



March 19, 2021

TO THE NEWFIELDS COMMUNITY,

We, the Newfields Board of Trustees, commit to working to make Newfields an empathetic, multicultural and anti-racist institution that embraces diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA) as a central and foundational part of our culture, purpose and mission.

Over the last 30 days, we have been listening. We have been listening to our staff, our docents, volunteers, and members of the community, including local artists. We are immensely grateful for your input. We recognize that racial bias and indifference have played out within our walls and gardens, and the circumstances that brought us to this moment are absolutely unacceptable. They *will not* define who we are going forward.

What we learned from you is reflected in the [plan](#) we are sharing today, in the actions we have already begun, and in our goals for the future. We welcome and seek to continue these important dialogues with you. We want every member of our community to see themselves in Newfields. We want every member of our community to see Newfields making a positive impact in their neighborhoods. We want Newfields to be a place where our employees are excited to come to work, feel respected, and are proud of the direction we are moving.

This plan presents the first steps to take us in that new direction - essential first steps that you, the Newfields community, told us were necessary. We pledge that your words will never again be ignored or disregarded.

To begin fulfilling the commitments we made to you just one month ago, we have undertaken a series of significant actions which lay the foundation for the work ahead. These important actions include creating a \$20 million endowment for the acquisition of works by marginalized and underrepresented artists; making our Board of Trustees more diverse to be more representative of our community; establishing Newfields' first Community Advisory Committee; opening a search process for Newfields' first diversity executive reporting directly to the President and CEO; and mandating ongoing DEIA training for all members of our organization, from our volunteers to our leadership, including Trustees. And, we have engaged a team of experts to conduct an independent assessment of Newfields' leadership, culture, and structure, with the goal of furthering Newfields' DEIA efforts.

Our actions will be deliberate and sustained. We know the work ahead will not be easy. As we take these and other steps, we fully recognize that they are only the start to rebuilding trust and establishing a deeper and more meaningful relationship with you, our community. Together, we will cultivate and create engaging exhibitions and programming, with a renewed focus on education and inclusivity.

We hope today marks a turning point and the beginning of a new era for Newfields. We ask for your patience, assistance, and grace as we move forward. Newfields is yours, and we hope you will join us in transforming its future.

Sincerely,
The Newfields Board of Trustees



NEWFIELDS

March 19, 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On February 17, Newfields identified a series of immediate priorities to begin rebuilding trust with our staff, volunteers, docents, and community, including local artists; to demonstrate a renewed commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA); and to establish a solid foundation for the transformative work ahead. This plan turns those priorities into concrete actions. We have been listening to our staff, our docents, volunteers, and members of the community, including local artists. This plan is a reflection of what we learned from you. Some of the actions included here have already been set in motion, while others will build upon each other. This list will continue to grow as new areas for action are identified by the community and Newfields' staff and leadership.

Organization-Wide DEIA Training: All staff, docents, and volunteers will receive ongoing DEIA training, beginning with an expanded assessment phase this month. Additionally, board members have recently completed an initial assessment and training and will complete an intensive 2-day DEIA training. They will also be required to participate in ongoing training with an anti-racism lens using a developmental approach. Newfields has retained PINK Consulting, a trusted outside DEIA firm with extensive museum experience, to conduct Newfields' trainings.

Increasing Leadership Diversity: Newfields will move to diversify its senior leadership, including its Board of Trustees (the Board). A diverse slate of candidates will be elected to the Board of Trustees at the annual meeting in May 2021. With their addition, including the new Community Advisory Committee chair, nearly 25 percent of Newfields' Trustees will come from communities of color and other marginalized identities, an increase from the current 8 percent. We will continue to prioritize the recruitment and retention of trustees from marginalized identities as we seek to become a truer reflection of our community.

