aurora cultural centre

2012 Annual Report

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aurora cultural centre

Message from the President

Last October, I was honoured to be elected the new President of the Aurora Cultural Centre Board of Directors, and I am delighted to present this annual report on behalf of our team at the Aurora Cultural Centre. 2012 was a year of tremendous change for our organization — change that we met with positivity and energy. I am pleased to report that our Centre is poised for a bright future of continued growth and contribution to the Town of Aurora and its surrounding communities.

In 2012, we were excited to see a growth in attendance by nearly 25% to over 25,000 visits. We exhibited over five hundred artists, achieved 88% customer satisfaction ratings, and were fortunate to work with a growing number of volunteers who contributed thousands of hours to provide our unique mix of arts, music, heritage and instructional programs for Aurorans. We are proud of these accomplishments and look forward to continuing to deliver exceptional cultural programming for our community and beyond.

In addition to what is happening inside the Centre, we are also pleased to see what is happening around us. The Centre is fast becoming a real contributor to Aurora's economic development, playing an increasing role in the revitalization of Aurora's downtown core. The Centre is now acting as a regular jumping off point for Aurorans and their guests to begin their morning, afternoon or evening, followed by dining or shopping on Yonge Street, or a visit to nearby Town Park.

An artistic and cultural journey has begun — one that celebrates Aurora's proud past, while looking towards its bright future. The community is a few steps into this journey, and many signs point toward an upward path of growth for the Centre.

In the evolution of all organizations, the time comes to take a step back, look around, assess progress and chart a path toward the future. This past year, the Centre did just that and completed a new Strategic Plan for 2013-2015.

Within the plan, born of community feedback, we've outlined a new vision for the Centre — *"to be a vibrant centre of cultural and social activity in the heart of Aurora, celebrating the value of creative arts, culture and heritage, and enriching the quality of life of our community"* — and five key goals for the success of the Centre. Our plan is available from our website; we invite you to review it and we warmly welcome your involvement in achieving our vision.

Within our volunteer Board of Directors, in 2012 we bid farewell to Robert Layton, President, Tracy Smith, Vice-President, Cathy Harris, Secretary, and Directors Susan Shaw, Sandra Iacobelli and Tracey Cox. We would like to express our gratitude to Rob, Tracy and Cathy for their important foundational work and their vision to establish and open the Centre and to Susan, Sandra and Tracey for their hard work on behalf of the Centre. We were pleased to welcome new volunteer Directors Michelle Carter, William Jones, Rob Keen, Janet Thacker, Graham Woodward and Levon Yazejian. We thank our new Directors for bringing their energy, time and talents to our team.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board members, our visionary Executive Director Laura Schembri, our dedicated and talented staff (Jane, Carol, Stephanie, Clare, Carlo and Shirly), our tireless volunteers, our wonderful donors, partners and sponsors, the Town of Aurora staff and Town Council, Mayor Geoffrey Dawe and our loyal community supporters. You have all contributed much to our initial success, and we look forward to the joy of working with you to ensure our continued growth and contribution to Aurora life.

As I look around at the exhibits, attend the concerts and fundraisers, and talk to all of the families, youth and seniors who support the Centre, I am inspired by the growing and strengthening cultural movement within our community. And I cannot help but be engaged to do my part to help us deliver more cultural programs to our Town. And so I also encourage you too, to "Be Inspired" and "Be Engaged" with our unique and wonderful Centre.

We've only just begun.

With warm regards,

Frank Pulumbarit

President – June 2013

Organizational Purpose

Our Vision

The vision of the Aurora Cultural Centre is to be a vibrant centre of cultural and social activity in the heart of Aurora, celebrating the value of creative arts, culture and heritage, and enriching the quality of life of our community.

Our Mission

We deliver a diverse range of inspiring artistic, music and heritage programs, and promote Aurora as a dynamic community that values the creative contributions of its citizens. We proudly showcase local, emerging and established talent for our community to enjoy.

Our Values

We endorse and support the following values:

1. Excellence & High Quality Programming
2. Creativity & Learning
3. Innovation
4. Inspiring Environment & Customer Service
5. Relationship Building
6. Collaboration
7. Diversity & Accessibility
8. Integrity & Accountability
9. Environmental Sensitivity

Creating a Governance Foundation upon which to grow

2012 was a year of several significant initiatives for the Aurora Cultural Centre. Continuing to build on the achievements of its first two years of operations, the Centre accomplished several key governance initiatives to strengthen the foundation for a strong future.

- We created a robust *Strategic Plan*, with input from the community and with assistance from the Aurora Consulting Group, to guide the Centre from 2013 to 2015.
- We developed a detailed *Fund Development Program* and *Fundraising Activity Plan*
- We applied to *Imagine Canada's Standards Program* for Canada's Charities & Non-profits and in 2013 we were thrilled to learn we are among 24 organizations in Canada to receive accreditation this year under this program, evidencing the Centre's commitment to excellence.

IMAGINE CANADA'S STANDARDS PROGRAM

Imagine Canada's Standards Program is one of the first-of-its-kind at a national level and is designed to increase public confidence in the charitable and nonprofit sectors' work through demonstrated transparency and accountability.

The Standards Program offers a Canada-wide set of shared standards for charities and non-profits designed to strengthen and demonstrate their compliance in five fundamental areas: board governance, financial accountability and transparency, fundraising, staff management and volunteer involvement.

Accredited organizations receive ongoing program support, are listed on Imagine Canada's website and are licensed to use the Imagine Canada Standards Trustmark signalling that they have demonstrated compliance with the standards.

