Spirit & Place is a community initiative housed in the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI.
Spirited Place first emerged as the Spirit & Place Festival in 1996 from the Project on Religion and Urban Culture, an initiative of The Polis Center at IUPUI that examined the ways in which religion and community have shaped each other in Greater Indianapolis. With support from Butler University, that first festival featured a conversation between John Updike, Kurt Vonnegut, and Dan Wakefield—along with 8 other public discussions and cultural events.

The annual multi-day Spirit & Place Festival remains a community-centered offering where cultural, congregational, and other civic organizations, as well as local artists and creatives, join forces around a central theme to create exhibits, performances, workshops, discussions, etc. using the arts, humanities, and/or religion.

Initially dedicated to its annual November festival of events, Spirit & Place evolved into a more complex year-round organization with major shifts occurring in the 2010s.

In 2013/14 Spirit & Place conducted an analysis of its role in the community and how it should position itself as a community change agent. In 2013, Spirit & Place embarked on its first initiative at tackling racism by hosting a "pitch fest" in which various parties submitted ideas on how to improve race relations for a $20,000 prize.

Lessons learned from these initiatives resulted in a restructuring of Spirit & Place in 2015 with the hiring of additional staff. As staff capacity grew, so did Spirit & Place’s year-round presence in the community with event series such as Gentrify: The Good, Bad, and Ugly with the Kheprw Institute (2016) Powerful Conversations on Race (2017), Civic Saturday (2018) and The Corona Dialogues (2020).

Art-centric community building initiatives also took root in the late 2010s with Spirit & Place’s partnership with the Kheprw Institute, Groundwork Indy, and EMC Arts on a project aimed at tackling the needs of those leaving incarceration as well as youth aging out of foster care.

Throughout its 25 years, Spirit & Place has used the arts, humanities, and religion as civic tools and has championed collaboration amongst community partners. Through these collaborations, Spirit & Place has become a trusted ally for experimenting with new event formats, wrestling with complex challenges, facilitating difficult dialogue, hosting thought-provoking events, and exploring our sense of place. Spirit & Place continues to live its mission as a catalyst for civic engagement and enduring change by breaking down silos, combating civic disengagement, and building stronger, more connected communities.
THANK YOU
2020 DONORS

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IUPUI
In late 2019, Lilly Endowment approved a $1.2 million grant to the Indiana University Foundation to support the 25th Spirit & Place Festival and festival events in 2021 and 2022. The grant includes $400,000 in matching funds, which Spirit & Place will use to leverage additional fundraising.

“We are honored to have received this grant from Lilly Endowment, especially during our 25th year,” said Pam Blevins Hinkle, Spirit & Place director. “We plan to use the grant to strengthen our faith-based engagement, grow our public profile, and build a more sustainable infrastructure for the future of the organization. Our arrival in this moment is possible only because of the many gifts of time, talent, and treasure from thousands of volunteers, donors, and community members who have believed in this important work since 1996.”

David Bodenhamer, executive director of The Polis Center noted, “It was our great pleasure to help birth and nurture Spirit & Place for 25 years. Its success is evidence of the commitment to civic engagement, civility, diversity, and inclusiveness exhibited by thousands of people across Central Indiana.” With the Polis Center’s move to the IU School of Informatics and Computing at IUPUI, Spirit & Place now makes its home in the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI.

MAKE YOUR GIFT

Gifts to Spirit & Place will be matched 1:1 thanks to Lilly Endowment. Visit spiritandplace.org and click “Donate.”
WITH GRATITUDE
For 25 years Spirit & Place has been thoughtfully guided and supported by numerous community leaders. We thank these past chairs for their time and talent!

Kevin Armstrong
IU Health Chief of Staff and Executive Vice President, Mission & Values

Vicki Bohlsen
CEO, Bohlsen Group

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Executive Director, ACLU of Indiana

Bruce Hetrick
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Ken Honeywell
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President Emeritus, Indianapolis Art Center

David Wantz
President & CEO, Independent Colleges of Indiana

Karen Whitney
President, Clarion University (retired)

Lynn Youngblood
Provost Emeritus, University of Indianapolis
The Spirit & Place Festival’s origin story begins with a now-fabled conversation between Kurt Vonnegut, Dan Wakefield, and John Updike at Clowes Hall in 1996. For 25 years we have proudly brought you the Spirit & Place Festival. Now our work using the arts, humanities, and religion to strengthen community life is year-round.