Hiring a Leadership-Level Diversity Executive: Newfields will hire a leadership-level executive to help drive the work required to become an empathetic, multicultural, and anti-racist museum. This executive position, which will be defined as part of our ongoing assessment work, will help oversee recruitment and hiring practices at Newfields, and will also oversee Newfields' procurement processes, helping foster diversity across vendors and suppliers. We will begin recruiting for this executive position, which will report to the President and CEO and have a dotted-line reporting line to the Board, no later than Fall 2021.

Outside Review of Leadership, Culture, and Policies: The Newfields External Expert Assessment Team, comprised of outside experts, has begun its work with a mandate to identify priorities for change to more inclusively represent our community, with particular focus on reviewing the structure of the HR Department and hiring the diversity executive. The team will address policies to recruit, retain, promote, and communicate within the organization. The team is led by Justice Myra C. Selby, head of the Racial Equity Solutions Group, working with management consulting partners, and PINK Consulting.

Launching a Community Advisory Committee: Dr. Sean L. Huddleston, President of Martin University and a highly respected community leader, will become Chair of Newfields' newly-convened Community Advisory Committee. With Dr. Huddleston leading next steps, additional members will be invited to serve. He will also serve as a Newfields trustee.



\$20 Million Endowment to Enhance Representation in Exhibitions and Programming: Newfields is establishing a \$20 million endowment, the proceeds of which will be dedicated to the acquisition of art created by Black, Indigenous, and artists of color, and artists from other marginalized backgrounds. Our curatorial and programming staff will partner with leading academics and industry experts that focus on DEIA on an accelerated program to ensure our acquisitions, exhibits, and programming, including *THE LUME*, reflect our community and the full canon of art history, in all their diversity. All future programming will be evaluated.

Expanding Access, Partnerships, and Free Memberships: With input from local nonprofits and community organizations, Newfields will create a neighborhood pass to provide complimentary memberships to area residents. We will also expand partnerships with local community organizations to provide free general admission to their members, participants, and other stakeholders. Effective July 2021, Newfields will expand its complimentary student membership program, which already includes Marion County public schools and public and non-profit universities and colleges, to include Ivy Tech.

Expanding Free Ticketing: We are accelerating our 2-year plan to expand our discounted and free ticketing program. Beginning immediately, and continuing annually, Newfields will provide 50,000 free and discounted tickets to *Harvest*, *Winterlights*, *THE LUME*, and other ticketed events, as well as educational programs, via new and expanded existing community partnerships. Effective April 1, Newfields will also expand its First Thursdays program, providing free general admission to the museum and gardens on the first Thursday of the month, for the full day, year-round.

Better Communication and Engagement: Newfields is posting all anti-racism and DEIA commitments and related activities online at discovernewfields.org/together, where we will make information available about all the new programs we are launching. The Board of Trustees will communicate internally and externally about these actions, our progress, long-term transformation plans, and seek input. We invite the community to partner in this work by submitting feedback directly, including at upcoming “Listening Hours” hosted by Newfields’ leadership.



NEWFIELDS ACTION PLAN

This plan executes on the commitments listed in Newfields' February 17, 2021 statement, by identifying new programs, investments, and changes that will bring those commitments to life.

It expands on many of the actions highlighted in the Executive Summary in deeper detail.

Ongoing DEIA Training

Commitment: Ongoing DEIA training, with an anti-racism lens, for Newfields' boards, full staff, docents, and volunteers.

Action: Newfields' DEIA partner PINK Consulting is launching ongoing anti-racism training, using a developmental approach, for Newfields' boards, full staff, docents, and volunteers. This training begins with an assessment phase this month.

Newfields seeks to become an organization where all employees feel valued and supported, in all their diversity. We are committed to the ongoing education, training, and work required to educate our leadership, workforce, docents, and volunteers around anti-racism.

Beginning in late March, [PINK Consulting](#) will launch the assessment phase of this work, engaging with staff at every level to determine the scope and content of the training required to achieve our goals. Over the next several months, staff, docents, volunteers, and members of our boards will participate in subsequent training sessions specifically designed to meet the needs of our organization. That includes an intensive two-day DEIA training for board members with the Racial Equity Institute, commencing in April.

