

# AURORA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT  
2022



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2022 was a transition year for the Aurora Historical Society. Patricia Wallace, long-time member and President of the Society resigned late in the year due to personal reasons. At the direction of the Board, Al Lambert and I assumed the position of Interim Co-Presidents, effective until the next AGM. We wish to thank her for her dedication and service to the Aurora Historical Society.

We held a Golf Tournament in June at Aurora's historic Westview Golf Club. Great weather and turnout made for a very successful afternoon. Thanks to all who participated! In the fall, we re-energized the Hillary House Ball with an in-person event at the Royal Venetian Mansion. Again, a very successful event, and thanks to all involved.

As we finally moved on from COVID, we experienced a steady increase in all areas of engagement, both virtually and in-person. The restoration of the verandah was completed and the replacement of the fence at the front of Hillary House by Parks Canada was started.

The Aurora Historical Society and Hillary House continue to benefit from the dedication of our members, volunteers, and staff.

- Geoffrey Dawe, Interim Co-President & Treasurer



AHS Board of Directors and Staff.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### President

Patricia Wallace\*

### Vice-President

Alan Lambert

### Treasurer/Secretary

Geoffrey Dawe

### Directors

Dan McGeown, Ronen Grunberg, Martin Paivio\*, Michelle Primeau

\* Patricia Wallace and Martin Paivio resigned from their positions on the Board of Directors for personal reasons. We thank them for their service.

# STAFF DEVELOPMENT

## Curator/Manager

Kathleen Vahey joined the AHS in 2020 as Curator. In 2022, the role transitioned to Curator/Manager and she continued to oversee the operations of Hillary House including human resources, facilities maintenance, collections management, curatorial projects, and programming. She curated three exhibitions, assisted with fundraising events, created digital engagement content, successfully obtained grant funding, and supported the update of several policies.

## Administrative Assistant

Julie Preston joined the AHS in 2020 as the part-time Administrative Assistant. In 2022, she continued to oversee the AHS office, membership and volunteer management, the Gift Shop, and provided financial management support.

## Programming & Outreach

### Coordinator

Selin Kahramanoğlu joined the AHS in 2022 as the Programming & Outreach Coordinator on a 1-year contract. She oversaw and updated AHS' public and educational programming, events, and outreach activities. Selin holds a Master of Museum Studies and a Master of Information with a concentration in Archives and Records Management from the University of Toronto.



From left to right. Standing: Selin Kahramanoğlu, Alessandra Falzone, and Julie Preston. Seated: Grace Armstrong and Kathleen Vahey.

## Temporary Positions

The AHS was fortunate to welcome Grace Armstrong back as an intern through Centennial College Museum & Cultural Management Postgraduate Program from the beginning of March to the end of April. Grace returned in the summer as the Assistant Curator and continued to work on collections management projects and assisted with exhibition development. Alessandra Falzone joined the AHS as the Museum Educator and assisted with program development and educational online content. These positions were possible thanks to the Canada Summer Jobs grant.

# MAINTENANCE

Small maintenance projects at Hillary House were completed by staff with assistance from volunteers. Larger projects were completed by industry professionals.

- Updated all fire and smoke detectors.
- Installed 3 security cameras.
- Upgraded fire extinguishers.
- Replaced sump-pump battery in basement.
- Installed a new hot water tank.
- Pest remediation around the office and Summer Kitchen.
- Tennis court and lawns were maintained.
- Replaced broken pane of glass.



Volunteers at the Fall Clean-up Day.



Restoration of the lattice panels.

# RESTORATION

In 2021, the AHS began a restoration project on the Hillary House verandah. In 2022, additional work on the iconic latticework as well as a new coat of paint, was completed in line with heritage reconstruction guidelines. The project will provide improved structural safety to the verandah space, allowing for increased programming space and public access to the museum for years to come.

# CURATORIAL ACTIVITIES



ACC Gallery Manager Samantha (left) & AHS Curator/Manager Kathleen (right) work on the exhibition *Inspirations from a Space of Healing*.

## Exhibitions

2022 featured three exhibitions throughout the year. Starting in March through to May, the AHS hosted *A Place to Grow*, a travelling exhibition from the Royal Botanical Gardens which highlighted the history of gardening in a Canadian context. Additionally, a short history of Garden Aurora was also on display.

The AHS worked closely with the Aurora Cultural Centre (ACC) and the Society of York Region Artists (SOYRA) on *Inspirations from a Space of Healing*, a collaborative exhibition on display at Hillary House and the ACC's temporary gallery space at Town Hall from November 2022 until January 2023. The exhibition showcased art inspired by the theme of healing and the museum's collection of artifacts.

Finally, in December the AHS partnered with the local Salvation Army Northridge Community Church and the Salvation Army Archives to showcase the history of the Salvation Army in Newmarket & Aurora.

