

## Quality of Life and the Library/Cultural Arts Center

The Quality of Life collaboration began several years ago when people interested in the future of Columbus came together and, through a collaborative effort, identified needs that would improve the quality of life for current residents and people looking to live and work here. As my wife and I considered a move to Columbus and researched the city, we were struck by the tremendous investment that was taking place in Columbus. To me Columbus embodies everything that is great about the United States: an entrepreneurial spirit, an attitude of progress, a willingness to take risks, and healthy re-investment in the community.

My first meeting after arriving in Columbus was a Quality of Life committee meeting. As I listened to the diverse missions, deep concern for people's needs, and thoughtful planning from our community leadership, my research became clearer and my admiration for Columbus deepened. As a Columbus Quality of Life center, the proposed Library/Cultural Arts Center would provide sustaining economic impact through: serving as an anchor of amenities in downtown Columbus; creating an inviting environment for children and adults to learn, grow, explore and socialize; offering 21st century learning tools; an Art Gallery where our community can be inspired; much needed meeting space; and an auditorium to host a variety of performances and presentations.

Late this past spring a fundraising feasibility study was conducted to better understand support for the proposed Library/Cultural Arts Center. More than 90% of the participants said having a new Library/Cultural Arts Center should be a top priority in Columbus. Just in the past month, great progress toward meeting that goal has been made. The Library Board, Foundation and Arts Council are very encouraged by the City Council's positive consideration of a new location for the building in downtown Columbus. The proposed location has several benefits, including ample parking, and it will cause less disruption during the construction process. The Columbus Library Foundation is in the early stages of organizing a fundraising campaign. The fundraising feasibility study indicated that the Library Foundation could raise \$6 million to \$8 million, roughly half the estimated cost of the new facility. On Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup> an announcement that the initial goal of financial support for the Quality of Life centers was in place. The generosity of major local donors has set the stage for the financial success of the Library/Cultural Arts Center project. The Library/Cultural Arts Center is still in the early stages of development. The Library/Cultural Arts Center project is an opportunity for the community to be directly involved in a large scale, deeply meaningful, building project with long-term benefit to the community. I welcome you to join in the process to create and support the project. If you are interested in being involved in the effort to build the Library/Cultural Arts Center, please contact me or Foundation President Mimi Ernst. Our contact information: [MimiErnst@icloud.com](mailto:MimiErnst@icloud.com); [Drew.Brookhart@columbusne.us](mailto:Drew.Brookhart@columbusne.us).

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