Not only do we host the nation’s only arts, humanities, and religion festival every year, Spirit & Place is a platform that trusts the community to create solutions, make new connections, engage in difficult dialogues, and transform civic life. We encourage risk and experimentation; strive to be flexible and adaptable; believe failures yield powerful lessons; and invest our time in the act of co-creation and relationship building.

Per our values, community feedback is solicited at the earliest stages of our efforts and is centered in our decision-making. We strive to strengthen community capacity by providing dialogue facilitation coaching, community development training via the arts, and embrace spiritual practices in these processes. By moving toward a practice of compensating our facilitators, we also strive to engage in equitable practices that acknowledge not only the skill, but emotional labor, brought to this work.
Discover more about our unique year-round efforts »
The Corona Dialogues

Last spring as the COVID-19 pandemic revealed both the best and worst of American life, we asked, “Where do we go from here?” Utilizing the arts and humanities as a springboard for discussion, *The Corona Dialogues* explored the origins of society’s weakest spots while also building out a framework for a new future from the ground up. We are especially grateful to local author Maurice Broaddus for leading two science-fiction literature workshops at the end of 2020 that helped the public re-imagine the world they want to build. Dialogues began in September and shifted emphasis in early 2021 to generate a “Pandemic Plan for Change.”

The Corona Dialogues is funded by The Indianapolis Foundation, a CICF affiliate, and Indiana Humanities, with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Our community partners include dialogue facilitators; the Medical Humanities and Health Program, IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI; Asante Children’s Theatre; Community Action of Greater Indianapolis; and the Kennedy King Memorial Initiative.

Powerful Conversations on Race

*Powerful Conversations on Race* (PCR) initially launched in 2018 through the support of an INCommon Grant from Indiana Humanities, with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Thanks to additional support from The Indianapolis Foundation, a CICF affiliate, Spirit & Place will soon be able to revive this series by training additional dialogue facilitators.

One of the exciting outcomes of training community members in this work is that anything can happen! At the conclusion of the first round of PCR in 2018, not only did 91% of attendees report changes in beliefs around race and 100% report they were motivated to change behaviors/take action, but several of our facilitators went on to use their new dialogue skills in innovative ways.

Just one example is how PCR facilitator Val Tate created CULTURE, HEART, ART AND TALK (C.H.A.T), a program at Community Action of Greater Indianapolis. C.H.A.T uses the Civic Reflection Dialogue method to address trauma and spark both individual and community transformation. C.H.A.T launched during the 2019 Spirit & Place Festival with plans to continue sessions.
Civic Saturdays
Civic Saturday is a civic ritual – an analogue to a faith gathering. It does not aim to replace faith traditions, instead, these gatherings serve as a time for us to nurture a spirit of shared purpose, wrestle with moral questions, and develop a sense of civic character. Using poetry, song, civic readings, and a civic “sermon,” Spirit & Place has been hosting gatherings since 2018 and was graciously provided the opportunity to share civic sermons on Big Car’s WQRT 99.1FM during the early stages of the pandemic.

Moving forward, Spirit & Place intends to re-shape these gatherings with more emphasis on providing the community time for reflection with one another. We will continue to use poetry, music, and civic texts in this work and are eager for the day we can again gather in common!

Faith Communities
The world’s spiritual traditions invite us to examine what it means to be human, how we live our values in both individual and public life, and how we should live in relationship to the seen and unseen world. Since 1996, houses and places of worship, congregations, nonprofit organizations that are theologically-rooted, among others, have participated in Spirit & Place, bringing the values of compassion, forgiveness, fairness, and hospitality, and more, into the public square. Thanks to funding from Lilly Endowment, we are examining how to best serve faith communities in Central Indiana. With 75-100 interviews planned, we’d be happy to talk with you. To set up an interview, email festival@iupui.edu and put “faith interview” in the subject line.

Arts Based Community Development
We know that the arts and artistic processes are powerful instruments for community transformation. In 2021, Spirit & Place and its community partners will host arts-based community development training in an effort to improve the quality of arts-infused community engagement projects, create lasting impacts from such efforts, and grow Indianapolis’ capacity to use the arts as tools for social change. Our community partners are the Arts Council of Indianapolis, Community Action of Greater Indianapolis, Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center, The RECLAIM Project and Reconnecting Our Waterways.
1996
The inaugural Spirit & Place Festival includes the first Public Conversation, featuring Kurt Vonnegut, Dan Wakefield, and John Updike. The “Spirit & Place” name was coined by journalist, writer, and critic David Hoppe, and the familiar script was created by Young & Laramore.