## Ongoing Cataloguing

Inventoried and cataloguing the permanent collection continued. Over 400 artifacts and archival documents were properly catalogued, photographed, or scanned, and added to the collections database. Additionally, a complete inventory of the archival collection was conducted which outlined necessary future collections management projects.

## Donations

Three items from one donation were accepted into the collection. These artifacts are properly stored and catalogued.

# PROGRAMMING & OUTREACH

In 2022, the AHS continued to provide virtual and in-person program offerings to engage with audiences. We hosted:

- Nine Speaker Series presentations
- Two heritage craft workshops
- Four holiday-themed events including the Easter Egg Decorating workshop, Halloween at Hillary House, Wreath Making workshop, and A Family Christmas
- Four yoga sessions
- Two historic walking tours
- Four fundraising events including High Teas, Golf Tournament, and the Hillary House Ball
- Seven camp programs
- and more!



AHS Programming & Outreach Coordinator Selin Kahramanoğlu at the Aurora Public Library's Just 4 You event.

Over the year we engaged with 2,623 people through tours of Hillary House National Historic Site, events and programs, fundraisers, and outreach opportunities.

## **Educational Programmings**

Continuing on past success, a variety of curriculum-based programs were presented to several different classes from St. Andrew's College through their Community Giving Program. The educational-based programming was also updated to provide teachers and other educators with more fulsome options.

## **Outreach Events**

The AHS has a long history of being actively visible in the Aurora community. With the gradual lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, the AHS was represented at five outreach events: the Aurora Home Show, Street Festival, Sr. Active Living Fair, Culture Days/Multicultural Festival, and the Aurora Public Library's Just 4 You and From the AHS Collection events.

# MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS



AHS Director Michelle (left) and President Patricia (right) at the Aurora Street Festival.

Three editions of the AHS newsletter, *The Attic*, were published and made available to members and supporters to update them on the status and activities of the AHS during 2022. These communications were supplemented by monthly AHS News updates.

Promotion online and through local media is ongoing, as necessary. The AHS continues to have a great relationship with local newspapers, being highlighted often.

Staff continued to engage audiences online through social media. On Facebook and Instagram where we typically have the most engagement, we saw an increase in followers. Additionally, the continued focus on consistent and varied social media content resulted in 31,547 online engagements, a 50% increase when compared to 2021.

The AHS purchased new marketing banners and redesigned the Hillary House brochure to ensure increased recognition and consistent communications.



Hillary House Ball Committee.

## Volunteers

The AHS Board of Directors remained strong in 2022 with a capable and committed group providing strategic and practical leadership. 80 volunteers recorded approximately 3,176 hours of work in 2022. This reflects the community's deep commitment to heritage.

# COMPARATIVE STATISTICS

Performance Measure/Metric	2020	2021	2022
Exhibitions	0	2	3
Collections: Accessioned/Cataloged Artifacts and Archival Materials	458	234	405
Number of Programs and Special Events	7	24	41
Number of Individuals Reached: Admissions, Rentals, Programs, Outreach, Online	349 in person	1,287 in person and virtually	2,623 in person and virtually
Social Media Followers	9,430	9,293	9,279
Online Engagements	11,000	20,600	31,547
Membership Totals	150	162	151
Total Volunteers	65	91	80
Volunteer Totals (Hours)	3,260	2,914	3,176
Number of Sponsors and Event Donors	4	68	79
Revenue from Fundraising Events (Gross)/Donations/Other	\$25,500	\$88,800	\$82,730
Grants Awarded	4	7	6
Grant Revenue	\$106,300 + \$15,500 in COVID-19 Emergency Funding	\$144,500 + \$39,800 in COVID-19 Emergency Funding	\$116,477 + \$44,935 in COVID-19 Emergency Funding



Programming & Outreach Coordinator Selin leads a Historic Walking Tour.



Guests enjoy the Mother's Day Tea.

# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Through the hard work and dedication of staff and Board members, we started to get back on track post-COVID. Our income was slightly lower in 2022 when compared to 2021, mostly as a result of a reduction in grants; however, successful fundraising events helped to offset this. Our expenses were considerably higher as a result of the verandah restoration project, increased staffing, and professional fees. It is anticipated that 2023 will return to more 'normal' operational levels.

While there are a number of sources of income, we wish to recognize and thank the Town of Aurora as a significant and continued supporter.

The Board and staff continue to diligently monitor expenses, and research ways to diversify revenue to ensure the continued financial success of the AHS.

