

Church Street School Cultural Centre – operating as the Aurora Cultural Centre

Executive Director's Q1 2013 Managerial Commentary

Intended to accompany the Centre's January to March 2013 First Quarter financial statements.

Highlights – 2013 First Quarter

- *19 Instructional Programs Running*
- *6,262 Visits*
- *582 Operational Volunteer Hours*
- *1,125 Governance Volunteer Hours*
- *39 Facility Rental Bookings*
- *7 Town of Aurora Facility Bookings*

June 14, 2013

PROGRAMMING Q1 2013 TOTAL Q1 Programs = 51

We are continuing to increase our programs while managing growth with responsible use of operating funds.

Art Exhibitions Q1 = 8

Exhibitions of art at the Centre showcase the work of national, regional and local established artists as well as local high school artists and vibrant community art shows. Exhibitions are changed approximately every six weeks and present a wide variety of mediums such as textile, clay, photography, acrylic, watercolour, pastel, sculpture etc...

January 17 – January 18 Aurora High School Grad Exhibition	Red, Blue, Great Hall, Reception & Aurora Room Galleries
January 20 – Feb 4 SOYRA Show & Sale	Red, Blue, Reception, Great Hall Galleries
Jan 21 – Feb 3 G. W Williams High School: GRADS 2013 Exhibition	Aurora Room Gallery
Feb 4 – April 8 Fireworks: FUSION Travelling Exhibition	Red, Blue Galleries
Feb 4 – April 8 Northern Star Collective: Passage	Aurora Room and Great Hall Galleries
Feb 6 – March 11 Photo Gallery Program: David Kempton	Reception Galleries
March 12 – April 13 Photo Gallery Program: Karen Merk	Reception Gallery
Feb 6 – April 14 The Instructors' Series	Reception Gallery East Wall

Heritage Displays of Artifacts Q1 = 3

The Aurora Historical Society has a glass case for the display of artifacts from The Aurora Collection located at the front reception desk area. It is the Society who is responsible for refreshing the display. As well, the Centre has developed our "Community as Curator" program where Aurora citizens, organizations and businesses are invited to display their artifacts and collections throughout the year at the Centre, also at the front reception area.

January – May 6 Priestly Demolition – The Evolution of a Local Entrepreneur	Community as Curator Reception Display Case
January – May Aurora Through the Decades	<i>Aurora Historical Society</i> Reception Display Case
January – to date Church Street School memorabilia	<i>Aurora Historical Society</i> Library Room Display

Concerts Q1 = 6

The Centre is in the process of growing our concert series and is committed to presenting a variety of styles of music to the community. In Q1 we offered classical, indie, pop, folk and a children’s concert. All very well received.

January 25 Indie Concert: <i>A Sheard, Wendellful Delight</i> (John Sheard, Wendell Ferguson)
February 1 Great Artist Piano Series: <i>Chu-Fang Huang</i>
February 2 SchoolHOUSE Concert Series: <i>Duffy & Ebata</i>
March 8 Great Artist Classical Piano Series: <i>Seiler Piano Trio</i>
March 9 Family Concert: <i>Chris McKhool’s Fiddelfire Children’s Show</i>
March 23 SchoolHOUSE Concert Series: <i>Memories Unplugged</i>

Special Community Events = 13

Community events are initiated by the Centre, partnered by the Centre with other groups, or the Centre provides the location for a community event facility rental. However it comes about, a community event always welcomes the community into the facility for a special activity; often at no charge.

January 9 Aurora High School Grads, RECEPTION
January 19 Aurora’s Indoor Farmers Market and Artisan Fair (rental)
January 26 SOYRA Show & Sale, RECEPTION
January 26 G.W. Williams High School exhibition, RECEPTION
February 7 – 10 Theatre Starts: Writers’ Springboard (rental)
February 20 Fireworks Artist Talk: Keith Campbell (sponsored by Pine Tree Potters)
February 23 Aurora’s Indoor Farmers Market and Artisan Fair (rental)
March 2 Passages exhibition, RECEPTION
March 5 Gesture Drawing workshop – 40 students from Aurora High School & Sacred Heart High School (rental)
March 12 “Bugs & Buds” free community March Break activity
March 18 Frank Klee’s Conservative Association Annual General Meeting (rental)
March 23 Aurora’s Indoor Farmers Market and Artisan Fair (rental)
March 27 & 28 300 High School students from throughout York Region: Poetry Slam event (rental)

Heritage Lectures = 2

This little series has developed a loyal following of people who come out each month to learn about local history and other heritage topics. Admission is by donation.

January 16 A Virtual Tour of the Aurora Cemetery	With Jacqueline Stuart
March 20 "Hidden Gems in Plain Sight"	With Fred Flood

Winter Instructional Arts Programs = 19

The Centre is committed to providing a slate of core artistic instructional programs – the type of which would typically be expected to be offered at most art galleries or cultural centres such as ours. Beyond the core we introduce new programs each session to see what the community is interested in exploring. Our newest additions for Q1 were ukulele and group singing classes, as well as wood carving, a semi-abstract workshop and the 150th March Break workshops.

