



**2015 Year in Review
Managerial Commentary**

June 30, 2016

About the Aurora Cultural Centre

The Aurora Cultural Centre is a non-profit corporation and a Registered Charity developed to operate a centre for the provision of Cultural Services on behalf of the Town, in accordance with the Provision of Cultural Services Agreement (PCSA). This agreement “provides an opportunity to promote, nurture, and expand Cultural Services to the residents of Aurora” (from PCSA). The Town and Centre have developed the following general objectives:

- (a) to engage and enrich the community through arts, culture and heritage programming and promotion at the School;
- (b) to seek to make the Centre a dynamic hub in the historic heart of the Town of Aurora with an arts, culture and heritage focus; and
- (c) to recognize the rich diversity of our community by presenting a broad spectrum of cultural programming.

The Aurora Cultural Centre’s Strategic Plan 2013-15, developed with community input, has identified 5 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.



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.

Summary of Services Provided - at a Glance

Programs

- Concerts – variety of genres of music
- Special community events
- Free community programs
- Instructional arts and culture programs
- Multi-cultural events and showcases
- Host fundraising marketplaces
- Host and facilitate heritage programs, displays and lectures
- Host and facilitate programs with community partners
- Art exhibitions, talks and demos
- *Community as Curator* community artifact displays
- Community facility rentals



Administration

- Management of all Centre activities (house and rentals)
- Bookkeeping, accounting, auditing
- Marketing and communications
- Customer services
- Website and Social Media presence
- Administrate & oversee High School Co-op Program
- Administer & oversee active volunteer program



Governance

- Volunteer Board of Directors – all residents of Aurora
- Two Town of Aurora Councillors as full members of Board of Directors
- Board of Director meetings
- Committee Meetings
- Create, review and administer policies and procedures
- Implement and update Strategic Plan
- Provide broad oversight of the Centre’s operations
- Advocacy
- Oversee compliance and reporting protocols
- Ensure compliance with Canada Revenue Agency, Imagine Canada Standards, Provision of Cultural Services Agreement (PCSA), Strategic Plan, Ontario Corporations Act and other applicable Provincial statutes

Highlights of 2015 – at a Glance

Achievements

In 2015, the Centre had another successful year.

Highlights of the Centre’s achievements in 2015:

- Recorded **30,359** visits to Centre
- Maintained ‘Imagine Canada Standards’ accreditation
- Award of Excellence in Financial Reporting Transparency - Voluntary Sector Reporting Award (VSRA)
- Favourable KPI results
- Executive Director invited to be guest speaker at the 2015 national CPA Conference in Toronto



Programming

Below are some of the programming highlights for 2015:

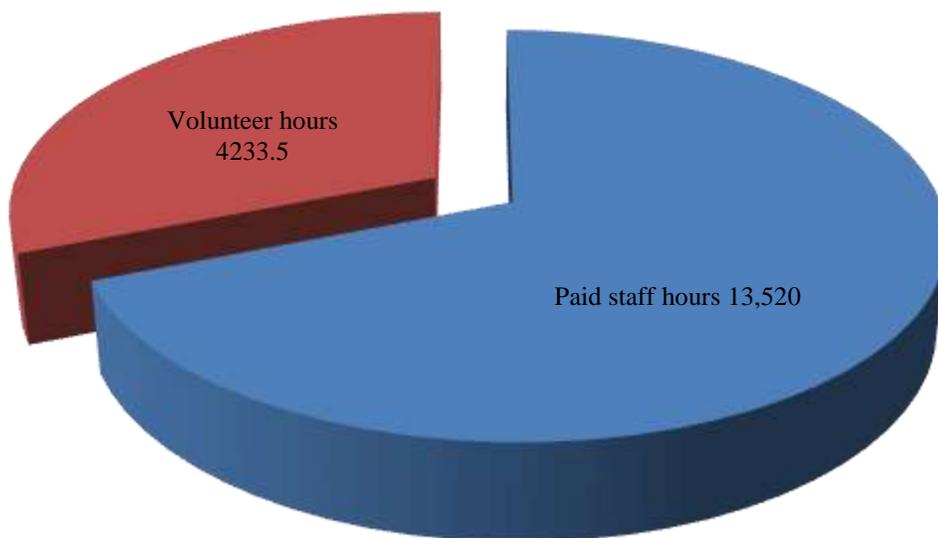
- 172 artists given the opportunity to exhibit their work in the Centre’s galleries
- 16 art exhibitions
- 45 events to meet the artist/s - demos/talks/receptions/docent days
- 33 adult arts programs ran with 303 registrants
- 11 child arts programs ran with 409 registrants (includes summer)
- 28 free, all-ages community events



- 14 concerts
- 7 Heritage activities including Community as Curator, lectures etc.
- multi-cultural programming including:
 - Pan Fantasy Steel Drums for Family Day
 - Community IFTAR dinner for Ramadan
 - Fete de la St-Jean
 - Culture Days.

