

SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

Celebrating the power of

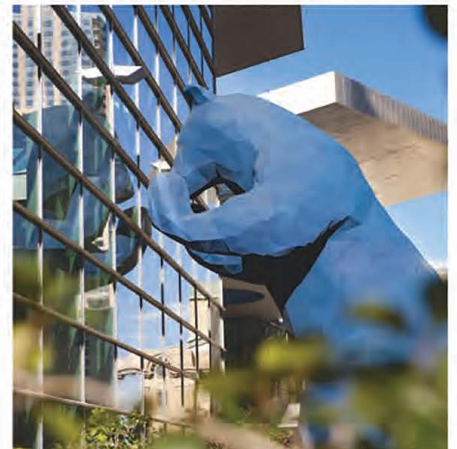
**GOOD**



**40**  
YEARS

 **OMPI**  
FOUNDATION





## Congratulations to the MPI Foundation on celebrating 40 years of industry education and research.

Congratulations to the MPI Foundation on reaching their ruby anniversary. With decades of insights, advocacy, and partnership, MPI has changed the industry for the better—forever. We're honored to have been a part of the last 40 years, and thrilled to be part of the years ahead.

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# Raising our voices to support the community

**OVER 25,000 INDIVIDUALS. EVERY MPI CHAPTER. DOZENS** of pan-industry research grants. US\$14.4 million distributed. **AND you!**

That's what 40 years of volunteer work has yielded.

The MPI Foundation's purpose has mirrored the needs of your global community to provide financial support to individuals, chapters and industry associations to raise the bar on education, professionalism, industry research and service.

Simply, no other industry association has distributed as much back to individual industry professionals.

Throughout this year, we've reached out to our Community of Honorees, past international board and trustee chairs, council members, chapter leaders and every MPI member who has ever benefitted from MPIF distributions.

We continue to collect their stories and hope they will pay it forward to make this industry great. Through the generosity of countless partners, dozens of fundraising events and donations large and small, MPIF has helped sustain the community that make MPIF's 40th anniversary even more celebratory.

Our association and our industry's future look very bright. As we reflect on our cumulative efforts, the community need is still evident. Every DAY, we are actively seeking funds to continue to support diverse and strategic efforts.

As we wrap 2024, let's celebrate that legacy and raise our voices to support a community dedicated to unleashing professional potential through innovation and engagement.

Special thanks to those partners who supported the creation of this booklet and to those who make giving to MPIF an annual rite.

One person. One chapter. One community. One industry. Celebrate the power of good today and always!

Gratefully,

Kevin Kirby  
Executive Director | MPI Foundation



Those attending the MPI Foundation's 2024 Thought Leaders Summit in Indianapolis had the opportunity to check out some of the city's top sports venues and their group options.



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Thank you to our 2024 advertisers, sponsors and chapter donors for supporting the foundation!



# CONGRATS ON *40 YEARS.*

For 40 years, you exemplified leadership in the meetings and events industry by providing opportunities to those in need, supporting emerging leaders and advancing vital research initiatives. We express our deepest gratitude for your unwavering dedication and impactful contributions. **Thank you, MPI Foundation.**

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**LAS**  
*Vegas*



## INDUSTRY LEGACY

The MPI Foundation's recent efforts to give back have been felt by meeting professionals around the world, whether impacted by COVID-19 closures or the wildfires in Hawaii. One particularly notable effort involved scholarships for students from Ukraine to attend MPI's World Education Congress in San Francisco (pictured).



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CELEBRATING THE

# POWER





## How the MPI Foundation has made the professionals in the meeting and event community the very best version of ourselves for 40 years.

**“THE RECENT FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN** to support Ukrainian students through the MPI Poland Chapter is a perfect example of the important work conducted by the MPI Foundation,” recounts Antonio Ducceschi, 2024 vice chair of finance for the MPIF Global Board of Trustees.

“This initiative was impactful as it provided crucial financial support to ensure the continuity of education for Ukrainian students affected by the war,” he says. “Without this funding, many of these students would have faced significant disruptions in their studies. This effort not only highlighted the foundation’s commitment to education but also demonstrated our ability to respond swiftly and effectively to global crises, ensuring that students could continue their academic pursuits.”

Meeting industry support like this has been at the heart of the MPI Foundation since its creation in 1984. The non-profit organization, spearheaded by the all-volunteer Global Board of Trustees, is the leading meeting and event industry foundation

devoted to funding grants, scholarships and pan-industry research for the people who need it most.

“Making our industry and community the best version of ourselves is what really drives us,” says Kevin Kirby, executive director of the MPI Foundation. “In 2023 alone, the MPIF distributed 251 grants and scholarships. Over the past 40 years, the MPIF has acted on behalf of our members, chapters and industry, distributing over \$14.4 million across our global community.”