- Geoffrey Dawe, AHS Treasurer & Interim Co-President

## SUMMARY

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Revenue		
Expenses	\$272,203	\$266,368
	\$198,937	\$298,459
Excess Revenue/Expenses	\$73,266	-\$32,091

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Special Events	7.7%	6.1%
Donations & Fundraising	3.5%	11.8%
Hillary House Ball	13.9%	16.8%
Grants	67.4%	60.5%
Memberships	0.9%	0.6%
Sales & Other	6.6%	4.2%

# FUNDING

## Golf Tournament

With the assistance of Westview Golf Club, the AHS hosted a Golf Tournament fundraiser which raised over \$2,500. Participants enjoyed a 9-hole round of golf, a selection of appetizers, and a silent auction.

## Hillary House Ball

2022 saw the return of an in-person Hillary House Ball fundraiser. Attended by 100 guests, the 2022 Ball featured a silent auction with over 70 donated items, a delicious meal, and dancing to the music of the local 20-piece band, After Hours Big Band. Due to the tremendous efforts of volunteers and staff, as well as the generous support from private donors, businesses, and sponsors, the Ball raised over \$16,000.

## Donations

Thanks to a generous membership base and supportive community, we received \$6,500 in donations in 2022. Additionally, the Koffler Foundation demonstrated its continued support with a \$25,000 donation. We sincerely thank all of our donors for their contributions!

## Grants

The AHS received several grants in 2022 which were integral to its continued operation:

- Community Museum Operating Grant (CMOG) from the Province of Ontario
- Canada Summer Jobs through the Government of Canada. This funded two, 12-week positions for the summer season.
- Operating Grant from the Town of Aurora.

The AHS was also fortunate to be granted emergency funding in 2022:

- Recovery Fund for Heritage Organizations – Museums Assistance Program through the Government of Canada.
- COVID-19 Business Support Grant &: Energy Cost Rebate Grant through the Province of Ontario.
- The AHS also benefitted from the Canada Emergency Business Account loan forgiveness program.

# 2023 PLANNED ACTIVITIES

## Staffing

The AHS expects to retain the current staffing complement through 2023, a full-time Curator, Programming and Outreach Coordinator, and a part-time Administrative Assistant. Funding will be sought for contract employees through granting programs, as has been done in the past.



Curator/Manager Kathleen (left) and Vice-President Alan (right) with the *A Place to Grow* exhibition.

## Maintenance

The AHS will continue to prioritize the maintenance of Hillary House in 2023. Small maintenance projects will continue to be remediated in-house while larger restoration will happen in collaboration with industry professionals.

## Curatorial Activities & Exhibitions

Staff will continue to prioritize collections management projects in 2023 including inventorying and researching for the Godfrey Collection. Three exhibitions are planned for 2023. *Growing Up Aurora* will look at experiences and memories of childhood in Aurora. *Beyond Blue & White: Wedgwood Designed for Canada* is a travelling exhibition from the King Heritage & Cultural Centre celebrating the history of Wedgwood ceramics in Canada. Additionally, the new Youth Mentorship Program will culminate with an exhibition to be decided by the group.

## Programming & Outreach

In 2023, 35 programs and special events are being planned. The focus for the year is to increase engagement with youth and senior demographics while maintaining the existing AHS programs. The AHS will continue to work with community partners to broaden our reach and develop innovative offerings.

# 2022 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Government Funders:

- Town of Aurora
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Government of Ontario - Community Museum Operating Grant
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada - Canada Summer Jobs & Recovery Fund for Heritage Organizations, Museums Assistance Program
- Government of Ontario – COVID-19 Business Support Grant Energy Cost Rebate & Ontario Small Business Relief Grant

## Business Supporters:

Addison Marketing

Aird & Berlis LLP

Allegra

Aqua Grill

Art Gallery of Ontario

Artistica Dance Studio

Backyard Pool & Spa

BDO Canada LLP

Bijoy's

Boston Pizza

BrokerLink

Bruce Spragg, Re/Max Hallmark York

Group Realty Ltd.

Canadian Tire

Cassidy Event Management

Chocolate & Company

Cormorant Books

Delmanor Aurora

Diamond Groundskeeping Services

Eric McCartney, Century 21

Heritage Group

Eye Care Optical

Filly & Co.

Gaspare Saracino

Geranium

Ginger's Cupcakes

Glenn Rodger Photography

Glover Hill

Golf Glen Veterinary Clinic

Golf Town

Great Memories Professional Book Design

Hockey Hall of Fame

Home Depot

Hurst Bakery

Jane Street Quilts

Kelseys Original Roadhouse-Aurora

Krown Aurora

La Jolie Cheese Shop

Laurion Law

Lenard Lind - The Lind Realty Team Inc.

