



ARTS|ORILLIA

Creativity
Culture
Community



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Canada Arts Presentation
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ORILLIA



SUNRAY
GROUP

Reflections of the Last Ten Years

Fred Larsen, Chair 2015–2024

September 2024 marks a decade since a pivotal conversation in Orillia set our organization on a transformative journey. Arts Orillia has since emerged as a cultural beacon in the Orillia community and a significant player in Ontario’s arts scene. As the last remaining original Board member, I feel compelled to recount our story.

Phase One 2014 – 2019: Huronia Cultural Campus (HCC)

In late 2014, a group of prominent Orillians, including Don Ross, Will McGarvey, Catherine Allman, Marcia McClung, Anderson Charters, Debbie Woodman, Chris Hazel, Pat Hehn, Charles Pachter, Dennis Smith, and myself, convened to explore transforming the largely abandoned Huronia Regional Centre into an arts hub.

Despite a busy 2019 filled with performances and after many meetings, the dream of transforming the Huronia Regional Centre into the proposed vision was deemed unattainable.

Phase Two 2019–2023: Orillia Centre for Arts & Culture

Recognizing the need for change, the organization rebranded as the Orillia Centre for Arts & Culture in 2019, focusing on event presentation. Nine events were held that year, involving professional artists and local youth. Kate Hilliard joined the Program Committee, establishing early connections with the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB).

The pandemic halted live performances in 2020, and we lost our manager. However, volunteer Kate Hilliard organized low-cost online events and began writing grant applications.

In early 2022, we contracted The OtherHalf consultants to develop a

Strategic Plan and Arts Orillia was born, with a renewed focus on bringing arts experiences to local youth.

Phase Three 2022–2024: Arts Orillia (AO)

The 2022 Strategic Plan emphasized youth arts experiences, attracting the attention of the James A. Burton Family Foundation. In January 2023, we received a grant for three years, enabling us to hire Kate Hilliard as Artistic Director, Sean Rees as Design Manager, Jasmine Au as Grant Writer, and Jeanette Heywood as General Manager in July 2023.

Throughout 2022–23, AO partnered with the Orillia Opera House, other local arts organizations, Lakehead University, and various Ontario artists. Our partnership with SCDSB provided arts education to local students through workshops.

In the Spring of 2024, AO began expanding its Board and seeking community volunteers and financial supporters. In addition to Burton Foundation funding, it aims to raise much-needed community support by the end of the Strategic Plan.

Phase Four 2024–2026 Goals: Arts Orillia (AO)

- Our goals for 2024–2026 include:
- Improved Community and Philanthropic Support
 - Board Development and Growth
 - Youth Engagement

Arts Orillia is poised for growth and ready to embrace the future.

Greetings From The Chair

Welcome to Arts Orillia! Whether you are a longtime supporter or new to our community, I hope you find our Annual Report as inspiring as we do.

Our history, detailed in the “Reflections” section, showcases our journey from inception to becoming a cultural leader in Orillia. Despite the challenges, including the pandemic, our dedicated team—Artistic Director Kate Hilliard, General Manager Jeanette Heywood, and Design Manager Sean Rees—has worked tirelessly to provide young people in Orillia with enriching arts experiences.

Over the past decade, we’ve faced many changes and have celebrated significant achievements. Highlights include the annual Gathering: A Festival of First Nations Stories, our growing partnership with the Chippewas of Rama First Nation, and numerous arts workshops for local students. We’ve introduced diverse cultural traditions to our community through collaborations with Lakehead University, the Orillia Opera House, and other arts organizations.

Our mission is clear: to enrich the lives of Orillia’s residents by nurturing the creative talents of our youth. They are the future of Arts Orillia, and with your support, we can continue to provide them with the opportunities they deserve.

Join us in building a vibrant future which will not only support our mission but also enrich your own life.

Fred Larsen, Chair 2015–2024



Executive Team Message

In the 2023/24 season, Arts Orillia made significant progress in advancing our mission to enrich the local community through the arts. We expanded our school programs to include a new after-school digital art initiative, providing students with innovative ways to express their creativity in a digital age. Additionally, we launched a social justice theatre project, giving young voices a platform to explore and address important societal issues through performance. Our general public festivals continued to thrive, offering inclusive and engaging experiences for audiences of all backgrounds.

Our efforts were bolstered by increased funding from municipal, provincial, and federal governments, reflecting a growing recognition of the value we bring to the community. These funds have enabled us to strengthen our organizational infrastructure, streamline administrative processes, and enhance our capacity to deliver impactful programs. Our partnerships with key stakeholders, including the Simcoe County District School Board, Chippewas of Rama First Nation, and the City of Orillia, have deepened, allowing us to extend our reach and provide more robust support for arts education and engagement.

As we look forward to the 2024/2025 year and the future, our priorities are clear. We will focus on refining our branding to better communicate the transformative power of the arts, expanding our Board to include diverse voices and perspectives, and increasing our engagement with the community. Strengthening existing partnerships and forging new ones will be key to ensuring the sustainability of our programs and initiatives. We are also committed to building a broader base of financial support, both from public sources and private donors.

Our vision for the future is one where the arts are a central, unifying force in Orillia, inspiring creativity, fostering connections, and driving positive change in our community.

Board of Directors

- Fred Larsen, Chair
Stevie Baker, Director
Laura Clark, Director
Rex Deverell, Director
Jay Fallis, Director (ended July 2024)
Matthew Jenkins, Director
Noah Man, Treasurer
Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, Director

Executive Team

- Kate Hilliard, Artistic Director
Jeanette Heywood, General Manager
Sean Rees, Design Manager

Financials

Revenues & Expenses 2023/2024 (pull from draft statements.)

Statement of Financial Position	FY2023/24	FY2022/23
Current Assets	\$69,920	\$34,895
Current Liabilities	\$43,491	\$2,888
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$26,429	\$32,007
Liabilities & Fund Balances	\$69,920	\$34,895
Statement of Operations		
Revenues	\$358,419	\$226,235
Expenses	\$363,997	\$211,630
Net Contribution	\$-5,578	\$14,605

Arts Orillia: A Decade of Transformation