Led by PINK's CEO and founder, [Phyllis Braxton-Frierson](#), who has over two decades of experience in the DEIA field as a professor, trainer, and DEIA consultant, PINK's work will also include engaging directly with staff to create an employee liaison committee, and the launch of an internal DEIA "train the trainer" program.

This represents an expansion and acceleration of existing DEIA work, also led by PINK, that has been ongoing since late 2020. That work has been rescoped to include an organizational development component to ensure what is learned is incorporated and sustained across Newfields.

These are only the first steps toward becoming an anti-racist organization grounded in DEIA principles.



Newfields Community Advisory Committee

Commitment: Create a city-wide community advisory committee to hold leadership accountable to DEIA goals.

Action: Led by Dr. Sean L. Huddleston, the Newfields Community Advisory Committee establishes a direct line of communication between the community and the Board. It will advise Newfields around the implementation of the actions presented in this plan.

The Newfields Community Advisory Committee will provide an independent, formal, and structured way for members who represent our community to advise Newfields leadership, to share their knowledge and perspectives, and to develop and offer recommendations in a focused and organized manner. It is a pathway for Newfields leadership to learn from the community and to ensure the actions we are taking truly advance our anti-racism, multicultural, and DEIA goals.

[Dr. Sean L. Huddleston](#), President of Martin University, will serve as the committee's first Chair and will also serve as a Newfields trustee. He is the former Vice President and Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer for the University of Indianapolis, a member of the advisory board for the Indiana Diversity Council, and was a member of the Response Review Committee, which provided a comprehensive assessment of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department's (IMPD) handling of the social justice protests of May-June 2020.

With Dr. Huddleston leading next steps, additional members, including a Newfields employee liaison, will be invited to join the Newfields Community Advisory Committee. With input from our staff, docents, volunteers, and the community over the last 30 days, it is critically important for the member selection process to be transparent and to promote DEIA, that the advisory committee's goals be clear and measurable, and that its progress be regularly shared with staff, volunteers, docents, and the community. The Board of Trustees will fully support Dr. Huddleston's efforts in this regard.



Admission and Membership Policies

Commitment: Review and expand the current admission policy to include additional free or reduced-fee days.

Action: We are expanding Newfields' admission policy to include a neighborhood pass, more partnerships with community and nonprofit organizations, the extension of our complimentary student membership policy to Ivy Tech students, and expanded free First Thursdays. We are also accelerating our 2-year plan to expand our discounted and free ticketing program. Beginning immediately, and continuing annually, we will distribute 50,000 free and discounted tickets to *Harvest*, *Winterlights*, *THE LUME*, and other ticketed events, as well as educational programs, via new and expanded existing community partnerships.

Like so much of the work outlined in this plan, truly expanding access is an integral component of our transformation and will be a long-term process. With input from our staff, the Community Advisory Committee, and the External Expert Assessment Team, we will continue to review our admission and membership policies. We are committed to the ongoing work – and change – required not just to expand physical access, but more importantly, to provide more equitable and inclusive access to Newfields by those in our neighborhood and by all members of our larger community.

In the immediate term, we have taken the following actions:

- **Neighborhood Pass**
With input from nonprofits, community organizations, and local leaders, Newfields will create a neighborhood pass to provide complimentary memberships to area residents and families. Neighborhood pass memberships will include standard membership benefits in addition to a free admission to *Harvest*, *Winterlights*, and *THE LUME*, annually, and invitations to special neighborhood events at Newfields.
- **Expanded Complimentary Membership Policy for Students**
Newfields will expand its complimentary student membership policy, which already includes students from all Marion County public schools and non-profit and public colleges and universities, to include Ivy Tech. (Effective July 2021)
- **First Thursdays Program**
Currently, on the first Thursday of each month from March to September, Newfields offers free general admission to the museum and gardens from 4-8 PM. Effective April 1, Newfields will expand this program to offer free general admission to the museum and gardens on the first Thursday of each month, for the entire day, year-round.



