

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

Executive Director's Q2 2013 Managerial Commentary

Intended to accompany the Centre's April to June 2013 Second Quarter financial statements.

Highlights – 2013 Second Quarter

- 18 Instructional Programs Running during Q2
- 6,696 Visits during Q2
- 298.5 Operational Volunteer Hours during Q2
- 758.5 Governance Volunteer Hours
- 77 Facility Rentals during Q2
- Town of Aurora – Aurora Room June 18 – Nov 8/13
- One of 24 non-profit organizations across Canada to be granted approval to use the Imagine Canada Trustmark



September 13, 2013

PROGRAMMING Q2 2013 TOTAL Q2 Programs = 51

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

Art Exhibitions Q2 = 4 [12 to end June]

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 frequently and present a wide variety of mediums such as textile, clay, photography, acrylic, watercolour, pastel, sculpture etc...

In Q2 we were thrilled to host York Region's own, internationally recognized acrylic artist, *Ernestine Tahedl* with her huge paintings filling most of the Centre. Art Cures' *Mentorship in Motion* brought established artists together with young artists facing challenges, and Karen Merk's *Portraits of Giving* showcased philanthropists from throughout York Region. *Melinda's Room* was a very special and intimate celebration of Melinda Tomlinson; creative artist, writer, craftsperson who also suffered from severe Bipolar Disorder.

Watch for more exciting exhibitions during the last half of 2013 as we continue to inspire and educate our visitors!

April 15 – June 18 Ernestine Tahedl: <i>Terra Incognita</i>	Red, Blue, Great Hall, Reception Galleries
April 9 – April 20 Art Cures: <i>Mentorship in Motion</i>	Aurora Room Gallery
April 28 – June 17 Deirdre & David Tomlinson: <i>Melinda's Room</i>	Aurora Room Gallery
June 17 – July 22 Karen Merk: <i>Portraits of Giving</i>	Red Gallery

Heritage Displays of Artifacts Q2 = 3 [6 to end June]

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 front reception area.

Beginning January 2014 the Aurora Room Gallery will be devoted solely to the display of artifacts from The Aurora Collection. To assist the Town of Aurora in its 150th birthday celebrations, the Centre cancelled activities previously planned for the Aurora Room and enthusiastically switched gears to work with the Aurora Historical Society and the Town in order that a special Sesquicentennial display of artifacts could be presented from June 19 to November 18th this year.

May 6 – August 27 125 Years of Double Blue: Aurora's First High School Through the Decades - Artifact Display	Community as Curator: <i>Dr. G. W. Williams Secondary School</i> Reception Display Case
June 1 – date Aurora Historical Society – 50 Years of Heritage	<i>Aurora Historical Society</i> Reception Display Case
January – to date Church Street School Artifacts	<i>Aurora Historical Society</i> Library Room Display
June 19 – November 8 Aurora Collects: Revealing 150 Years of our Shared History	<i>Town of Aurora & Aurora Historical Society</i> Aurora Room Gallery

Concerts Q2 =3 [9 to end June]

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 Q2 we offered classical and blue grass concerts. All very well received.

Watch for an exciting line up of all genres of music occurring in the last half of 2013!

April 12 Great Artist Classical Piano Series: <i>Bax & Chung</i>
April 19 Blue Grass concert: <i>The Foggy Hogg Town Boys</i>
May 31 Great Artist Classical Piano Series: <i>William Wolfram</i>

Special Community Events = 14 [27 to end June]

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.

