



a facility of the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute, Est. 1974

December 1, 2011

Dear Member & Friend,

Gifts are like butterflies.

They drift into your life unexpectedly, uplifting your spirits, and bringing joy to your day.

Other gifts are more like caterpillars. They're unexpected, they're delightful, but then they change right before your eyes into something quite extraordinary.

We received a caterpillar gift last week. The envelope looked ordinary, but inside was a letter from a donor saying that she wanted to give us \$10,000—if we could raise a \$10,000 match.

Will you help us change a \$10,000 caterpillar into a \$20,000 butterfly?

This kind of opportunity doesn't come to us every day, so I asked the staff what they would do with such a wonderful windfall. The damage caused by the freeze, fire, flood, and drought took a toll on our operating budget this year and everyone has been walking a tight line—purchasing only what was absolutely necessary to keep us operational.

But a windfall? Oh, the options. Oh, the opportunities.

A gift from you will help us **conserve water** by replacing our aging and inefficient drip irrigation system or replacing bathroom fixtures with more water-efficient units.

A gift from you will **support our volunteer program** by allowing us to purchase tools and equipment needed by our volunteer team of over 150 wonderful individuals.

A gift from you will help us **reach more people** through our education programs, the website, and interpretive programs at the Nature Center.

A gift from you will help us **keep going** for another year, sharing our love for this very special desert.

The fire, drought, and other natural and man-made disasters (such as budget cuts to schools), are just opportunities for the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute. Now, it's even more important to promote water-wise living in the desert, do more for less with the help of our volunteers, and provide educational opportunities for children and adults alike.

Our role in science education is especially important. This is what one teacher had to say after bringing her Gifted and Talented students to our annual earth science program: “[The Earth Rocks] taught our students things that we cannot even come close to teaching them in school now that the state has cut the education budget so much.”

And the students? They have lots to say as well:

“That was awesome! Can we come back tomorrow?”

“I loved the hike! It was beautiful back there. Can we go again?”

“Please Ms. P., bring us back for the next thing they do!!!”

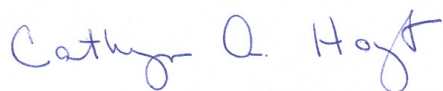
As we enter 2012, however, our reserves are running low. Will we be able to offer our annual Bug Day and Earth Rocks programs to the schools for free? Can we continue to demonstrate sustainable development to the thousands of visitors that walk through the gardens each year? Can we encourage and support graduate-student research? Will we be able to bring in lecturers for our Life Long Learning program? Can we afford to maintain the botanical gardens?

With your help, we can. And, because of another very generous member, your gift is worth twice the amount you write on your check!

There is no doubt that your gift will be a butterfly—delightful, unexpected, and very much appreciated.

Please take a moment to support the CDRI by making a gift today!

Very best wishes to you and your family for the holidays,



Dr. Cathryn A. Hoyt
Executive Director

P.S. All of the photographs of butterflies and caterpillars were taken on the grounds of the Nature Center. Your gift allows us to provide habitat for these, and many other, native plants and animals.