How We Came To "Be"

- Originally built in 1886 to house Aurora's public school, later known as the Church Street School, the historic building was beautifully restored and re-opened in 2010 as the home of the Church Street School Cultural Centre (operating as the Aurora Cultural Centre). Registered as a charity, the 17,500 square foot community space now provides the finely detailed infrastructure for exhibitions of art and artifacts, concerts, small theatre, community events, educational programs, workshop, facility rentals and more.
- In 2009, in response to a public appeal from the Town of Aurora, residents expressed interest in joining the founding Board of Directors as an independent organization at arm's length from the Town. Ten Aurora residents stepped up to the plate and were confirmed as volunteer Board members with the number increasing at the Annual General Meeting of 2010, to twelve members. The Centre was provided with the Novita Report, adopted by the Town of Aurora in 2008, as a strategy to guide the delivery of cultural services on behalf of the Corporation of the Town of Aurora.
- A core operating grant from the Town of Aurora was established with a five year contract to provide cultural services on behalf of the Town.
- The founding Board was vested with the responsibility of creating a "participatory community cultural centre" from its inception. After becoming incorporated the Board began the search for the founding Executive Director. Laura Schembri was hired in October 2009.
- On January 27, 2010 the doors that had remained closed for eight years re-opened for the Ann Mortimer exhibition: The Great Umbrella Caper where over 400 attendees celebrated.
- The Centre was successfully recognized by the Canada Revenue Agency as a Registered Charity in August 2010.

- Staff was hired and volunteers welcomed in a gradual and carefully planned fashion over the course of 2010. Infrastructure needs from furnishings to technology were evaluated and purchased. Throughout the year a mix of registered programs and free community events were rolled out to welcome the public back in to the schoolhouse. Within a short time we were ramped up and last year, in 2012, the Centre enjoyed over 25,000 visits.
- The stable, core operating funds provided by the Town of Aurora cover operating costs including staffing costs, and allow for the administration of the Centre and provide the security for long term strategies and planning to occur.
- The delivery of programs, concerts and events is supported through registration fees, sales of tickets, occasional sales of art, facility rental revenue, public donations, corporate sponsors, proceeds from fundraising events and substantial volunteer support.
- In order for the Centre to deliver programs, concerts and events it is necessary for the Centre to raise funds from additional sources to supplement the core operating grant. We are grateful for the community support from residents and local businesses received to date.
- 2011 represented the Centre's first full year of programming with staff and infrastructure in place and programs running over a 12 month period.
- In 2012 Council opened the Centre's five year contract early . The Centre and Town representatives held a series of meetings from which a new agreement was formed. Together we created a new fifteen-year Provision of Cultural Services Agreement. The Agreement was signed by Mayor Geoffrey Dawe and President Frank Pulumbarit on March 8, 2013 cementing a strong future of partnership between the two bodies.

"Everyone wants to live in a city that has a great ballet, even if they themselves will never go to the ballet."

Mayor Nenshi, City of Calgary

A Strategy for Success

Creativity in Motion

The Centre's key operational strategy is based on the multipurpose use of spaces within the Centre. As a community cultural centre we are not an art gallery, museum, instructional institution, community event space, lecture, film or concert hall or facility rental venue, yet we provide elements of all, often in new and creative ways.

Modular furnishings on wheels have facilitated a diversity of quick set ups in all spaces, allowing one room to have art on the walls, an instructional class in the centre and public access for viewing to occur simultaneously. A quick turnaround ensures that the same gallery space can hold a public meeting, a musical quartet or a heritage lecture a few hours later. Most exhibitions taking place in the five galleries rotate on a six week basis. No two exhibitions showcase the same mediums back to back. This creates an ever-changing landscape of art and artifacts which provide an enticing reason for visitors to come back frequently.

This approach is used throughout the entire facility and is an inclusive strategy that allows a large number of individuals from children to seniors and a diverse spectrum of organizations such as cultural and community groups, broad access to the Town-owned facility over the course of the year. This optimizes the number of residents and groups who have the opportunity to utilize the Centre and has been a key factor in our success to date as illustrated by the large number of visitors we welcome each year and the growing demand for our services.

Access to Culture – A Place for All

The Centre is committed to program affordability and maximizing public access to the programs and services we provide. Entrance to the Aurora Cultural Centre is free or by donation. In 2012 we brought a significant amount of fine art from all over Ontario to the Centre for visitors to experience at no charge.

Visitors are welcome to purchase a coffee, view multiple galleries of art or artifacts, rest in a sunny spot in cozy chairs or on gallery benches and just take in the ambiance of this beautifully restored heritage building.

In addition, the Centre welcomes the community in to meet artists and to celebrate new works at each exhibition's public opening reception, and provides a wide range of free or by donation community cultural events, including in 2012 the popular heritage lecture series and community sing-alongs.

The strategy of mixing free community events, admission by donation events and registered or ticketed events allows the Centre to provide opportunities for all residents and users of the Centre to participate in accessible and affordable cultural activities, which in turn assists the Town of Aurora in achieving goals identified in the Town's Strategic Plan and to meet expectations identified throughout the Provision of Cultural Services Agreement.

The Cultural Centre is viewed by online survey respondents and stakeholder interviewees as being an accessible place where everyone belongs. Prices are fair and affordable with many low-priced and free options.

Multipurpose space, providing inclusive cultural experiences in an accessible building, with a mix of free, donation and paid-for programming is a significant component of the Centre's operational plan.