Significant Volunteer Contribution

Volunteers are an important indicator of community participation with the Centre and represent a significant portion of the hours contributed to the Centre as illustrated below:



Our volunteer hours are tracked in two streams: Governance Hours (Board of Directors) and Operational Hours (volunteers assisting with programs or administration etc.). Combined, they clearly show the significant support the Centre enjoys from the community. Our volunteers range in age from 15 into their 70's; some volunteer as husband and wife couples, some as families, many as individuals – all of whom are dedicated to the Centre and are excited to be involved. The Centre is actively involved with local high schools and in 2015 mentored five co-op students during long term volunteer placements at the Centre.

Currently our Governance Hours are slightly declining as the Centre matures and moves out of the governance work required for the “start-up” of a new organization.





Awards & Recognition

The Centre is proud to have been recognized for its accountability and transparency by the following national programs:

Imagine Canada



Imagine Canada's Standards Program for Canadian non-profit organizations and charities awards accreditation to organizations that excel in several areas of operations. Accreditation is achieved through demonstrated compliance with a rigorous set of best practice standards in:

- Board Governance
- Financial Accountability and Transparency
- Fundraising
- Staff Management
- Volunteer Involvement

The Aurora Cultural Centre is honoured to have achieved and maintained our accreditation with this prestigious national organization.

Voluntary Sector Reporting Awards (VSRA)



The awards, created by the Chartered Accountants of Ontario and the Queen's School of Business, are Canada's most prestigious awards where charities that have excelled at transparency and accountability in financial reporting in the not-for-profit sector are recognized. The Centre was named one of 15 finalists (out of a field of over 140 applicants) in 2014 and 2015. In February 2015 the Centre received the *Award of Excellence in Financial Reporting Transparency* for charities with up to \$1 million revenue.



Paul Martin rings the bell!



David Crombie visits



Chippewas of Georgina Island

Community Impact

The Centre makes a significant contribution to the economic health of the Town of Aurora and has an equally important social impact.

The Centre:

- Currently employs seven residents of Aurora;
- Additionally, hired three Aurora youth in 2015 to lead our summer art programs;
- Purchases locally: event refreshments, catering, office and program supplies, linen laundering, printing, signage, event rentals, banking, furnishings, advertising, and consulting, legal and auditing services;
- Enthusiastically promotes local restaurants for visitors, rentals, and for before and after Centre events;
- Provides name recognition and positive branding for the Town of Aurora through the Centre's marketing efforts (which includes the 400 series highway signage) and national recognition from programs such as Imagine Canada Standards and Voluntary Sector Reporting Awards, CPA conference, Culture Days Canada, Aurora Doors Open;
- Provides quality volunteer opportunities for High School volunteer hours;
- Provides all residents of Aurora an equal opportunity to participate in arts, culture and heritage for free and in programs for a reasonable cost;
- Has become a recognized concert destination – with trickle down benefits to entire town;

- Provides graduating high school art classes with professional art gallery exhibitions;
- Welcomes and mentors local Co-op students in annual long-term placement opportunities;
- Participated in the development of the Town of Aurora’s Cultural Master Plan and is actively involved with significant roll-out initiatives;
- Participated in the development of the Town of Aurora’s Tourism Plan,
- Participating in York Region’s initiative “Let’s Talk Inclusion”,
- Taking Leadership role with Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s “Cultural Access Pass”,
- Partners effectively with the Town of Aurora, Aurora Public Library, Hillary House National Historic Site, Aurora Farmers’ and Artisans’ Market, and Theatre Aurora, among others - and;
- Is the “home of”, Society of York Region Artists, Aurora Community Band, Ramadan Community IFTAR Dinner, Pine Tree Potters’ sales events and Empty Bowls fundraiser, Third Age Learning York Region, York Region Children’s Chorus, L’Association des francophone de la regance de York: Fete del as St-Jean, York Region Multi-Media Film Festival, Paaske Quartet, Aurora High School Youth art shows, Special Olympics Annual Holiday Marketplace fundraiser, Girl Guides #37 Annual volunteer Recognition Event.



In Summary

In 2015 the Centre celebrated its 5th year of operation.

We are the proud stewards of the beautiful Church Street School, now so clearly identified as the Aurora Cultural Centre. The seeds of imagined possibilities in our first five years have taken root.

Three levels of support are required to ensure the Centre's bright future:

- Revenue growth through programming;
- Community investment and fund development commitment; and
- Significant commitment of stable funding from the Town of Aurora.

Together, with the Town of Aurora as our partner, these three integral concepts will solidify the Centre's presence as a leading cultural hub in Aurora and well beyond our borders.

If you have any questions please feel free to email me. lauraschembri@auroraculturalcentre.ca

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Schembri
Executive Director
June 30, 2016