Kirby says that beyond raising funds through donations from individuals, chapters and organizations, MPIF leaders have sought to make the connection to the meetings community more profound at the 40-year mark through a “Celebrate the power of good!” theme.

“Our success is measured by ensuring we maximize our grants and scholarships distribution,” he says. “While how much we raise is important, it’s equally as important to know that through 40 years, we have helped over 25,000 individuals.”

# ER OF GOOD



"There are so many highlights from my involvement with the MPI Foundation, but I have most pride in the fact that the funds that we raise fund grants, scholarships and pan-industry research for the people who need it most within the meeting and event industry. The dollars they receive allow them to grow their career and move the industry forward."

Susie Townsend  
2024 Chair

MPI Foundation  
Global Board of Trustees

## THERE'S NEVER A WRONG TIME TO DO THE RIGHT THING

The MPI Foundation is continually seeking to expand and enhance the scope and breadth of its service to MPI members. Brad Dean, a current member of the Global Board of Trustees, says one initiative that stands out to him occurred early on during the pandemic, when the meeting industry was severely impacted by travel restrictions and public health concerns.

"Everyone was very concerned about the future of in-person meetings, and some were even suggesting that in-person meetings might never return to the levels we had become accustomed to," he says. "The MPI staff, Global Board of Trustees and International Board of Directors were all unified in our belief that not only would meetings return, but their importance would soar post-pandemic as we would value in-person meetings even more (thankfully, we were right). After much discussion and thoughtful analysis, we unanimously voted to invest as much of our MPIF funds, including reserves, as was possible to keep professional planners engaged and educated throughout the crisis."

Other recent initiatives by the MPIF include providing support to the community in Hawaii impacted by the tragic wildfires in 2023 and providing a grant to develop an anti-human trafficking education program for use at all MPI chapters to support efforts to stop the horrors of human trafficking.

## A PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER

MPI Foundation contributions to the industry run the gamut, including underwriting the CMM program, research/studies (including IACC's "Meeting Room of the Future" and an analysis of the comprehensive economic impact of the meeting industry), grants that help MPI chapters provide important education (such as the MPI Connecticut River Valley Chapter's nighttime dinner and education combo session with a medical meetings focus) and a grant supporting HelmsBriscoe's HB Cares Autism Work Experience Project.

An MPIF grant helped the MPI Denmark Chapter host a one-day training course using the Event Design Canvas methodology.

Former chapter president Anne Dalgaard says the grant made it possible for the chapter to offer members a certificate course on top of the "ordinary" seminars—a more substantial educational offering than was previously available.

"The course went really well—it was beneficial to the attendees, interactive and highly educational. The course received a satisfaction score of 4.8 on a five-point scale," she says. "An educational offer like this makes it possible for us to show our members that there is more to MPI than our local seminars—that we are part of something bigger!"

Countless individuals have benefitted from MPIF scholarships that enabled them to become MPI members or attend important events such as the World Education Congress (WEC) and European Meetings & Events Conference (EMEC).

"My participation in the MPI Chicago Area Chapter literally would not have been possible were it not for this scholarship opportunity," says Gabriel Alaniz. "The MPIF has helped me gain confidence in my journey towards establishing myself as a meeting planner in the Chicago area. Thanks to this scholarship opportunity, I have been able to foster meaningful relationships with other

## Milestones from each decade of the MPI Foundation's first 40 years

### 1984-1994

- Incorporated as non-profit
- Bylaws approved
- Name simplified to MPI Foundation
- Published "Meetings & Taxes" monograph
- Established the Educational Resource Center in Dallas
- First Silent Auction hosted
- First Rendezvous, hosted by Sonesta Hotels

*Rendezvous*



# CONGRATULATIONS ON 40 YEARS OF THE MPI FOUNDATION



*Pictured: MPI Foundation Thought Leaders Summit, August 2024*



“As a meeting professional, MPI has been a constant in my career, providing education and connections that elevate my work, enabling me to make a positive impact in the community. Today, it is an honor to give back to the organization that has given me so much. Thank you, and cheers to a bright future ahead!”

**Susie Townsend**

*Chair, MPI Foundation  
Chief Destination Experience Officer, Visit Indy*



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meeting planners in the Chicago area. Additionally, with MPI's help, I have been able to create some clear goals for my ongoing professional development as a meeting planner."

Susie Townsend, 2024 chair of the MPIF Global Board of Trustees, says the destination marketing organization (DMO) family is a community that is near and dear to her heart, which is why she's particularly excited about the recently launched campaign intended to support DMOs large and small.