2012 Selected Highlights

The Centre had many significant achievements in 2012, including 16 concerts, 68 community events, four seasons of adult and youth programming and eight heritage lectures. Selected highlights include:

- The Centre – and classical musical lovers – were fortunate to be the recipient of Bonnie and Norbert Kraft's sponsorship, management and facilitation of the Great Artist Piano Series concerts and in 2012 the Centre hosted four of these magical evenings to near capacity crowds.
- In 2012 the Centre proudly undertook, with the Town's approval, the restoration of the original 1886 school bell. With input from the Centre's architects the bell was successfully remounted in the belfry and hung with a pulling rope mechanism now located in the front vestibule. The bell which had remained silent for so long was rung again for the first time by His Honour David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario on the occasion of a fundraising event for The Queen's York Rangers.
- The Centre hosted the Pine Tree Potters' sold out Empty Bowls event for the third consecutive year as well as the sold out Humber River Shakespeare Company's A Christmas Carol, which has become a new Aurora family tradition.
- We held fundraising events including Taste of Wine, The Art of Tea and we participated as a recognized charity in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon.
- 2012 saw the Centre's first step into summer programming, demonstrating maturation into an all-season instructional programming facility. These children's half-day programs were hugely popular with waiting lists for some of the sessions. We will be growing our summer programs in 2013 with the assistance of a Young Canada Works grant from the Federal Government.
- Much of our focus in 2012 was working with the Town of Aurora to create the new Provision of Cultural Services Agreement. We successfully concluded negotiations with the signing in early 2013 of a 15 year agreement with the Town of Aurora for the delivery of cultural services. This agreement will enable us to continue the long term planning necessary to continue to provide high-quality programming for all to enjoy.
- The Centre has enjoyed early success having been awarded operational grants, including an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant over three years in partnership with Theatre Starts Inc. to launch the Writers' Springboard playwright program and Ministry of Tourism & Culture Summer Experience grants to hire summer students.

	2012 TOTALS
Art shows	27
Concerts	16
Community events	68
Heritage lectures	8
Instructional programs	58
TOTAL activities to community	**169**
Visits	25,677
Volunteer hours	6,191
Facility rentals	129

Metrics

Key Performance Indicators

In 2009 the Centre was provided with the Novita Report, adopted by the Town of Aurora in 2008, as a strategy to guide the delivery of cultural services on behalf of the Corporation of the Town of Aurora.

A core operating grant from the Town of Aurora was established with a five year contract to provide cultural services on behalf of the Town.

The founding Board was vested with the responsibility of creating a "participatory community cultural centre" from its inception.

The Novita Report directed that the Centre report on four **Key Performance Indicators** (KPIs) annually. In addition, the Centre was to provide *Financial Statements* to the Town quarterly and *Audited Financial Statements* annually, as well as several other documents. Since 2011 the Centre began providing the Town with detailed Managerial Commentaries reporting on the four assigned KPI *quarterly* (rather than annually). The commentaries form a part of the quarterly reporting package and provide insight into the operations of the Centre.

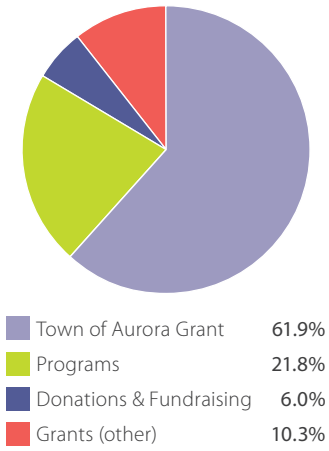
Beginning 2013 the Centre will be working with new key performance indicators which are itemized in the current Provision for Cultural Services Agreement, including customer satisfaction, and numerical measures such as the change in the number of visitors to the Centre annually and program spending as a percentage of total spending, among others. Several of the measures are new, resulting in 2013 being a baseline for the future.

Outreach & Marketing

Given the Centre is a new organization, the staff and Board have made significant strides in making the public aware of the programs and services provided by the Centre. Below is a list of selected outreach activities undertaken to increase public awareness of the Centre which have contributed to the early success of the Centre and continue to attract visitors to the Centre:

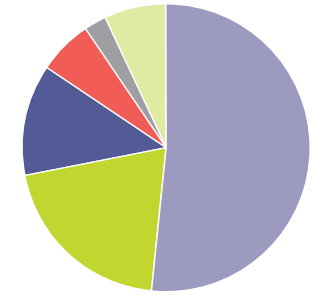
- January 2011: Produced *Highlights*, an 8 page full colour tabloid review celebrating the Centre's achievements of 2010 and distributed this throughout Aurora and selected surrounding municipalities.
- Summer 2011: Aurora Cultural Centre had signs placed on the 400 series highways outside of Aurora.

2012 Total Revenue $576,612



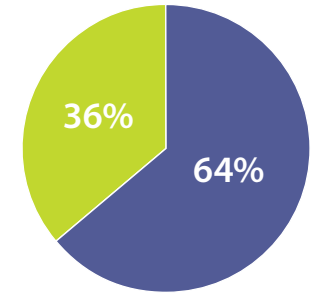
Town of Aurora Grant	61.9%
Programs	21.8%
Donations & Fundraising	6.0%
Grants (other)	10.3%

2012 Total Expenditures $597,789



Salaries and Benefits	51.9%
Programs	20.2%
Professional Fees	12.4%
Office, etc.	6.3%
Fundraising	2.4%
Amortization & other	6.8%

2012 Expenditures of Program expenses vs. Administrative expenses



Program Expenses	$383,266
Administrative Expenses	$214,523

- September 2011: Launched the Centre's first website, a large colourful "calendar" of the many events taking place.

Ongoing:

- The Executive Director and members of the Executive present public reports to Aurora Town Council and answer questions on the Centre's annual budget and activities.
- The Centre welcomes interested Town Councillors to the Centre to answer any questions or concerns they might have individually. As a result, our relationship with the Town has been enhanced and solidified.
- The mail list continues to grow in numbers and includes over 1,600 people who have requested to be kept informed of our activities. In 2011, the Centre began regularly sending out e-blasts of upcoming events, news and volunteer opportunities.
- Our marketing plan consists of information-packed seasonal flyers, often inserted in the local papers, strategic display advertising, e-blasts, regular visits to Rogers TV studios, a myriad of media releases, interviews, a powerful content managed website and encouraging word of mouth promotion as well as the above initiatives.
- Staff regularly conduct potential user tours of the facility all year.