April 14 Art Cures: <i>Passport to Wellness</i> (rental)
April 20 Art Cures: <i>Mentorship in Motion</i> public RECEPTION with artists
April 25 Multi-Media Film Festival of York Region media launch
April 27 Ernestine Tahedl: <i>Terra Incognita</i> exhibition, public RECEPTION with artist
May 2 - 5 Pine Tree Potters: <i>Spring Show & Sale</i> (rental)
May 4 <i>Art of Tea</i> : Cultural Centre Fundraising event
May 8 Ernestine Tahedl: <i>Modern Acrylics for Artists</i> one day workshop
May 9 - 12 Theatre Starts: Writers' Springboard Spring Readings (Trillium Partner rental)
May 11 Ernestine Tahedl Bravo film showing: <i>An Artist's Life</i> followed by walk & talk with the artist
May 18 David & Deirdre Tomlinson: <i>Melinda's Room</i> public RECEPTION with Tomlinsons
June 2 Yonge Street Festival participation outreach, and Centre open
June 6 D Day: <i>We'll Meet Again</i> Community Sing-along with the Silver Stars
June 22 Aurora Horticultural and Garden Society Annual Flower show (rental)
June 23 Aurora Community Band Spring Concert (rental)

Heritage Lectures = **1** [3 to end June]

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.

April 17 Making of a Centre: Adapting our Heritage for Relevancy Tomorrow	With Mary Ellen Lynch-Comisso
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Spring Instructional Arts Programs = 12 [31 to end June]

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.

Small Group Guitar: Second Verse 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+
The Signs of Spring Watercolours – daytime class 8 weeks	Ages 16+
Ukulele for Beginnings 4 weeks	Ages 16+
Ukulele Level 2: The Songwriter Series 4 weeks	Ages 16+
Creating Impact with Your Photos 8 weeks	Ages 16+
Experimenting in the Medium of Acrylics Workshop	Ages 16+
Cartooning & Anime 8 weeks	Ages 6 – 12
Young Artist Studio 8 weeks	Ages 4 - 6
Mixed Media Fun 8 weeks	Ages 7 – 10

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION Q2

Community participation flows through everything that happens at the Centre.

*With **6,696** visits in the Second Quarter of 2013, and **12,958** visits January to end June this year, it is clear that the community is actively engaged with the Centre.*

The second quarter of 2013 offered some inspiring community engagements of note. Here is just a taste!

- In April we enjoyed full houses for two completely different types of musical events— a beautiful classical piano duo and the down home sounds of blue grass. The opening reception for King City resident and internationally respected artist, Ernestine Tahedl brought a large number of guests, among them representatives of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, The Varley Art Gallery, The Austrian Consulate as well as several well known Canadian artists.
- In May a very special evening with David and Deirdre Tomlinson and family was held as *Melinda's Room* opened to the community. This exhibition facilitated a community-wide discussion on mental health issues that was important for the Centre to help facilitate. Our annual Tea event saw guests in colourful dresses, hats and fans enjoy several tastings of tea and sweets from our partner Bonsai Hill Tea House. The Aurora screenings of the winning entries from the Multi Media Film Festival of York Region brought young film makers and viewers together to explore issues raised in the films. Our Ontario Trillium Foundation grant partner Theatre Starts, presented their Writers' Springboard program over three days celebrating and mentoring Canadian playwrights. Our final classical concert brought the season to a dramatic end with the powerful playing of William Wolfram.
- In June we "took it to the streets" as the Centre participated in the annual Yonge Street Festival. On the anniversary of D Day a full house of seniors, care-givers and community recognized the momentous time in history with a brief talk followed by what is becoming a beloved annual event of a community sing-along with the Aurora Silver Stars, singing the songs of the 1930's and 40's. We also held our first Public Meeting on June 12 where the Board of Directors invited the public to participate in an information session where we discussed budget, financials, events and opened the floor for a Q & A session. On June 27th we "took it to the Market" with a booth providing free children's activities while we promoted our upcoming summer programs.
- Q2 also saw several community piano recitals, a spring concert by the Aurora Community Band, end of year performances by Roger White Academy and Spotlight Theatre, annual flower show by the Aurora Horticultural Society, repeat bookings by various departments of the Region of York and several local non-profit groups, a heritage lecture, Passport to Wellness, Portraits of Giving, Mentorship in Motion, a jam packed art gallery program and of course, our spring instructional programs for children, youth and adults.