Beginning Group Guitar 8 weeks	Ages 16+
Drawing, Sketching & More 8 weeks	Ages 16+
Expressive Acrylics Level 1 8 weeks	Ages 16+
Expand Your Horizons in Acrylics Level 2 8 weeks	Ages 16+
Small Group Guitar 8 weeks	Ages 16+
The Colours of Snow Watercolours – daytime class 8 weeks	Ages 16+
The Colours of Snow Watercolours – evening class 8 weeks	Ages 16+
Wood Carving 8 weeks	Ages 16+
Ukulele for Beginnings 4 weeks	Ages 16+
Ukulele Level 2 – The Songwriter Series 4 weeks	Ages 16+
Moving from Realism to Semi-Abstract Acrylics Workshop	Ages 16+
Harmonise: Group Singing 8 weeks	Ages 16+
Cartooning & Anime 8 weeks	Ages 6 – 12
Drawing & Painting for the Passionate Young Artist 8 weeks	Ages 11 – 14
Young Artist Studio 8 weeks	Ages 4 - 6
Mixed Media Fun 8 weeks	Ages 7 – 10
My Aurora 150 Years 150 Youth -- Photography March Break Workshop	Ages 7 – 10
My Aurora 150 Years 150 Youth -- Photography March Break Workshop	Ages 11 – 15
My Aurora 150 years 150 Youth -- Creative Writing March Break Workshop	Ages 11 - 15

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION Q1

Community participation flows through everything that happens at the Centre. With **6,262** visits in the first three months of 2013 it is clear that the community is actively engaged with the Centre.

The first quarter of 2013 offered some inspiring community engagements of note:

- While teachers were not participating in extra-curricular activities, the Centre assisted students from Aurora High and GW Williams high schools to organize their own class art exhibitions which would have otherwise been cancelled. The students ran with the opportunity and designed, hung and presented their own shows for their family and peers.
- The FUSION travelling exhibition brought a nationally touring show of ceramics and glass to the Centre. We partnered with Pine Tree Potters to provide our first docent program and PTP sponsored an artist talk which we were therefore then able to present to the community at no charge.
- We hosted our first Chinese artist collective which included a traditional ribbon cutting ceremony. This exhibition provided wonderful insight into the experience of the artists' transitions from China to North America in a show entitled: *Passage*. MP Lois Brown in attendance.
- We were able to honour a long time, family run business by showcasing the *Priestly Demolition* artifacts in our *Community as Curator* display case.
- The diversity of our musical concerts is being very well received. In Q1 we saw die-hard classical piano concert-goers also attend a sold out John Sheard and Wendell Ferguson show – a concert of a completely different genre.
- For the first time, high school art classes from the public school system and the Catholic system came together at the Centre to participate in a collaborative gesture drawing workshop. Brevik Hall was full of 40 students, each working with an easel and drawing from a live model.
- Our "Bugs & Buds" free March Break creative community program brought together young artist volunteers and 170 members of the community – of all generations – creating together during March Break.
- 300 High School students from all over York Region gathered at the Centre over two days to participate in a regional *Poetry Slam* event. They created individual poems, spoken word teams and rap groups and presented to their peers at the end of each day.
- Fred Flood's Heritage Lecture brought an almost entirely new audience out to the lecture series.
- Our instructional programs continue to provide a welcoming gathering point for those who love to create.
- We are seeing more repeat clients as facility bookings. They tell us they love the artistic environment with its changing exhibitions and of course, our responsive staff.

OUR VOLUNTEERS Q1

Volunteers are another important measure of community participation at the Centre. Our volunteers donate thousands of hours of their time. All ages offer to volunteer at the Centre in operations; including couples and families volunteering together. We are always happy to welcome more people to our volunteer team. We offer a thorough orientation and interesting volunteer opportunities. Our Board of Directors, and citizens sitting on occasional ad hoc committees donate a huge number of hours to the governance of the Centre. We simply could not operate the Centre without our dedicated volunteer force.

VOLUNTEERS donated a TOTAL of 1,704 hours January to March 2013

Operational Volunteers TOTAL hours donated Q1	582.5 hours (not including Board Of Directors)
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Governance Volunteers Board of Directors (12 members + Mayor Dawe) TOTAL hours donated Q1	1,121.5 hours
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FACILITY RENTALS – AN INDICATOR OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION Q1

Facility Rentals bring large numbers of diverse community groups and organizations to the Centre where we are able to further engage them with culture. We are seeing more and more return bookings from happy users.

- Facility Rentals = 32* bookings Q1
*These are in addition to the seven rentals noted in the **Community Events** section of this report.

Some interesting bookings of note in Q1 were:

- Book Launch by local artist
- Pre-Budget Community Consultation, Lois Brown MP
- Spotlight Theatre School recital
- Ontario Trillium Foundation Community Outreach and Information Session
- York Region Food Network, fundraiser event
- York Region District School Board, All Day Candidate Interviews
- Newmarket Aurora PC Association, AGM, Frank Klees, MPP
- S-Trip, Student/Parent Information Night
- York Region District School Board, 2 day student poetry slam

... and of course our regular monthly bookings for SOYRA, Region of York Quilters, Aurora Community Band.

PARTNERSHIPS Q1

Partnerships are an integral programming component for the Centre.

In the first three months of 2013 we have worked in partnership with:

- Aurora High School
- Town of Aurora
- Aurora Farmers' Market
- York Region Arts Council
- Aurora Community Band
- Aurora Historical Society
- Trillium Foundation
- Theatre Starts Inc
- artists, writers, performers, lecturers
- Sacred Heart High School
- Society of York Region Artists (SOYRA)
- Pine Tree Potters
- Dr. G. W. Williams High School
- York Region District School Board

FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES Q1

The Fund Development Committee of the Board of Directors has spent several months researching and preparing a detailed activity plan for the Centre's upcoming Fund Development Program for 2013 and 2014. This multi-layered approach to fundraising is ambitious and we look forward to rolling it out in the coming months.

SUMMATION

The Centre is being accessed and well used by a diverse cross-section of our community; not just in the form of a wide group from the arts & culture sector, but also by varying ages, genders and ethnicity.

Laura Schembri
Executive Director
Aurora Cultural Centre

June 14, 2013