"This has been a reciprocal effort given the MPIF's support of DMO employees during the pandemic," she says. "We can confidently state that over 60 DMOs across the globe received support via the foundation at a time when funds were tight. Our intent is to high-

**To date, the MPI Foundation has given \$14.4 MILLION back to the community.**

## Milestones from each decade of the MPI Foundation's first 40 years

### 1995-2004

- Inaugural Global CMM certificate
- Women in Leadership Initiative
- Multicultural Initiative
- Accepted Practices Exchange (APEX) Initiative with the Convention Industry Council (CIC, now the Events Industry Council)
- Multi-industry Foundation publication "Winning with Diversity," first report on inclusivity
- First pan-European study "Making Meetings work in Europe" is published



# GRAZIE

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MPI Foundation

CONGRATULATIONS ON  
Enriching the Meetings  
Industry for 40 Years

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# CONGRATULATING THE MPI FOUNDATION ON 40 YEARS OF SUCCESS.



Rosen Shingle Creek



Rosen Centre



Rosen Plaza

Rosen Hotels & Resorts is pleased to extend our warmest congratulations to the MPI Foundation on forty years of giving back to the meeting planning industry. Through unmatched generosity, the Foundation has given thousands of professionals the opportunities and tools needed to advance their careers and the hospitality field. To the entire team at MPI and the MPI Foundation, we congratulate you all once again and wish you many more years of success.

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To join Rosen Hotels & Resorts in celebrating our own 50th anniversary, visit [RosenHotels.com](http://RosenHotels.com).



light the value of the MPI community and suggest simple ways every DMO can support this ongoing recovery via the foundation.”

#### UNFORGETTABLE FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Fundraising through live events and activities is another key aspect of the MPI Foundation’s efforts, from golf tournaments to silent/live auctions with amazing resort stays and experience packages donated by partners to the must-attend after-hours networking event for the meeting industry: Rendezvous, which takes place at EMEC, IMEX America and WEC.

“I’m particularly proud of the fresh, engaging and memorable foundation fund-

#### Milestones from each decade of the MPI Foundation’s first 40 years

### 2005-2014

- ROI | Platinum Series Education
- MPI Professional Pathways developed
- Research with George P. Johnson published
- Annual double-digit chapter awards distributed
- Funding of Canadian Economic Impact Study 3.0
- CSR training program grant
- Global Certificate of Meeting Operations grant
- Grant to support MPI Europe events met BS8901 Sustainability Standards



To date, the MPI Foundation has supported more than **25,000** MPI members.

## CONGRATULATIONS, MPI!

On behalf of everyone at San Francisco Travel, we salute you for 40 years of amazing work.

Thank you for your continued partnership.

Anna Marie Presutti  
President & CEO  
San Francisco Travel Association





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Destination DC congratulates the  
MPI Foundation on 40 impactful years.



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raising events we've curated recently," says Rebecca DeLuca, 2025 chair of the MPI Foundation Global Board of Trustees. "In 2024, we introduced a TopGolf Foundation event designed to appeal to both golfers and non-golfers. These events have been a refreshing way to raise funds for the foundation while fostering connections among MPI members."

Gus Vonderheide, 2014-2015 chair of the MPI Foundation Global Board of Trustees, says during his tenure, the competition was on to surpass the funds from the previous year.

"I was most proud of two initiatives," he says. "The Wine Auction was first introduced that year and continues today as Red, White and You. The event has gener-

**In 2023 alone, the MPI Foundation distributed 251 grants and scholarships.**

## Milestones from each decade of the MPI Foundation's first 40 years

### 2015-2024

- IMEX + MPI Foundation COVID membership relief
- MPI Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal-Quebec receive grant to create the EVENT
- Global Impact of Meetings & Events research
- Belgium and Poland economic impact grants
- Training grant for autism individuals to work in hospitality
- Anti-human trafficking education
- Future Leaders Forum
- Ukraine hospitality students grant
- MPI Hawaii grant

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Above:  
The IMEX team in  
Las Vegas 2024

Left to right:  
Ray Bloom, Chairman  
and Carina Bauer, CEO  
of IMEX Group



# Congratulations to the MPI Foundation on 40 years of giving back.

Thank you for everything you do for our industry,  
and for our continued partnership.



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"Joining the MPI Foundation Board has been a standout achievement in my career. Collaborating with an international board and a team of high-caliber professionals has significantly enhanced my growth, from refining my business acumen to developing leadership skills and mastering strategic planning. Being surrounded by inspiring trailblazers and innovators has driven me to excel in every facet of my work."