OUR VOLUNTEERS Q2

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 1,057 hours April to June 2013 [2,761 hrs donated to end June]

Operational Volunteers TOTAL hours donated Q2	298.5 hours (not including Board Of Directors)
Governance Volunteers Board of Directors (12 members + Mayor Dawe) TOTAL hours donated Q2	758.5 hours

FACILITY RENTALS – AN INDICATOR OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION Q2

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 = 72* bookings Q2 [117 bookings to end June]
*These are in addition to the five rentals noted in the **Community Events** section of this report. (= 77 rentals total)

We have developed long term standing rental relationships with the following organizations:

- Quilters of York Region
- Society of York Region Artists (SOYRA)
- York Region Arts Council (YRAC)
- Aurora Community Band
- Pine Tree Potters
- Theatre Starts
- Spotlight Theatre
- Aurora Performing Arts
- York Region Children's Chorus

Some interesting bookings of note in Q2 were:

- York Region District School Board – specialized training workshops
- York Region Catholic School Board
- Austrian Consulate General - Austrian Business Club, book launch and reception
- Oak Ridges Moraine Trust – AGM & Seminar
- Kerry’s Place Autism Services
- Ontario Trillium Foundation - public workshop
- Yellow Brick House
- Sandgate Women’s Shelter
- Girl Guides
- Windfall Ecology, seminar
- Children’s Treatment Network
- Roger White Academy, recital
- Aurora Chamber of Commerce
- York Region Environmental Services
- York Region Waste Management
- York Region Geographic Services
- York Region Long Term Planning
- several private rentals for spring piano recitals

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

PARTNERSHIPS Q2

Partnerships are an integral programming component for the Centre.

In the first six 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
- Ontario 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
- Austrian Consulate
- Rickard Banjos
- Bonsai Hill Tea
- Priestly Demolition

FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES Q2

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. Now that the Centre is operating in a more secure environment with a strong relationship with the Town of Aurora, we have been able to build a fund development plan and a strategy to activate it.

We did it! Aurora Cultural Centre Awarded Trustmark Distinction Through Imagine Canada

This quarter the Centre was one of 24 non-profit organizations granted approval to use the **Imagine Canada Trustmark** by achieving thorough compliance of a rigorous set of standards in five key areas:

- Financial Accountability & Transparency
- Board Governance
- Fundraising
- Staff Management
- Volunteer Involvement.

The Centre now proudly joins a select group of only 45 non-profit organizations nationwide working at this recognized level of excellence; organizations such as Save the Children Canada, The Canadian Diabetes Association and World Vision.

We are thrilled with this gold standard recognition of our practices and our ability to bear the coveted "Trustmark".



Currently the Centre is in the midst of launching its *Friends of the Centre* program which includes levels of support from \$50 to \$1,000+ with corresponding benefits

100% of the Board of Directors has supported the Friends Program.

Our *Business Partners* and *Event Sponsorship* programs are also newly underway.

May 4 Fundraiser # 1 The Art of Tea

This popular fundraising event raised many friends and the Centre benefited by receiving revenue and donations in kind. The Centre worked in partnership with Bonsai Tea for this event.

UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS

- October 19 *Fest in October* **DANCE** (sponsored by Apple Suites. Music donated by the Thursday Night Jam Band, festive foods by Gabriel's Cafe.)
- October 20 Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront **Marathon** walk and run
- November 22 A Taste of **Wine** event

ON GOING FUNDRAISING INITIATIVES

- Friends of the Centre program
- Concert & Event Sponsorship opportunities
- Business Partner opportunities

SUMMATION

We have enjoyed participating in various celebrations for the Town's 150th Anniversary and continuing to work in partnership with a diverse group of organizations, individuals, businesses and volunteers to deliver cultural services to the Town of Aurora, while joyfully promoting Aurora as a dynamic community that values the creative contributions of its citizens.

Laura Schembri
Executive Director
Aurora Cultural Centre

September 13, 2013