Risks and Challenges

As we are a young non-profit, volunteer-based cultural organization with one major funder to date, our primary identified risk is that the organization is dependant on the core operating grant from the Town of Aurora in order to carry out its day-to-day activities. That said, the challenge of securing and maintaining strong core funding is one shared by most non-profit cultural organizations.

As we grow operations it will be necessary to grow the staff complement in order to properly fulfill our goals as outlined in our Strategic Plan. We are aware of the need to allocate as much of our resources to programming as is fiscally responsible, and to optimize administrative expenditures. We are committed to managing and optimizing these resources today and into the future.

In 2012, the Board created and approved a Risk Management Plan which enables us to continue to identify and manage risks going forward. The Board and staff of the Centre regularly review risks and mitigation strategies in order to safeguard the Centre.

Treasurer's Report

2012 was a challenging yet operationally successful year for the Centre. Early in 2012 we were required to re-focus our efforts on our agreement with the Town of Aurora. As a result, much of the focus and effort of both the Executive Director and the Board throughout the year was spent pursuing a new agreement with the Town.

A long term Provision for Cultural Services Agreement (PCSA) and stable annual core funding from the Town in the form of an annual operating grant is crucial for the future sustainability of the Centre. The operating grant covers the cost of salaries and other overhead costs and allows the Centre to be open to the public six to seven days per week.

Approximately 52% of the Centre's annual operating expenses are for salaries and benefits. In addition, the Centre incurs compliance costs in order to meet the requirements of the Ontario Non-profit Corporations Act and the terms of the PCSA, as well as to meet the filing requirements and other obligations of a Registered Charity.

In order for the Centre to continue its delivery of programs, concerts and events at the current level and to grow its offerings, it is necessary for the Centre to raise funds from other sources to supplement the core operating grant. Our 2012 sponsorship campaign was scheduled to roll out in February 2012; however with the uncertain status of the Centre's contract with the Town we were unable to move forward with that and we had to curtail other fundraising plans. The ensuing uncertainty meant that fundraising opportunities were limited and this presented a significant challenge for the Centre.

Our 2012 budget had been based on generating $95,000 from fundraising and sponsorship activities. We fell short of our goal, but we managed to raise $34,510 through four successful fundraising events and donations and sponsorships from generous supporters. In order to offset the decreased revenue, staff and the Board cut costs in other areas while minimizing the impact on programming wherever possible.

The Centre, having succeeded in securing a 15 year PCSA with the Town beginning in 2013, is now able to dedicate resources to fundraising initiatives that were curtailed in 2012. We have a goal of raising $50,000 in 2013 and the Fundraising Committee of the Board of Directors is overseeing this effort, including the 2013 launch of the "Friends of the Aurora Cultural Centre" Program.

Other revenue sources

2012 saw a 25% increase in program revenue. Our diverse offering of concerts, special events and multi-week programs continue to grow in popularity with all ages. Our prices are fair and affordable with many low-priced and free options so the Centre can continue to be an accessible place where everyone belongs.

The Centre has had some early success obtaining grants from Provincial and Federal granting bodies and will continue to seek further opportunities.

Expenditures

2012 saw a 383% increase in Professional Fees expense over the prior year and much of this increase was directly tied to the need to re-negotiate the agreement with the Town. With this now successfully behind us, it is our hope that this line will see a more realistic operating figure in 2013 and going forward.

Programming expenditures, including amounts spent as required by the terms of a Trillium Grant received were down approximately 4% over the prior year and Office and other administrative expenses were down 3% as the Centre trimmed costs to meet a lower top line.

Including non-cash amortization of $36,096 the Centre had a deficiency of revenues over expenditures of $21,177 for the year which was close to the budgeted deficiency for the year.

Reserves

In 2011 the Board established an operating reserve. This amount remained at $100,000 in 2012. Cultural organizations experience variability in cash flows and the reserve is intended to act as a shock absorber should unforeseen events occur.

2013 Budget

Our 2013 expenditure budget of $568,421 is down 5% from our actual expenditures of $597,789 in 2012. As a non-profit registered charity, the Centre must continue to operate with a close eye on costs in order to maintain fiscal health and reserves while continuing to meet our charitable objectives.

Accountability & Transparency

The Aurora Cultural Centre takes a team approach to the serious business of the governance of the Centre. We appreciate being the recipient of funds from the Town of Aurora and from members of the public and take care to ensure public money is spent with care.

Audited Financial Statements are provided to the Town (along with several other required documents) annually and they are available for the public to access. As well, quarterly financial statements are provided to the Town.

The Centre files a Registered Charity Information Return with the Canada Revenue Agency which provides additional oversight. This information is also available to the public.

The Centre continues to review opportunities to further enhance transparency. In 2013 the Centre's website will include a number of informative documents on Centre operations. The Centre's first public meeting was held on June 12, 2013. These public meetings will be held quarterly and all are welcome to attend, ask questions and learn about what the Centre offers to the community.

Together these steps provide transparency, accountability and oversight of the Centre's financial and operational standing.

Other

The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants developed new accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. The Centre adopted these new standards in 2012. There was no impact on our reported results as a result of adoption of these new standards.