**Rebecca DeLuca**  
2025 Chair

MPI Foundation  
Global Board of Trustees

ated hundreds of thousands of dollars for the foundation. The second was a mind shift that challenged the chapters to hold a local fundraiser within their community—proceeds would come to the foundation and then a large percent of that would be given back to the contributing chapter for education, training, etc. We called it '5K can go a long way!' We encouraged 5K races and asked each chapter to shoot for a \$5,000 donation to the foundation."

### SECURING FUTURE SUCCESS

Although we're celebrating the 40th anniversary of the MPI Foundation by taking a look back, it's important to note that the MPIF is not going anywhere. To help ensure its ongoing legacy, an endowment was established during the tenure of Jim Russell, 2016-2018 chair of the MPI Foundation Global Board of Trustees.

"This endowment is intended to eventually provide enough returns to support the operating costs of the MPI Foundation," Russell says. "That way, we achieve closer to a dollar-for-dollar contribution to benefit ratio. Every dollar given to the foundation goes back out to the community vs. supporting operating costs."

Russell says he's been blessed to have so many friends in the industry that also serve the community.

"I've found that there are so many in our industry that you simply cannot out-give! Not just in dollars, of course, but with inspiration, servanthood and mentorship," he says. "I'd love to challenge everyone to get involved in the MPI Foundation...I guarantee you will get more than you expect. You will serve alongside like-minded industry leaders and make an impact on this amazing community we are privileged to be a part of."

Looking ahead, Ducceschi believes the MPIF will play a crucial role in shaping the future of the meeting industry by investing in the younger generations.

"The foundation's initiatives will be pivotal in ensuring that young people are introduced to and remain engaged in our fantastic industry, thus securing its future growth and success," he says.

## Past MPI Foundation Presidents / Chairs

Raymond J. Hall, 1984-1989

Stephen D. Powell, 1991

John Fuller, 1992-1993

Rod Abraham, 1994-1995

Brian Dietmeyer, 1996-1997

Weldon D. Webb, 1997-1998

Roger J. Dow, 1998-1999

Mike J. Gamble, 1999-2000

C. James Trombino, 2000-2001

Mark N. Sirangelo, 2001-2002

Nancy Morrell-Swanson, 2002-2003

David C. Scypinski, 2003-2004

Steven Armitage, 2004-2005

Charlotte St. Martin, 2005-2006

David G. Gabri, 2006-2007

Michael L. Beardsley, 2007-2008

Rita D. Plaskett, CMP, CMM, 2008-2009

Margaret A. Moynihan, CMP, 2009-2010

Ken Sanders, 2010-2011

Kevin A. Olsen, 2011-2012

Vincent J. LaRuffa, 2012-2013

David Johnson, 2013-2014

Gus J. Vonderheide, 2014-2015

Stephen J. Revetria, 2015-2016

Jim Russell, 2016-2018

Carole McKellar, 2019

Chandra Allison, 2020

Todd Marinko, 2021

Gary Schirmacher, 2022

Jennifer Beatty, 2023

Susie Townsend, 2024





# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY **MPI FOUNDATION**

Through funding grants, scholarships and providing our industry with impactful research, we commend you for your dedication to giving back and uplifting our community.

Thank you for serving the ever-changing meetings and events industry.

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Our professional staff can help you plan your next meeting or convention with us at any of our properties across the country.



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ENTERTAINMENT®

Left: RENDEZVOUS at  
Drai's Day & Night Club  
at the Cromwell Hotel in  
Las Vegas during IMEX  
America 2024.

Next Page: RENDEZVOUS  
at the Mercury Ballroom,  
Louisville, Ky., during  
MPI's 2024 World  
Education Congress.



# THE PARTY

OF THE YEAR  
THAT'S GIVEN

BACK

FOR

DECADES.

Why longtime supporter Caesars  
Entertainment believes in the mission of  
the MPI Foundation—and the impact of  
its RENDEZVOUS networking event.





**THE MPI FOUNDATION'S RENDEZVOUS PARTIES** are the industry's premier networking events for meeting and event professionals. The MPIF partners with diverse brands and organizations to produce these parties at events in North America and Europe (including MPI's WEC and EMEC), with proceeds benefitting the MPI Foundation. One particularly passionate MPIF supporter is the team at Caesars Entertainment, a longtime sponsor of RENDEZVOUS at IMEX America.

"We have been a supporter of the MPI Foundation for years and Brian Crumby, our director of strategic accounts, is on the Global Board of Trustees," says Kelly Gleeson Smith, vice president of sales for Caesars Entertainment. "The MPI Foundation's mission is to fuel the growth and advancement of MPI members by providing scholarships, educational grants and research. This aligns with Caesars Entertainment's values."