- **Expanded Community Partnerships**
We are in the process of solidifying new partnerships with Indianapolis nonprofit organizations to provide free general admission to their members, participants, and/or other stakeholders.
- **Greater Website Visibility and Staff Training to Communicate these Offerings**
We will update our website to ensure information about these offerings is easy to locate. In addition, we will train all docents, volunteers, and staff members to ensure they are able to communicate these policies.

Newfields External Expert Assessment Team

Commitment: Engage an outside committee to review Newfields' leadership, culture, Board of Trustees, and Board of Governors, with the goal of enhancing DEIA across the organization.

Action: Newfields is working with a team of outside experts to conduct a deep and thorough review of the institution's culture, leadership (including the Boards of Trustees and Governors), and organization, with particular focus on the structure of the HR department and the hiring of a leadership-level diversity executive. The team launched in March and is led by Ice Miller's Racial Equity Solutions Group and PINK Consulting. The team's findings and recommendations will identify priorities for change and a road map for tackling them.

[Justice Myra C. Selby](#), head of the [Racial Equity Solutions Group](#), is the team chair. Justice Selby has the distinction of being both the first woman and the first Black person to have served on the Indiana Supreme Court. Since 1999, she has been a member of the Indiana Supreme Court's Commission on Race and Gender Fairness, which is charged with ensuring fairness and diversity in the legal system. Justice Selby also recently served on the IMPD Response Review Commission.

We cannot truly understand or address the issues presented in February through the lens of only one event. They need to be evaluated in the broader cultural and institutional structures at Newfields. Under Justice Selby's leadership, team members will work collaboratively to identify and provide recommendations for the dismantling of structural and systemic racism within Newfields. Together, members of the team will undertake a data-driven examination of Newfields' culture, leadership, and organization, and specifically will assess inequities in the experiences, opportunities, and outcomes for the organization's employees, volunteers, docents, vendors, and other formal partners.

Employee input is crucial to the success of this work. Recognizing that recent events have exacerbated feelings of distrust and alienation among Newfields staff, the team has been intentionally structured to provide employees with opportunities to speak about their experiences confidentially, and in a manner that promotes constructive dialogue and healing.

Throughout the next 3-4 months, PINK Consulting, led by its founder and CEO, Phyllis Braxton-Frierson, will engage deeply and directly with Newfields staff in a series of listening sessions, surveys, workshops, and when necessary, private consultations.



PINK Consulting has already engaged with over 70 percent of Newfields employees to collect insights and input for this action plan. PINK is expected to complete its assessment and report its findings and recommendations to the Board of Trustees within 120 days. The Board will share a report based on its findings, which will also include initial proposals for next steps.

Curatorial Representation of Marginalized Identities

Commitment: Expand curatorial representations of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), and people from other marginalized backgrounds.

Action: To support the acquisition of works by artists from marginalized communities, we are creating and fully funding a \$20 million endowment, the proceeds of which will be designated for the purchase of works by BIPOC and underrepresented artists. This is only the beginning of our effort to ensure that our institution reflects our community and the full canon of art history, in all their diversity.

“Access” to Newfields is about so much more than just the price of a ticket: it is about physical and intellectual access to and representation in the experiences we offer. We are committed to the learning and change required to better facilitate equal and equitable opportunities to take advantage of the resources we provide. Not only by reducing financial barriers, but also by expanding our collection, content, and programming, we will better reflect the needs, interests, and experiences of our community.

Newfields will work with leading academics and guest curators who specialize in curatorial DEIA to adapt our exhibitions, events, and other programming. With the help of these expert partners, we will explore more diverse cross-cultural perspectives and narratives and better showcase the work of underrepresented artists. We will also prioritize collaborations with underrepresented curators and artists.

Starting in 2022, Newfields will dedicate one of the featurettes of *THE LUME* exhibition to digital works by artists of color, women artists, LGBTQIA artists, and artists from other historically marginalized groups. Each year, an artist will be granted a cash prize and the opportunity to bring their content to one of the largest digital platforms in the nation.