2000
The NUVO Cultural Vision Award is given to The Polis Center at IUPUI for the Spirit & Place Festival.

2001
The Indiana Achievement Award is given to The Polis Center at IUPUI for the Spirit & Place Festival.

2003
Four festival events occur in Muncie, Indiana when Spirit & Place celebrates the theme of Remembering & Reconciling. This marks the beginning of festival events outside the metro area, including Martinsville, Columbus, Franklin, Shelbyville, among others.

2004
The festival expands to 75 events. Festival events will grow annually, passing 100 events within just a few years.

2013
This RISK-themed year featured two competitions: the $20K Competition About Race as well as the first “best of show” prize for a festival event, won by WFYI’s “Spirited Chase.”

2014
Pratt/Richards, a Chicago consulting firm, conducted a program evaluation which challenged Spirit & Place to reach more diverse audiences.

2015
A community engagement initiative is launched to begin dismantling our complicity in upholding institutional racism and white supremacy.

2016
A yearlong partnership with Kheprw Institute explores gentrification in a year-long discussion series called Gentrify: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. Also, spoken-word artist Tony Styxx is commissioned by Spirit & Place to create “Dear Indy,” which premiered at the opening festival event.

2017
The festival’s first hip-hop event, created by Kheprw Institute and its partners, wins the Award of Awesomeness. Groundwork Indy, Kheprw Institute and Spirit & Place also collaborated with EMCArts (with core support from MetLife Foundation) on a national pilot project called the Indy Community Innovation Lab, which used artistic practices to explore economic inclusion for returning citizens and youth aging out of foster care.
2005
Spirit & Place celebrates its 10th anniversary with the theme of Moving & Staying and a celebratory event featuring writer Wendell Berry and musician and actor Tim Grimm.

2007
Ten local voices are invited to write essays on the annual festival theme from 2007 through 2015. Essays appear in the event guide, the festival website, and were aired on WFYI 90.1 FM.

2008
Random Acts of Improvisation unleashes scenes of chaos and joy in community spaces and college campuses during the festival theme that celebrates Exploring Imagination.

2009
The festival becomes a 10-day event (instead of 17!) with bookend signature events, following a strategic planning process that prioritized quality over quantity.

2010
An Evening with Anthony Bourdain and Eric Ripert at Clowes Hall was presented in partnership with Indiana Humanities in celebration of our mutual theme, Food for Thought. The event sold out three weeks ahead of time.

2011
Special projects accompanying the BODY-themed festival include Dressing Indianapolis, a conversation about urban design through the lens of fashion, and Sin’s Last Stand, an “informance” on the history of American Burlesque.

2012
GameSpot remixes relationships between people and places and brought fun and fitness together with quirky games printed on sidewalk decals in 80 Indianapolis locations during the Play-themed festival.

2018
Facilitators trained in the Civic Reflection Dialogue method partner with Spirit & Place to launch Powerful Conversations on Race, a monthly discussion series that creates space for the difficult dialogues surrounding the history and contemporary impacts of race, racism, and racial violence in the U.S. Also, Civic Saturdays are launched, offering an hour of poetry, song, readings, and a civic “sermon” to help us wrestle with complex moral questions and nurture a shared sense of civic purpose.

2019
Spirit & Place moves from The Polis Center at IUPUI, its home since 1996, to the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI.

2020
Amidst a global pandemic and worldwide protests against police brutality, Spirit & Place rises to the times with The Corona Dialogues, a discussion series designed to reflect on life in uncertain times, unpack the disparate impacts of COVID-19, and create a Pandemic Plan for Change. The 25th annual festival features 25 virtual and hybrid events on the theme of ORIGINS for both in-person and digital audiences near and far, and includes “A Brave Attempt,” a commissioned work by poet and activist Manon Voice, which premiered at the 25th Annual Public Conversation.