Gleeson Smith says Caesars Entertainment believes strongly in developing its people and helping them grow, and that is also one of the most important aspects of her role.

"There is nothing more valuable than helping others achieve their dreams," she says. "As an in-

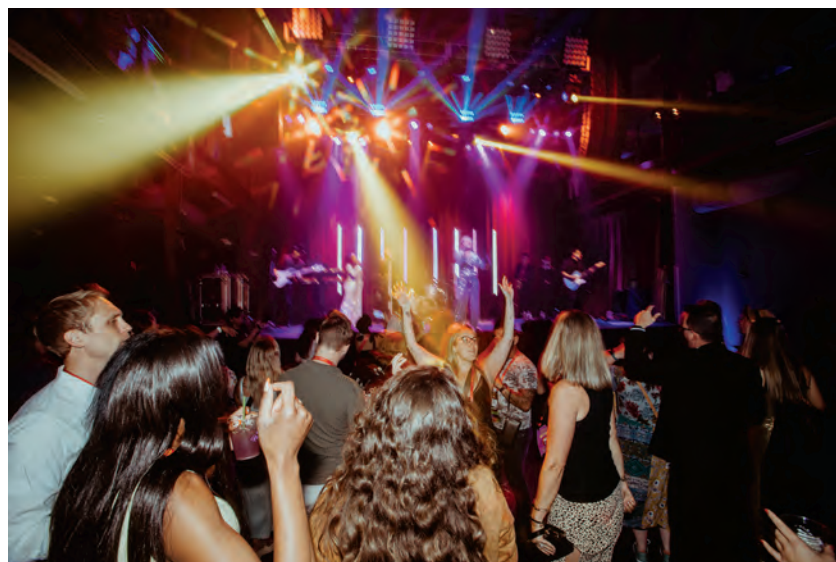
dustry, we need to attract talent to and grow the awareness of the value of meetings and events. The meeting industry is bigger than fashion and bigger than the automobile industry, yet so many still don't realize it's an industry. And what an incredible industry it is! 'When we meet, we change the world' is MPI's motto. Now that is impactful."

Caesars Entertainment has proudly sponsored RENDEZVOUS for more than a decade.

"This event has been held at Drai's Day & Night Club at the Cromwell Hotel for as long as I can remember," Gleeson Smith says. "Over 2,000 meeting professionals attend, and numerous sponsored areas provide everyone in the industry with a dedicated space to gather. The venue boasts expansive indoor and outdoor areas with stunning views of the Strip. Outside, there's ample room for mingling, and inside there's an amazing, large dance floor where attendees can let loose and enjoy themselves. And let's not forget our local celebrity DJ Warren Peace. It's always a fun and unforgettable night!"

Hosting RENDEZVOUS during IMEX is a highlight that many people look forward to, according to Reina Herschdorfer, director of marketing, national meetings & events for Caesars Entertainment.

"It's growing every year and selling out, and we are proud to play a role in its success—raising almost \$400,000 for the foundation is certainly something to be proud of," she says. "Besides hosting our top clients and welcoming the industry into our home, the branding opportunities at Drai's are unsurpassed and the experience is first class."



# 'The MPI Foundation is the heart of MPI'

Former leaders discuss the impact and legacy of the foundation.

## Why is the foundation's work so important to the ongoing strength of the meeting industry?



**KATIE CALLAHAN-GIOBBI**  
Executive Vice President

The work of the MPI Foundation is crucial because it directly addresses the education needs of our members and chapters. It allows the MPI Foundation to bring resources through targeted programs, scholarships and other important initiatives. Beyond the education aspect, the MPI Foundation uplifts members, inspires confidence and, I believe, drives meaningful change in the meeting industry.

Katie Callahan-Giobbi



**DAVID DUBOIS**  
Executive Director

Since almost 40% of the workers in our industry (due to the pandemic) are new and inexperienced with what it takes to produce business events, the MPI Foundation helps to strengthen our industry by providing excellent resources, scholarships and other support.

David DuBois



**TONY FUNDARO**  
Executive Director

The MPI Foundation is the HEART of MPI. Through scholarships, research and strategic support, the MPI Foundation doesn't just respond to today's needs—it builds the foundation for tomorrow's growth. Their work empowers professionals at every level to elevate

the experiences they create, ensuring the meeting and event industry's enduring strength.

Tony Fundaro

## Can you tell us about an important foundation initiative undertaken during your leadership tenure?

I had the pleasure of leading two major fundraising campaigns that helped to underwrite very member valuable programs: the Women's Leadership Initiative and the Multicultural Initiative. Many elements of those programs continue to exist today and continue to be enhanced.

