

Several months ago, Harry and I told Sandi Scanelli that we had revisited our estate planning and now intend to leave a significant gift for the Community Foundation to administer for the performing arts. So when she revealed to us that the Community Foundation was establishing an endowment exclusively for cultural activities, we were very pleased-- to say the least.

While Harry and I have contributed to social services most of our 34 years here, we have always found some time and some money to help support cultural activities-- especially the Brevard Symphony Orchestra--where Harry is Chairman of the Board and the Henegar Center for the Arts--where I am a permanent volunteer. Those two organizations in particular have a very special place in our hearts.

Therefore, when Sandi asked me to say a few words about why we are so passionate about the arts, I jumped at the chance.

1. **First -- We absolutely enjoy live music and theater.** -- Whether it is a Beethoven Symphony by the BSO or a traveling production of South Pacific at the King Center, or the High School production at the Henegar Center of Thoroughly Modern Millie, or Melbourne Civic Theater's production of the Full Monty-- we love it all.

There is nothing like quality live entertainment to take you away from the stresses of everyday life, to lift up your spirits, or force you to think about what the artist is expressing about the human condition or to have you release the emotions the music or performance may evoke.

And when a performance is particularly enjoyable and creative we are buoyed and talk about it for days. **It is enriching and defines for us the quality of life we enjoy here in Brevard.**

2. **Secondly The arts are extremely important for economic development:** For example, when Howard Lance told me a couple of years ago that the young engineers at Harris lamented about the lack of entertainment for their age group, we partnered to bring more and diverse entertainment for a younger audience at the Henegar Center. When FIT realized that they were losing some good candidates for the University because they didn't have any music classes, they created a music department and bought an art museum and will be adding art classes.!!!

When companies look to relocate in Brevard they don't ask just about housing and schools. They also ask "what is there to do here for entertainment?"

3. **Thirdly and really most importantly we also have come to realize that we all have a creative side of our brains and it is this creativity that moves society forward.** The arts are not a luxury. They are a necessity. They define who we are. Bread may feed our bodies, but the arts feed our souls. And, even in the darkest

financial times, we need to find ways to support and nurture the arts--especially for our children.

Harry and I were very fortunate. The Los Angeles School District sent me and my classmates to see Peter Pan starring Mary Martin when I was just 11 years old. I will never forget the experience. And Harry had the lead in the operetta Peer Gynt at West Seattle High when he was just 17 years old - They are two of our fondest memories from our childhood. We now realize how important their influence was in our lives.

And 8 months ago when I found myself helping the Henegar Center on a day to day basis, I learned very directly how children's participation in theater can be transformational for them-- turning shy, inhibited children into self-confident stage performers.

Further, In the process of pursuing additional grants for the Center, I delved into the latest research on arts and education.

What I found is that children who participate in the visual and performing arts do better in school and on their S.A.T's -- regardless of their socio-economic family background. And brain research confirms that arts education strengthens student problem solving and critical thinking skills.

So when Harry and I contribute to the arts in Brevard, we are supporting not only a better quality of life for ourselves but a better educated and successful community.

Let me remind you all that it was creativity that brought us the I phone , gave us the music of the Beatles and most importantly to our community --- took us to the moon!!! And I truly believe that it is creativity that will eventually take us out of this financial malaise we find ourselves.

We certainly hope that this endowment by the Community Foundation will make more visible the importance of the arts to society--- and particularly to the future generation of our young people right here in Brevard.

thank you.