

Thomas F. Brickey, DMD

Why are you drawn to Red Butte Garden? Are you a flower enthusiast, an Indian cuisine connoisseur, or do you just love the incredible concerts? Well, I became a member in 1999 to participate in native plant sales and walk through the Garden. Little did I know that, more than a decade later, this place would help to restore hope into my life at a time when I needed it more than any other. I want to share with you something that has happened in my life and one reason I continue to support Red Butte Garden. And I hope you will consider supporting it as well.

In 2011, my daughter Mia was a healthy, happy eleven-year-old. She came down with a stomach bug—or so my wife Heidi and I thought. We were shocked when the doctors told us that Mia had myocarditis, an inflammation of the heart muscle, and would have to undergo an emergency heart transplant in order to survive.

The heart transplant was successful but, due to ensuing medical complications, Mia remained in the ICU for another two months. During all this time, I rarely left the hospital. I stayed by Mia's side, willing her to be strong, to fight, and to live. Over time, I was physically, mentally, and emotionally worn out. I didn't realize how empty I had become. I began to lose all hope.



Heidi and Mia

The nurses encouraged Heidi and me to take care of ourselves. When some friends invited us to a Michael Franti concert at Red Butte Garden, they told us that we needed to go. I thought: "With all my daughter is going through, how can I leave her and go enjoy a concert?" I felt guilty for going, and was doubtful. I was convinced it would be a hassle. No fun. I didn't want to go.

The nurses and Heidi won out and, though I was dreading it, I finally made my way over to Red Butte Garden and the concert. I took my seats in the Amphitheatre and sat there in shock. When I looked around, I realized I was surrounded by all these happy, smiling, dancing people. So many people, having fun, in such a beautiful place. I was overwhelmed. I hadn't felt such positive energy in weeks or months... As I sat there, I started bawling. It just came out. While I sat there crying, I was listening to Michael Franti sing. And suddenly, I felt like I had been washed clean. My spirit was refilled. I felt like Michael Franti was talking to me. I began dancing and smiling. I realized that I needed to be positive, and believe that Mia would make it!

Mia recently celebrated her 14th birthday. She has made two dance teams and is testing for her second-degree black belt in October. We are grateful for her life every day. We

all attended the Michael Franti concert at Red Butte Garden on August 18th and he invited Mia and several other children onto the stage to dance with him. The circle is complete!

For me, Red Butte Garden is no longer just a botanical garden—it is an oasis of happiness that bloomed in the arid desert of my despair. It has sustained my friends, my daughter, and me. The Garden not only gave me back my joy and hope, it does that for others every day. The amazing concerts and bands that play in the Garden aren't the only reason to support Red Butte Garden. But it's a darn good reason! And at your next concert, take a walk around the garden if you can. You will quickly be reminded of the reasons you support the Garden as well.

So, please give what you can to this organization, this special place. As another friend and Red Butte Garden member said to me: “You can’t afford NOT to give to Red Butte Garden!” And he was right. Of all the charities in the valley, Red Butte Garden is (in my opinion) at the very top of the list. It is a Gem in the desert. **Give today.** I want to know that this place will be here when Mia becomes an adult and that it will be growing and thriving for my grandchildren and for our community as a whole.

In Gratitude,

Thomas F. Brickey dad 

Tom Brickey
Red Butte Garden member since 1999

P.S. This is for Red Butte Garden’s annual fund. Please consider giving whatever you can. And if you can, **please give generously!** Thank you.