

Dear Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities supporter ,

We want to let you know that the Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities board has received a letter of resignation, effective February 29, 2020, from Roberto (Bert) Jara, who has served as our CEO for the last two years. Bert is leaving for primarily two reasons. First of all, he has become acutely aware of how little time there is for him to spend with his aging parents who live in California. Second, in the last two years, it has proved difficult for his wife, Barbara, who is Austrian, to obtain employment that suitably matches her skills here in West Michigan. He and his wife have decided to relocate to Vienna this spring. This move will enable Barbara to find employment more in line with her skills and allow Bert to pursue a career in writing that has been a major goal of his life. With this vocational shift, Bert will be able to travel to California for much longer periods of time with his parents and family.

We are grateful for Bert's leadership over the last couple years, and wish him and Barbara well as they turn a new chapter in their lives.

While we will miss Bert and will now embark on a process to fill his leadership void, we are confident in the executive staff leadership to carry on the day-to-day operations in a seamless manner. Steffanie Rosalez, director at the Cook Arts Center, Sue Garza, director of the Cook Library Center, and Jes Kramer, director of finance and administration, have worked collaboratively with Bert to develop internal processes and systems to expand our capacity. Also, they have worked to build a staff and culture that is deeply committed to providing resources, space and a network of support for neighbors to determine the course of their own lives and strengthen our community. The staff has worked hard to strengthen GAAH and expand programs. We expect a seamless transition that will not affect our families or children.

Since Bert will still be with us until the end of February, the board has decided to take some time to evaluate what characteristics and skills will be needed to lead GAAH in the years to come.

We are grateful for the ways you support the programs at the arts center and library and will keep you informed about our progress. If you have any questions, please contact me.

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