David DuBois

One of the key initiatives launched during my tenure was the economic impact studies, beginning in Canada and expanding to the U.S., Great Britain and many other countries. Funded and led by the MPI Foundation, these studies were particularly meaningful because they highlighted the meeting and event industry as a powerful economic engine. By quantifying our industry's value, we equipped professionals and policymakers alike with essential insights to drive growth and advocate for the industry's role in the global economy.

Tony Fundaro

One of the most exciting and impactful initiatives our board undertook was transforming the MPI Foundation's governance structure to support our international growth. As part of that plan, we held our first board meeting in Dubai, a bold and enterprising move to demonstrate how the MPI Foundation's work supports the global meetings and events community.

Katie Callahan-Giobbi

## Can you share a foundation-related story that inspired you?

The most impactful stories I remember are those where an MPI Foundation scholarship opened doors that transformed a member's career. With access to training and mentorship that would have otherwise been out of reach, these professionals gained the tools to thrive and lead. This is the heart of the foundation's work—seeing firsthand how one opportunity can change a life and, in turn, uplift the entire industry.

Tony Fundaro

Throughout my tenure as EVP of the MPI Foundation, I was continually impressed with the passion of our board, donors and members and the level of support we were able to secure. The impact the MPI Foundation made then, and still makes today, is nothing short of inspiring.

Katie Callahan-Giobbi



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PEOPLE TOGETHER





# 'The freedom to focus'

A recent recipient of two MPI Foundation scholarships on how it helped her achieve important goals.



**GRACE SCHULER, A DREXEL UNIVERSITY CLASS** of 2024 graduate, says her World Education Congress and KPMG Emerging Professionals scholarships, courtesy of the MPI Foundation, gave her the freedom to focus more on learning and less on funding her education.

"I so appreciated that gift of time," she says. "I cannot tell you how helpful the Emerging Professionals scholarship and attendance at the conference were to me during my five-year hospitality management studies. I was truly grateful not only for financial reasons, but because it was an honor to be considered worthy."

Schuler says both scholarships enabled her to meet many great people and have experiences that wouldn't otherwise have been possible.

"For example, in my senior year, I was able to take on an internship with the event planning team at The Ritz-Carlton in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, to learn about resort management," she says. "It was also possible for me to volunteer my time to serve as the president of the Drexel Hospitality Society. These are things I could not have considered doing without scholarship support."

As she begins her career in event planning, Schuler hopes to continue to develop events that "resolve hard issues and find solutions for those in need."

"I believe with this career I can make a difference that can improve lives," she says. "Your generosity has inspired me to give back to the community. I hope one day I will be able to help other students achieve their goals."



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**CONGRATULATIONS ON 40 YEARS**



*The  
UnExpected  
City*  
FORT WORTH, TEXAS





# Creating cutting-edge research

At the annual Thought Leaders Summit, the MPI Foundation convenes the profession's best to look at events in new ways—resulting in insights that move your industry forward.

**THE MPI FOUNDATION CONVENES THE MEETING** and event industry's top leaders for its annual Thought Leaders Summit to discuss, ideate and problem-solve critical challenges such as AI, safety, diversity and inclusion and designing the future of work.

Julie Holtgrave, CMP, deputy director of operations & education initiatives for the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, has attended several Thought Leaders Summits and calls the experience “exceptional.”

“Each one is very different—the content is different, the dynamic of the attendees is different,” she says. “The level of the conversations and the challenges that I encounter as a meeting professional bring a context to what I do and help me to solve problems. You experience second-to-none hospitality, and participating is definitely a highlight of my year.”

Recent host cities have included Buffalo, N.Y., and Mobile, Ala. The 2024 Thought Leaders Summit in Indianapolis featured two education tracks: food waste prevention and neuroinclusion.

“The education sessions at the Thought Leaders Summit are challenging,” Holtgrave says. “They challenge you to think outside the box.

The other attendees challenge you to think in ways that you may not have thought of before, using a different lens and a different filter to think about how your events come together and how it might impact your attendees. It's very different than sitting at the World Education Congress and hearing different operational and facilitation concepts for your events. This goes a little deeper, and it definitely is something that applies more to the senior-level planner.”

The MPI Foundation also funds important industry research, such as economic impact studies that demonstrate the true value of the meeting industry in different countries/regions. White papers based on Thought Leaders Summit education are one of the important research-focused projects that benefit from MPI Foundation support.

The following is an excerpt from “Neuroinclusion Next: Meeting and Event Design,” one of the white papers based on the 2024 Thought Leaders Summit in Indianapolis, where attendees earned the Event Welfare Champion: Neurodiversity & Experience Design certificate, developed by Google's The Neu Project & EventWell.