Heidi Franken

Treasurer – June 2013

Statement of Financial Position (as at December 31, 2012)

	2012	2011
ASSETS	**$**	**$**
Current Assets		
Cash	295,144	253,423
Amounts receivable	30,075	18,513
Prepaid expenses	4,099	6,089
Subtotal	**329,318**	**278,025**
Capital Assets	93,021	85,367
	422,339	**363,392**

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	**$**	**$**
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable & accruals	28,966	26,936
Revenues received in advance	9,307	12,180
Deferred grants	109,930	19,332
	148,203	**58,448**
Deferred contributions	22,800	32,431
Subtotal	**171,003**	**90,879**
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	52,248	101,088
Internally restricted	128,867	118,489
Invested in capital assets	70,221	52,936
Subtotal	**251,336**	**272,513**
	422,339	**363,392**

The Statement of Financial Position and the Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets are reproduced in the Annual Report as they appear in the audited financial statements. The audited financial statements are available on the Centre's website.

Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets

	Dec. 31, 2012	Dec. 31, 2011	Budgeted 2013
REVENUE	**$**	**$**	**$**
Grants – Town of Aurora Operating	356,852	346,460	370,000
Grants – other	59,712	39,795	26,100
Programs	125,538	100,757	115,000
Fundraising, donations, sponsorships	34,510	40,348	50,821
Other	—	—	6,500
	576,612	**527,360**	**568,421**
EXPENDITURES	**$**	**$**	**$**
Salaries and benefits	310,314	282,766	325,309
Programs	95,547	117,560	110,625
Amortization	36,096	24,694	— *
Office, telephone, equipment, lease, bank charges	37,750	40,835	40,200
Professional fees	73,890	15,291	51,787
Fundraising	14,291	13,352	9,000
Trillium grant (programs)	24,915	8,168	26,100
Insurance	4,986	3,380	5,400
	597,789	**506,046**	**568,421**
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenditures for the year	**(21,177)**	**21,314**	**0**
Net assets, beginning of year	**272,513**	**251,199**	
Net assets, end of year	**251,336**	**272,513**	

The Statement of Financial Position and the Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets are reproduced in the Annual Report as they appear in the audited financial statements. Budgeted figures for 2013 have been added for comparative purposes. To view the complete audited statements and accompanying notes visit **www.auroraculturalcentre.ca**

*Does not include amortization.

Thank you to our 2011 – 2012 Major Donors!

Donors large and small are very important to the Centre and we value all contributions. Thank you to individuals and local businesses who supported the Centre in 2012.

80 of 88 piano keys have now been "sold". Soon the donor plaque will be placed in Brevik Hall near our beautiful grand piano. Thank you to those who have so generously participated.

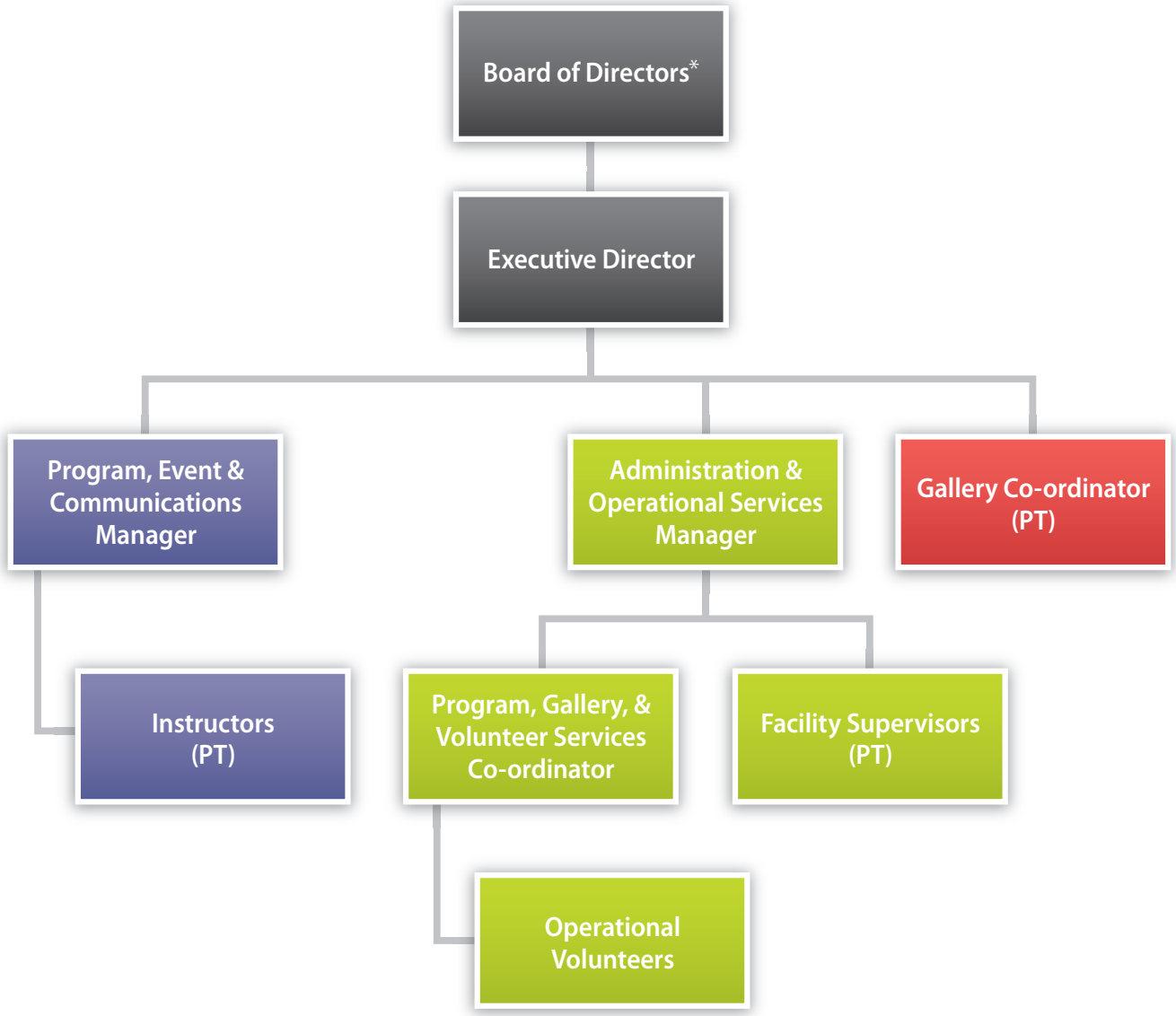
Thank you to Major Donors and Sponsors:

- Town of Aurora, providing annual operating grant;
- Ontario Trillium Foundation, 3 year collaborative grant with Theatre Starts Inc.;
- Bonnie & Norbert Kraft, sponsors of The Great Artist Piano Series;
- Apple Suites, sponsors of the Oktoberfest Dance and Victorian Christmas Afternoon celebrations

Thank you also to Yonge Street Winery and Chris Price for contributing to our Taste of Wine fundraisers, and Pine Tree Potters for their continued support.

Organizational Structure & Leadership

Our Team



*12 Directors. Beginning August 2011 Mayor Geoff Dawe was invited to attend Board Meetings. Two Town of Aurora Councillors are invited to join the Board at the Town's discretion.

Our Operational Volunteers – Sharing & Caring Hands

60+ volunteers of all ages assist with the operation of the Centre and in 2012 provided 1,846 hours of volunteer time. From administrative work, to assisting with the hanging of art exhibitions, being the welcoming face on reception every afternoon, taking tickets at concerts, donating skills and services; our volunteers are the best and have allowed the Centre to immediately flourish! The value of volunteer service can never be over-estimated and is most often under-estimated. Although the Centre has estimated the value of volunteer hours at the Centre to be close to $100,000 in 2012, we know the true value is actually much greater.

The Centre simply could not operate at the current level without the support of our hard working, dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers. Thank you all!

Staff – Creative, Hard Working and Inspired!

We have a small staff of creative and hardworking individuals who are passionate about their work. We have four full time professional staff that operate the Centre. The Executive Director reports directly to the Board, attends all Board meetings and is included in all committee meetings where possible. The ED is responsible to ensure that the directions of the Strategic Plan are put into action. The operations of the Centre are driven by an inclusive decision making process in a unique team environment where staff are inspired to take on multiple roles and responsibilities. In addition, there are currently three part time staff who are also a valued part of the team.

Feedback from stakeholder interviews undertaken in 2012 showed recognition and admiration for the way staff have built such successful programs and services within a tight budget in such a short period of time. Staff were found to be ... "customer focused", "welcoming", "professional", "dedicated", "responsive", "flexible" and open to new ideas and community outreach. Our small team wear many hats and are extremely dedicated, responsive and always enthusiastic.

Our Creative Partners – The Team beyond Staff & Board

The Centre has been extremely fortunate to work with an array of talented, creative and sharing artists, artist instructors, writers, writer instructors, potters, musicians, musician instructors, photographers, photographer instructors, historians, film makers, actors and lecturers. All of whom have enriched the Centre and the lives of those they have reached. In a very short time the Centre has amassed an enviable record of excellence in the creative partners with whom we have the pleasure of working.

Governance

The Board of Directors are responsible for high level governance, direction and policy creation. Within the Board are several committees providing planning and oversight of their areas of responsibility. The Board meets monthly and committees as required (often several times a month).

The Board of Directors are all residents of Aurora and are volunteers who do not receive remuneration for their hard work on behalf of the Centre. They dedicate their time for a two-year term of office and may be re-elected up to a maximum of six years at which time they are welcomed to volunteer in other ways, or simply to take a well earned rest. Prior to the Annual General Meeting an ad is placed in local newspapers, an e-blast sent to our large mailing list, and the call for Directors is posted on our website and other relevant sites to identify potential candidates to join the Board.

All Directors sign a CONSENT TO ACT AS DIRECTOR & ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES agreement, a DIRECTOR's CONFIDENTIALITY agreement, and a DIRECTOR'S CONTRACT pledging to accept the fiduciary responsibility of the position and to work in the best interests of the Aurora Cultural Centre. Each Director is completely committed and is expected to attend monthly Board meetings, sit on at least one committee, to participate in fundraising and to attend Centre events as available.

The recorded governance volunteer hours donated by the Board of Directors for 2011 and 2012 is an impressive 8,745 hours. The Centre is incredibly fortunate to have such dedicated and hard working Directors. Thank you to each and every one – present and past – for all you have done to set the foundation of this organization. It has been hard work, but it is paying off beautifully!

Our current Board of Directors

Frank Pulumbarit, Hon.B.Sc., MBA
PRESIDENT

Frank is the Managing Principal of FPConsulting Group, a leading digital media and technology consulting company, founded in 2004. Frank's clients include global fortune 500 companies such as Cineplex Entertainment, Astral Media, Rogers, Scotiabank, CBC, RIM, PepsiCo, Toronto International Film Festival and many others. Internationally published, Frank has held executive leadership positions including VP, International at Kobo, SVP, Solutions at Syncapse, VP, Interactive (consulting role) at Cineplex, VP, Interactive at Alliance Atlantis, as well as Creative Director IBM Interactive and Director, New Media at Sony Music.

Frank holds a Masters of Business Administration degree from McMaster University and an Honours Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Western Ontario.

Frank joined the Centre's Board in 2010, and has lived in Aurora with his wife Lara and two daughters, Sophie and Lia, since 2005.