2021
Highlights of the coming year include the Living Stories: An Evening with Elaine Pagels, the 26th Annual Spirit & Place Festival, celebrating the theme of Change, return of Powerful Conversations on Race, continuation of The Corona Dialogues, semi-annual trainings on Civic Reflection Dialogue, and Arts-Based Community Development training.
Spirit & Place has always anchored its work in annual themes. From *Remembering and Reconciling* and *Food for Thought* to our more recent one-word themes such as *Play, Risk, Home,* and 2020’s *Origins,* we have used themes to create a time of focused reflection, fellowship, and conversation for the community. COVID-19 could have derailed our efforts, but 64 community partners came together to create 24 events that engaged more than 4,700 people this past November. (Not including those who watched recorded events after the festival ended!) To these amazing, hard-working, and creative partners we say THANK YOU and we cannot wait to see what the future holds.

### 2021 CHANGE

2020 changed everything. We—and the world—feel changed. This change has been exhausting, exhilarating, terrifying, liberating, needed, and not enough all rolled into one. We ask the community to reflect on the changes we have witnessed and experienced and imagine the steps needed to make further change possible.

### 2022 IDENTIFY

Who are you? Who are we together? What happens when we hide part of our identity from view? How we identify and talk about ourselves, individually and collectively, frames how we walk in the world. Identity shapes stereotypes, institutional structures, cultural and civic values, policies, and much more. Our identities are deeply personal and often thought of in individualistic terms. No matter how personal the experience though, there is something communal about the ways in which we identify.
The Award of Awesomeness began in 2016 as a way to recognize festival events that exemplify Spirit & Place’s values; use the arts, humanities, and religion in innovative ways; and just plain knock it out of the park in delivering an AWESOME experience! Your financial support is what helps fund this $1,000 community prize.

2016
Riverside Speaks! Past, Present, and Future
Ebenezer Baptist Church & partners

2017
Break the Chains Off! History of Hip Hop in Power and Resistance
Kheprw Institute & partners

2018
Explore Art-omotive!
Ivy Tech Community College—Indianapolis & partners

2019
(W)rites of Passage
Indiana Prison Writers Workshop & partners

2020
OM: The Origin of All
Hindu Temple of Central Indiana & Santosha Yoga
To close the 2020 Spirit & Place Festival, Irish poet and theologian Pádraig O’Tuama and local poet and activist Manon Voice joined in a conversation exploring the power of poetry, the nature of reconciliation, and what it means to be “students of repair.” Pádraig, comfortably at home in Belfast, and Manon at her Indianapolis home, were welcomed into conversation by Darren Chittick, pastor of The Church Within. More than 200 viewers joined in via Zoom and Facebook live from across the United States, Canada, Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

Commissioned by Spirit & Place and with support from the Indiana Arts Commission, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, Manon debuted her newly commissioned poem “A Brave Attempt,” which may be found at spiritandplace.org.
OUR PAST SPEAKERS

Twenty-five Public Conversations have featured acclaimed artists, activists, authors, scholars, politicians, faith and civic leaders:

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar
Dr. Maria Hamilton
Abegunde
Will Allen
David Baker
Wendell Berry
Phyllis Boyd
A’Leila Bundles
Sr. Joan Chittister
Julie Dash
Matthew Desmond
Anita Diamant
Andre Dubus III
Nathan Dungan
Barbara Ehrenreich
John Fetterman
Harrell Fletcher
Howard Gardner
Mary Gordon
Philip Gulley
Nikole Hannah-Jones
Joy Harjo
bell hooks
Mayor William Hudnut III
Charles Johnson
Scott Jones
Thomas Keneally
Maxine Hong Kingston
Jonathan Kozol
Rabbi Harold Kushner
Rabbi Lawrence Kushner
Frances Moore Lappe
Barry Lopez
Allison Luthe
Thomas Lynch
Dr. James Madison
Manning Marable
Martin E. Marty
Peter Matthiessen
Jane McGonigal
Brian D. McLaren
Mark Nepo
Kathleen Norris
Pádraig O’Tuama
Angelo Pizzo
Sister Helen Prejean
Reynolds Price
Dr. Timothy E. Quill
Dr. Bernice Johnson
Reagon
Richard Rodriguez
Timothy Schmalz
Gail Sheehy
David Sklar
Jane Smiley
Susan Sparks
Patty Stonesifer
Clifton Taulbert
Zeynep Tufekci
John Updike
Manon Voice
Kurt Vonnegut
Dan Wakefield
Jim Wallis
Renita Weems
Cornel West
Betty Williams
Terry Tempest Williams
Marshawn Wolley
Rev. Anastassia Zinke
SPIRIT & PLACE
FRIENDS

Spirit & Place is truly a collaborative endeavor. The annual festival, year-round conversations, and skill-building opportunities we offer would not be possible without each and every generous offering of talent, time, space, and money. Thank you for helping us build stronger communities through the power of the arts, humanities, and religion.