Newfields is also fast-tracking the planned re-labeling of artwork by underrepresented artists in our current collection to elevate and better document their work.



Further Commitments: More Diverse Leadership

Beyond those commitments made in February, Newfields is further pledging to increase diversity on its boards, in leadership, and among staff, docents, volunteers, and vendors.

Action: Newfields will move to diversify its senior leadership, including its Board of Trustees. With a new slate of candidates to be elected in May 2021, including the new Community Advisory Committee chair, 25 percent of Newfields' Trustees will come from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, an increase from the current 8 percent. Our goal is to see this number continue to rise. Newfields will also hire a leadership-level diversity executive, reporting to the President and CEO, to drive forward the work required to become an empathetic, multicultural, and anti-racist museum, including overseeing Newfields' procurement.

In addition to the new slate elected to the Board of Trustees, Newfields will continue to maintain and increase diversity on its Board of Governors.

The work of Newfields' External Expert Assessment Team will further Newfields' actions to diversify its senior leadership, including developing a work plan for the new diversity executive reporting to the President and CEO. We will begin recruiting for this executive position, which will be a member of Newfields' senior leadership team, no later than Fall 2021.

In addition to other duties defined by the assessment work, the new diversity executive will oversee Newfields' procurement processes. This is one of the most critical ways in which Newfields can strengthen engagement with diverse communities and empower local Minority, Women, Veteran, Disability, or LGBTQIA-owned Businesses (XBEs), increasing their share of Newfields' business above the current 15 percent. Through this work, Newfields will continue and expand the goals identified in its strategic plan.

Additionally, Newfields will foster more diversity at every level, including among docents and volunteers, who serve a pivotal role within the institution. We will engage community organizations directly to develop an increasingly diverse pipeline of potential docent applicants and volunteers.

Further Commitments: Governance

Action: Newfields' Board of Trustees will establish a Human Resources Committee.

Newfields' Trustees recognize the need for a dedicated board committee to engage and address issues related to staff concerns and development and will establish a stand-alone Human Resources Committee. This committee and the Board will receive the full results of current and future employee engagement surveys, and the committee will work with Newfields' External Expert Assessment Team as it evaluates the structure of the HR department and HR policies, and recommends improvements.



COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

We know that the process of transforming our institution will require deep, sustained engagement with communities inside and outside our walls.

Developing Metrics: Newfields will collaborate with the newly-formed Community Advisory Committee and External Expert Assessment Team to develop specific metrics to measure Newfields' progress in achieving its DEIA commitments over time. Those metrics will be published online.

Communications: Newfields has launched a webpage dedicated to our anti-racism and DEIA commitments and future activities: discovernewfields.org/together. This is where Newfields and the Board of Trustees will communicate their actions, ongoing work, and long-term transformation plans. We invite the community to partner in this work by submitting feedback directly. Newfields' leadership and Board of Trustees will regularly communicate with staff, docents, and volunteers, providing ongoing updates and seeking their invaluable input and ideas.

Listening to the Community: Newfields will hold ongoing listening sessions beginning this spring, where members of the Board of Governors, Board of Trustees, and senior leadership will personally engage with visitors and community members on campus for "Listening Hours." Anyone visiting Newfields will have the opportunity to directly express the change they want to see. Working with its community partners, Newfields will increase its attendance at off-site meetings and events, to hear from people who haven't visited Newfields, and to share information about new programs and offerings.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and access will be a core priority of our institution and for every member of the Newfields team – from our Board of Trustees and Board of Governors, to our staff, our docents, and volunteers. It will be seen and felt across every aspect of Newfields – from the artwork in our collections, to our admissions policies, to the way our Human Resources department engages employees.

Through ongoing community listening sessions, direct outreach, and better lines of communication, we will build stronger relationships and rebuild trust with our staff, docents, volunteers, and community.

It is our responsibility to listen, to act, and to change – and to do so with urgency. And it is our responsibility to sustain that commitment, not for a month or a year, but for the long-term future.

We are eager to move ahead on the journey before us.

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