Bonnie Silver-Kraft, B.MUS, A.R.C.T.
VICE PRESIDENT

Bonnie is an internationally respected producer and editor of classical music CD's. Recognized as one of the top producers in the classical music field, she was awarded a Grammy in 2010 for music production, and has had 3 Grammy nominations. As North American Artist and Repertoire Consultant for Naxos Records, she has introduced some of Canada's finest classical musicians to the international CD market. Her career has included being a busy performer, teacher, examiner, administrator, and she has served on juries for government granting bodies. She has volunteered for cultural organizations since 1984. In 2012 Bonnie was awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Bonnie is a founding Director of the Centre and is a member of the Executive Committee and Chair of the Joint Initiatives Committee.

Heidi Franken, CPA, CA
TREASURER

Heidi joined the Aurora Cultural Centre Board in October 2010 and has served as Treasurer and as a member of the Executive Committee since that time. She is also Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee.

Heidi is a Senior Accountant in the Corporate Finance Branch at the Ontario Securities Commission. Prior to joining the OSC, Heidi completed her Chartered Accountant designation with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario and worked in the audit practice at PWC where she managed audit engagements for both corporate and non-profit clients. She brings her knowledge and experience with best practices in financial reporting and corporate governance to her role at the Centre.

She holds an Honours Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Brock University. Heidi has lived in Aurora for 10 years and is proud to support the Centre and help it continue to be an exciting and welcoming community hub.

Karin Allan, B.Ed., ECE
SECRETARY

Karin has been a resident of Aurora for seventeen years. She is a Retired Elementary teacher. Her love of the arts and working in the community is evident in the enthusiasm with which she embraces all she does. Karin joined the Board in 2010 and currently serves as the Secretary of the Board. She is a member of the Executive Committee and Co Chair of the Fund Development Committee.

Craig Mather, BSc., Eng.
DIRECTOR

Craig served as the CAO for the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority from 1992 to 2003 with a staff of 250. He is the Province of Ontario appointee to the International Joint Commission's Water Quality

Board, former National Director of the Canadian Water Resource Association, and former Director on the Board of the Toronto Centre for the Arts. Craig is Chair of the Governance Committee.

Shirley Russell
DIRECTOR

Shirley is a Real Estate Broker originally from Ireland and a resident of Aurora for 17 years. Shirley was part of the first group of townsfolk involved in brainstorming sessions at the Centre's inception. As a local realtor she has many opportunities to meet new people moving into town and as part of her welcome package she always informs them about the wonderful Cultural Centre they have at their disposal. Shirley is a member of the Governance Committee.

Levon Yazejian, CGA
DIRECTOR

Levon is a Certified General Accountant who was the Director of Audit for a major retailer/distributor in Ontario. He has done extensive volunteer work in Canada for charitable, cultural, educational and NGO organizations. Levon is a member of the Centre's Finance and Audit Committee.

William (Bill) Jones, B.A.
DIRECTOR

Bill is a graduate of The University of Western Ontario, with more than 15 years of senior business development experience with Fortune 500 companies and relationship management expertise in the private and non-profit sectors.

He is experienced in all aspects of philanthropic fund development in post-secondary education and arts and culture, including major gift solicitation, campaign management, community and alumni relations, volunteer board management, corporate sponsorship, affinity group marketing and event management.

Bill is attracted to the neighbourhoods surrounding downtown Aurora. He recently relocated to a heritage property and is delighted to experience all that living in Aurora has to offer. Of particular interest is the transformative role that arts and culture organizations play in creative, vibrant and healthy communities. Bill is the Co Chair of the Fund Development Committee.

Janet Thacker, Hon. BSc., B.Ed
DIRECTOR

Janet is new to Aurora in the last year from Toronto and has retired as Administrator from the Etobicoke School of the Arts. Janet is a member of both the Governance and Fundraising Committees.

Robert Keen, RPF
DIRECTOR

Rob is a Registered Professional Forester who has been a member of the Ontario Professional Foresters Association since 1985, where he served as Vice President for two terms. He was Chair of the Algonquin Forestry Authority, Director for Maple Leaves Forever and Director on the Board of the Ontario Forestry Association for 10 years and President for 2 years.

Rob is currently CEO of Trees Ontario, a not-for-profit charity with a mandate to enhance settled landscapes through the support and promotion of forest restoration. Rob is a member of the Governance Committee.

Graham Woodward, BSc, MSc
DIRECTOR

Graham is Director of Clinical Programs at Ontario Renal Network and a member of the Finance and Audit Committee.

The Board currently has three standing committees; the Finance and Audit Committee, the Governance Committee, and the Fund Development Committee.

Finance and Audit Committee

The Finance and Audit Committee meets regularly with the Executive Director and provides strict oversight by closely monitoring the Centre's financial health. The committee assists the Board of Directors in fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities by overseeing the financial reporting processes, internal control systems which management and the Board have established, and coordinating communication between the Board and external auditors. The Town of Aurora receives quarterly financial reports, keeping them up to date with knowledge of our financial standing on a regular basis and the Centre makes available its annual audited financial statements on its website.

The Governance Committee

The Governance Committee has been charged with formally creating the policies which will guide the governance of the Centre. The Committee ensures that appropriate policies, procedures and systems are in place to manage risk, optimise operational performance and maintain high stands of ethical behaviour and legal compliance.

The Fund Development Committee

The Fund Development Committee conducts and oversees fundraising activities, sponsorship and donor opportunities on behalf of the Centre. The Committee's new fundraising plan has been approved by the Centre's Board and rolls out mid-2013.