This list includes 2020 committee members, volunteers, and community partners, as well as donors who gave between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020. If your name is not listed as you would like it to be, or if it has been omitted, please accept our apologies, and call us at (317) 278-2644.

M. Hamilton Abegunde
Colette Abel
ACLU of Indiana
Star Adita
Africana Studies Program, IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI
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Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation, Inc.
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Arts Council of Indianapolis
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Athenaeum Foundation
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Tabitha Barbour
Emily Beckman
Ariana Beedle
Barbara Bernhard
Big Car
Wesley Bishop
David Bodenhamer & Penny Bodenhamer
Bohlsen Group
Vicki Bohlsen
Helen-Louise Boling & Joseph Boling
Sharrona Breeding-Moore
Kathleen Brinkman & Charles Brinkman
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Center for Interfaith Cooperation
Central Indiana Community Foundation, Inc.
Central Indiana Land Trust
Central Library
Child Advocates
Christel House Academy
Christel House Academy South
Darren Chittick
Clockwork Music
Arlene Coleman
Community Action of Greater Indianapolis
Community Alliance of Far Eastside
Congregation Beth El-Zedeck
Violet Cundiff
Dance Kaleidoscope
Neil Devadasan
Aron DiBacco
Keesha Dixon
Sharolyn Doane
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Melissa Moran
Kelli Morgan
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at IUPUI
Jenny Niec
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Wildstyle Paschall
Patchwork Indy
Beth Perdue Outland
The Penrod Society
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Elaine Powell & Richard Miles
Project Lia
Purdue University Native American Education and Cultural Center
The RECLAIM PROJECT
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Unbound Coaching for Life
Manon Voice
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Lynn Youngblood, Ed.D.
& Kay Youngblood

Activities noted on the timeline (pages 10-11) were made possible through the talents and contributions of many individuals, festival partners, and donors, including (but not limited to): Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation; Arts Council of Indianapolis; Asante Children’s Theatre; Big Car; Butler University/Clowes Hall; Central Indiana Senior Fund, a CICF affiliate; Comedy Sportz, Community Action of Greater Indianapolis; Dance Kaleidoscope; Duos Indy; Indiana Arts Commission; Indiana Historical Society; Indiana Humanities with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities; Indiana Writers Center; Indianapolis Center for Congregations; Indianapolis Downtown, Inc.; Indianapolis Museum of Art; League of Women Voters of Indianapolis; Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center; Indianapolis Public Library; IndyTalks; IUPUI Office of Equity & Inclusion; Ivy Tech Community College; IUPUI Herron School of Art & Design; JCC Indianapolis; Jewish Family Services at The Albert & Sara Reuben Senior and Community Resource Center; John D. Barlow Lecture in the Humanities, IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI; LEVEL: Lilly Endowment Inc.; Maribeth Smith & Associates; Medical Health & Humanities Program, IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI; MetLife Foundation: NUVO; Reconnecting Our Waterways; Second Presbyterian Church; Silver in the City; SongSquad Indianapolis; Sussurus; St. Paul’s Episcopal Church; The Indianapolis Foundation, a CICF affiliate; The Lacy Foundation; The Penrod Society; The Polis Center at IUPUI; WFYI Public Media; WQRT 99.1 FM; Young & Laramore.
Pam Blevins Hinkle  
Director

LaShawnda Crowe Storm  
Community Engagement Director

Erin Kelley  
Program Director

Janna Thomas  
Fundraising Assistant

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Steering Committee Chair  
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Executive Director, Education Formation Outreach, Marian University (deceased)

Gail Thomas Strong  
Vice President, Community Engagement, WFYI Public Media

Robin Thoman  
Paradox Dental Care

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Violet Cundiff, Community Member

Les Etienne, IU School of Education and IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI

Dan Grossmann, NUVO

Anita Gupta, *Hindu Temple of Central Indiana*

Callie McCune, Indiana Historical Society

Tariq Robinson, *Indianapolis Public Library*

Rev. Carolyn Scanlan-Holmes, *The Garden*

Tom Streit, Indiana Humanities