of course, that the arts are essential," Lawrence says. "What's so wonderful is that we don't have to make that argument to the Endowment."

Dayton Molendorp, chairman, president and CEO of OneAmerica Financial Partners, Inc., and co-chair of the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership, agrees with Lawrence that having vibrant arts and cultural organizations in Indianapolis is critically important. "The ability of businesses to recruit the talented professionals they need to prosper is significantly affected by the quality of life they will enjoy in Indianapolis. That's why OneAmerica consistently supports a variety of arts and cultural organizations and programs," he adds.



“The zoo can engage and enlighten while promoting conservation,” Crowther says. “Inside the cavernous Oceans exhibit, for example, visitors can ‘pet’ dog sharks in a shark touch pool. A personal encounter with sharks—whose feeding habits are key in sustaining life in the world’s coral reefs—may reduce fear and increase interest in protecting an endangered species,” he adds. “People are much less likely to kill something they have touched. There are millions of kids since 2007 (when the shark touch pool opened) who have touched a shark and view sharks differently,” notes Crowther.

The Endowment provided a \$5 million capital grant to the center, which will provide a state-of-the-art home to eight of the world’s most endangered primates.

“They are truly wondrous creatures,” Crowther says of the orangutans. “Beyond being wowed by them, we hope visitors will better understand global issues, such as destruction of rainforest habitats in faraway Borneo and Sumatra for consumer products like palm oil,” Crowther adds.

“**The zoo is a portal for the community to pass** through, to see the world that lies beyond Indianapolis.



**The International Orangutan Center is designed specifically to meet the animals’ physical, social and intellectual needs.** The focal point of the exhibit will be the soaring Beacon of Hope tower, illuminated by lights the orangutans—such as Azy and Rocky (previous page)—turn on themselves.

“Successful capital projects like the Oceans exhibit attract new visitors and generate revenue to further the zoo’s efforts in education and conservation,” Crowther says.

In 2012 the zoo broke ground on its most ambitious capital project to date, a \$21.5 million International Orangutan Center slated to open in 2014.

If we can do that, we’ll be doing our job,” he says.

“Part of our confidence is in knowing that the Endowment cares about us and our missions. If we didn’t know that, we would become tentative. You can’t win if you are tentative.”