*People who are neurodivergent make up 20% of the global population, according to The Neu Project. The term “neurodivergent” refers to “neurologically divergent from typical” and includes developmental, acquired and mental health.*

*These numbers have profound implications for meeting and event planners. Not only do neurodivergent people tend to find it harder to participate in events due to sensory overload, crowds, noise and lighting, among other factors, they are also less likely to go altogether because of the stress they anticipate it will cause them.*





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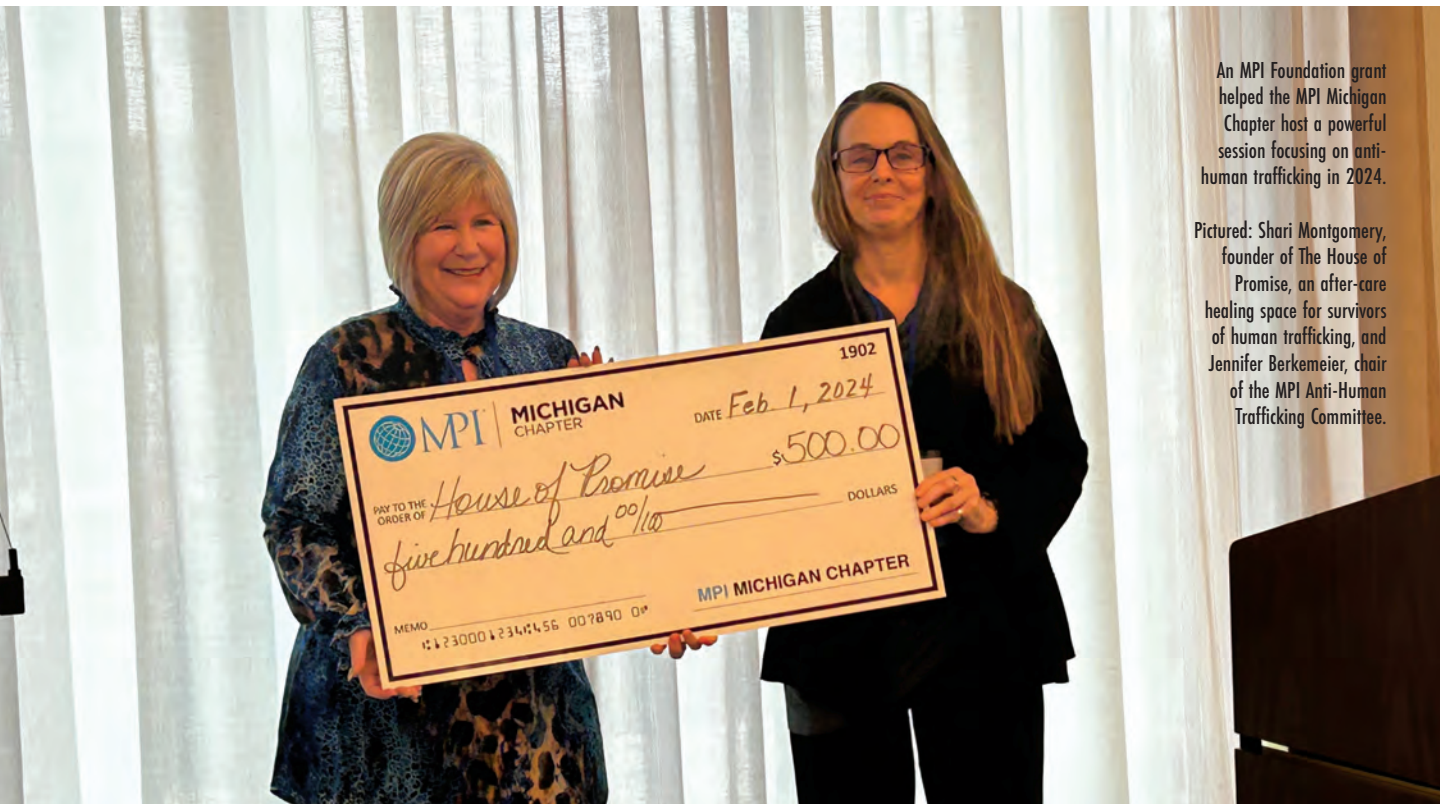
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An MPI Foundation grant helped the MPI Michigan Chapter host a powerful session focusing on anti-human trafficking in 2024.

Pictured: Shari Montgomery, founder of The House of Promise, an after-care healing space for survivors of human trafficking, and Jennifer Berkemeier, chair of the MPI Anti-Human Trafficking Committee.