Outlook for the Future

Strategic Priorities

Our 2013 – 2015 Strategic Plan outlines the Centre's five key goals:

1. Deliver high-quality arts, culture and heritage programs that are diverse, accessible and appealing to multiple audiences

2. Establish and sustain long term collaborative partnerships and relationships with our stakeholders

3. Secure sufficient resources to achieve the goals defined by our strategic plan, in order to contribute more fully to the well-being of our community

4. Be a respected role model for a well-managed organization demonstrating best practices in transparency, accountability and good governance to our customers, stakeholders, staff and donors

5. Be recognized by Aurora and our neighbouring communities as a vibrant and accessible centre of cultural and social activity

Outlook for the Future

The Aurora Cultural Centre will implement the strategic plan by assigning responsibilities to appropriate committees and staff, and working towards the vision. The Board of Directors and Executive Director will champion the plan, offering support to staff to ensure that the Centre's goals are achieved over the three-year period. As implementation of the plan progresses, key performance indicators will be tracked to measure and report progress. A copy of the Strategic Plan is available at **www.auroraculturalcentre.ca**

Accompanying the Strategic Plan is the Centre's new Fund Development Plan 2013–2014. This plan has been reviewed by Centre staff and Board and is consistent with the Strategic Plan and the Provision of Cultural Services Agreement. It recognizes the embryonic nature of the Centre's early fundraising activities and provides a course of action for building a comprehensive fund development program over time, including in 2013 the launch of the Friends of the Aurora Cultural Centre Program.

With three robust leading documents approved (Provision of Cultural Services Agreement, Strategic Plan, Fund Development Plan) as well as an Imagine Canada accredited slate of policies, the Centre is well-positioned to move forward with confidence.

Early indicators demonstrate a strong community appetite for the experiences we have been offering. The Centre's professional staff and dedicated Board of Directors, assisted by community volunteers and partners will be working diligently to grow our self generated, earned revenue.

The annual core funding provided by the Town of Aurora allows the Centre the ability and stability required to grow additional streams of revenue. As those streams grow, the Centre will funnel more significant funds back to the community through increased programming and a mix of free and affordable cultural experiences. Continued support from the Town of Aurora, combined with Centre fundraising initiatives, sponsorship programs, granting successes and development of programs will fuel the growth of the Aurora Cultural Centre and ensure our future.

With this will come enhanced, inclusive cultural programming, economic drivers for the downtown and the maturing of a valued community institution.

Summary

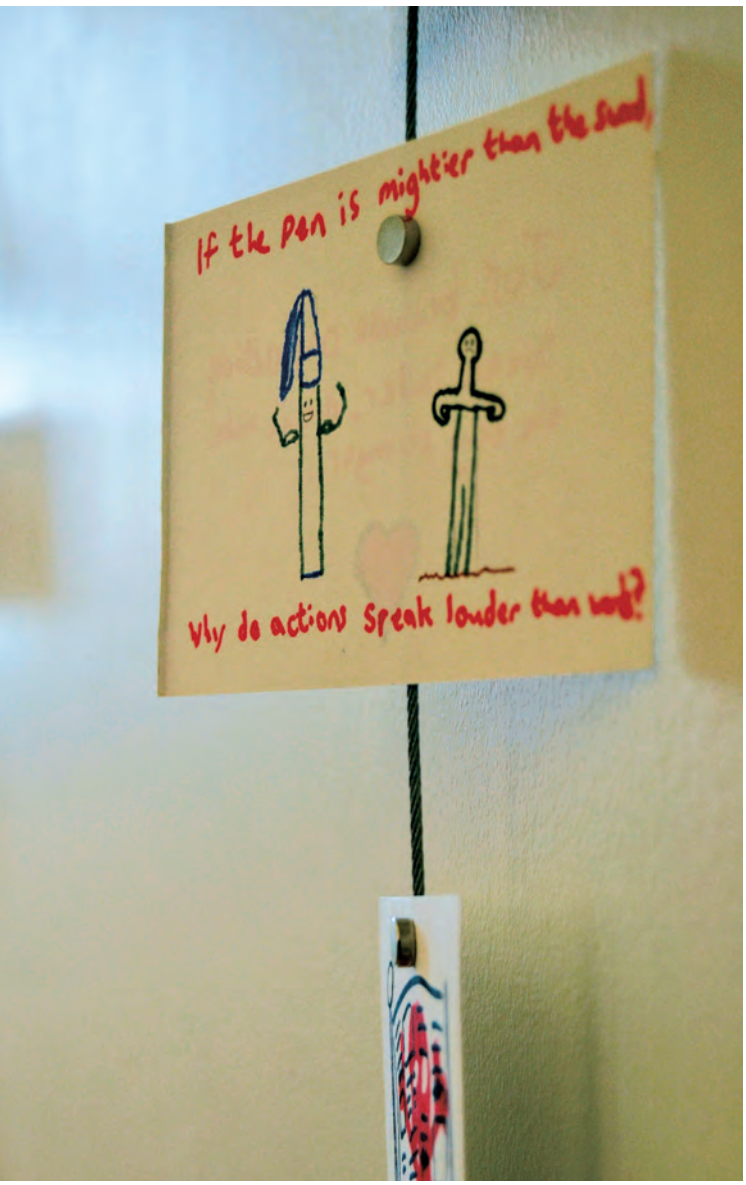
With the continued support of The Town of Aurora and a strong governance and operational foundation in place, the Aurora Cultural Centre is well-positioned to positively contribute to Aurora life, and to the long-term success of our town. We welcome all who come through our doors and are always interested in receiving feedback and ideas. We encourage people to visit our website often to be informed about the many activities, programs, concerts, lectures, films, dances, classes, displays etc., that form the ever-changing landscape of the Aurora Cultural Centre. Be Engaged! Be Inspired! Join us as a volunteer or a visitor. You are assured of a warm welcome.

Laura Schembri

Executive Director – June 2013

"I think the word **"culture"** needs to be stretched as wide as it can without causing injury. Given that culture pervades almost every part of our lives, we do ourselves and our communities a disservice by making it synonymous with—only—the ballet, say, or a piece of art in a museum... **We define culture as everything** from great literature to amateur sports to new media to political ads to Anne Murray."

Jian Ghomeshi: Host and Co-creator, CBC Q



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