

THANK YOU, JOHN AND GOOD AFTERNOON EVERYONE.

I'D LIKE TO BEGIN BY THANKING THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS FOR BRINGING US TOGETHER TODAY.

IT IS MY PLEASURE TO WELCOME YOU TO THE ADA SILVER ANNIVERSARY SUMMIT, AS WE COMMEMORATE THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, A TRULY LANDMARK PIECE OF LEGISLATION.

UNDER THIS FEDERAL LAW, OUR NEIGHBORS WITH DISABILITIES ARE PROTECTED AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND GUARANTEED THEIR RIGHT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EMPLOYMENT, GOVERNMENT SERVICES, PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION... JUST THE SAME AS EVERY HUMAN BEING DESERVES.

WHEN PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH STOOD ON THE SOUTH LAWN AND SIGNED THE ADA INTO LAW 25 YEARS AGO, HE SAID: "TODAY'S LEGISLATION BRINGS US CLOSER TO THAT DAY WHEN NO AMERICANS WILL EVER AGAIN BE DEPRIVED OF THEIR BASIC GUARANTEES OF LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS."

TODAY, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CONTINUES TO WORK EVERY DAY TO PROMOTE RESPECT AND DIGNITY FOR ALL OF OUR FELLOW RESIDENTS IN THE SPIRIT OF THIS LAW.

I BELIEVE THAT ALL MIAMI-DADE COUNTY RESIDENTS SHOULD BE TREATED EQUALLY AND FEEL EMPOWERED AS MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY, AND AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THAT IS EQUAL ACCESS TO CULTURAL EXPRESSION.

ARTS PROGRAMS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR OUR COUNTY AND HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF MY SENIOR ADVISOR MICHAEL SPRING, HAS WORKED TO MAKE INCLUSIVE CULTURAL SERVICES AVAILABLE TO CHILDREN, ADULTS AND FAMILIES, WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES.

THE DEPARTMENT HAS WORKED WITH KEY PARTNERS, INCLUDING THE CHILDREN'S TRUST, ON A NUMBER OF AWARD-WINNING ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMS MANAGED BY THE DEPARTMENT'S CHIEF OF ARTS EDUCATION, FRANCINE ANDERSEN.

I WANT TO THANK THEM AND THE ENTIRE TEAM FOR THEIR DEDICATION TO BRINGING ARTS AND CULTURE TO ALL MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY.

I KNOW THAT MANY OF YOU HERE SHARE THE VISION TO MAKE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY A MORE FRIENDLY PLACE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AS THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF YOUR CREATIVE WORK, EACH AND EVERY DAY.

AND I AM HAPPY TO JOIN ALL OF YOU AS WE WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE THIS WONDERFUL COMMUNITY A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES CAN FULFILL THEIR GREATEST POTENTIAL FOR INDEPENDENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT.

THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING...

MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!