# Giving back helps push people forward

MPI Foundation scholarships and grants aid in the success of the individuals and MPI chapters that receive them, especially in times of great need.



**STEPHANIE LYONS**  
MPI Houston Area Chapter

"I'm honored and grateful to have been selected as a recipient of an MPI Foundation scholarship. As a new member, this scholarship will allow me to pursue more education and create quality relationships in the event management space. This will enhance my contribution to our sales team and customers across the board. Thank you again for your

support and I look forward to continual growth as a professional and contributing to the mission of MPI."

Stephanie Lyons  
MPI Houston Area Chapter

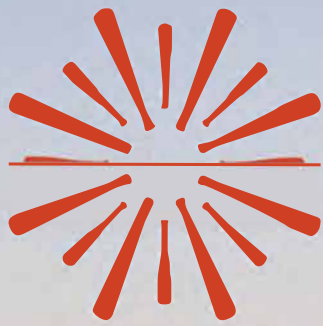
"MPI's motto, 'When we meet, we change the world,' is truly meaningful. I've experienced it firsthand and seen how powerful connections can transform

not just careers but lives.

As one of the Ukrainian students who received the scholarship from MPI, I can say it provided me with the motivation and resources I needed to dive into the industry. It made a significant difference in my life, allowing me to continue my studies and kick-start my career in this amazing field.

"Since then, I've been super excited to keep learning, growing and finding new ways to connect with amazing people in this field. I'm also really proud to now be a





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*Congratulations*  
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ON AN AMAZING & IMPACTFUL *40 years!*



**NICOLE FILIPPO**  
MPI Carolinas Chapter



**VIKTORIIA YUSHKALIUK**  
MPI Poland Chapter

member of the MPI Poland Chapter, which has opened even more doors for me to meet inspiring professionals and keep building my skills.”  
Viktoriia Yushkaliuk  
MPI Poland Chapter

“Thanks to the MPI Foundation’s Anti-Human Trafficking Chapter Education Grant, the MPI Carolinas Chapter continues its efforts to raise awareness, spark action and equip members with information about human trafficking. The grant supported an anti-human trafficking education session at our August chapter meeting, which empowered our members with essential knowledge to recognize the indicators of human trafficking, challenge harmful myths and take meaningful steps toward prevention. Our chapter is committed to offering anti-human trafficking education sessions annually, and we appreciate the foundation’s support in this initiative.”

Nicole Filippio  
MPI Carolinas Chapter

“Through the assistance of the foundation, I was able to continue my MPI membership during COVID while our resort was closed for a year. I was so grateful to be able to have the support from my MPI family during this time as it allowed me the opportunity to network and prospect with other members and take advantage of all the benefits that come with the membership.”  
Sherrie Holl  
MPI Oregon Chapter

“I am very grateful to have received the scholarship for membership to MPI. The cost savings has been a blessing, as I have returned to graduate school to obtain a master’s degree. The degree will qualify me to return to the university classroom to teach the next generation of meeting and event planning professionals.”  
Lee-Ann Choy  
MPI Oregon Chapter

“I am deeply grateful for the incredible support I received for my annual membership

fee. The MPI Foundation stepped in at just the right moment! After facing back-to-back hurricanes in St. Petersburg, Fla., I incurred significant expenses evacuating my family twice, followed by thousands of dollars in unexpected vehicle repairs. This generous support provided much-needed relief during a challenging time.”

Jennifer Gilman  
MPI Tampa Bay Area Chapter

“Support from the MPI Foundation has been invaluable in connecting me with a community of like-minded professionals and helping shape my career. It’s equipped me with leadership skills that I’ve applied as a board member for the MPI Virginia Chapter, allowing me to give back to the industry while growing personally and professionally.”

Lauren Keys  
MPI Virginia Chapter

## WORKING TOWARD A COMMON GOAL

leadership tenure. ¶ “A highlight was when we had success, it was shared by all,” he says. “My experience enabled me to effectively articulate the goals and mission of the foundation and how it supports MPI to the donor community.” ¶ One of the important MPIF initiatives undertaken during Powell’s leadership tenure was funding the modernization of the MP Resource Center, which had been established years before in hard copy. ¶ “The MPI Resource Center was a repository of books, periodicals, research/analysis reports and textbooks relevant to the industry,” he says.

Stephen D. Powell, the second chair of the MPI Foundation Global Board of Trustees (1991), says he learned and refined his ability to communicate with and motivate other leaders toward a common goal during his MPIF



**STEPHEN D. POWELL**



CHEERS TO 40 YEARS, MPI FOUNDATION

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*We can't wait to host MPI-WEC in 2025!*

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