Levetto

Lori Hoyes, Avon Representative

LuxGive

Magna International

Market Brewing Company  
McLaren Doors  
Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament  
Meridian Credit Union  
MP Leah Taylor Roy, Aurora-Oak  
Ridges-Richmond Hill  
MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy,  
Newmarket-Aurora  
MR Menswear  
Old Spaghetti Factory  
Omars Shoes  
Pine Farms Orchard  
Powell  
RBC Wealth Management  
Ren's Pet Depot  
Roberts & Company  
Romy's  
Royal Canadian Legion (Br # 385)  
Royal Ontario Museum  
Sports Clips  
St. Andrew's Chiropractic & Wellness  
Story of Love  
Sunhaus Designs  
Sunshine Park Clothing – Hoda Soliman  
Terry's Flowers  
The Auroran  
The Country Look Hair Salon  
The Patrick House  
Theatre Aurora  
Topper's Pizza Aurora  
Vandenboshe Jewellers  
Volvo Financial Services  
Westview Golf Club

## **Community/Heritage Partners & Supporters:**

Aurora Museum & Archives  
Aurora Chamber of Commerce  
Aurora Cultural Centre  
Aurora Garden and Horticultural Society  
(Garden Aurora)  
Aurora Public Library  
Aurora Senior Centre  
Aurora Sports Hall of Fame  
National Trust for Canada  
Neighbour Aurora  
The Auroran Newspaper  
Town of Aurora  
Royal Rose Art Gallery

## **Annual Appeal & General Donations**

Alan Lambert  
Alison Collins-Mrakas  
Andrew Bulmer  
Angela Trevivian  
Anna Orodi  
Anne Clement  
Barbara Hoffmann  
Bill Newman  
Bob McRoberts  
Brian Roberts  
Bruce Williamson  
Carroll Graham  
Cindy Scythes  
Cortney Cassidy  
Dan McGeown  
Daniel Lajeunesse

Darlene Mathews  
Dina Krinitski  
Donald Hutchinson  
Donald Webb  
Eric McCartney  
Ethan Wahba  
Frank Klees  
Geoffrey Dawe  
George Gonsalves  
Harold Kim  
Harry and Hilary Oosterhof  
Helen Yielding  
Holly Williamson  
Holly Windle  
Janet Wilson  
Jeff Walker  
Joan Gardner  
Joan Patterson  
John and Deborah Smale  
John Greenhough  
John McIntyre  
Julie Preston  
Kyle Peterson  
Lawrence and Carol Crump  
Leah Taylor Roy  
Leanne DiMonte  
Lindsay Strom  
Louise Procter Maio  
Mandie Eddie  
Marco Di Girolamo & Family  
Margaret Blackie  
Martin Watson  
Michael Thompson  
Michelle Primeau

Mike Norris  
Mike Smith  
Neil Johnston  
Owen Heritage  
Pamela Farquhar  
Patricia Wallace  
Peter Styrmo  
Randal Bonham  
Robert Aiello  
Robert and Angela Grattage  
Robert Lounds  
Ron Weese  
Ronen Grunberg  
Rosalyn Gonsalves  
Sandra Humfryes  
Sharon Nisbet  
Sue Miller  
Sylvia Balicki-Jones  
Tali Hasanov  
Tiana Koffler Boyman  
Tom Mrakas  
Tom Wasley  
Tony Van Bynen

### **Volunteers**

Alan Lambert  
Alejandra Silva  
Alisa Ruzhynsky  
Allison Collins-Mrakas  
Amy Norris  
Amy P.  
Angela Silva  
Angela Trevivian  
Aranza Escarzaga

Bob McRoberts  
Brenda Snape  
Christine McLure  
Cindy Scythes  
Christian Pisapia  
Daniel McGeown  
Donna Lewis  
Edward van Nostrand  
Elizabeth Evans  
Evan Lambert  
Geoffrey Dawe  
Grace Armstrong  
Guillaume Jean  
Hannah Hutchings  
Helen Burlanyette  
Hoda Soliman  
Howard Wen  
Jacqueline Stuart  
Jennifer Bulmer  
Jennifer Zsolt  
John Bare  
John Green  
Katelyn Cholmondeley  
Lesley Watterson  
Linda Blanchford  
Lissa Dwyer  
Luciana Huertas  
Mariana Regina Padilla Silva  
Marjorie Bare  
Martin Pavio  
Michelle Primeau  
Mike Norris  
Nancy Sinclair

Nate Windle  
Nathan Lambert  
Nick Moutrey  
Owen Norris  
Pat Vahey  
Patricia Wallace  
Ricardo Padilla  
Ronen Grunberg  
Samona Nasrullah  
Sandra Humfries  
Sandy Bodkin  
Sandy Bundy  
Sara M.  
Scott McInnis  
Shelley Bodkin  
Shirley Binns  
Shriya Arun  
Silvana Croce  
Sonia K Koczekan  
Sophia Fiorini  
Steve Scythes  
Stu Bundy  
Susan Abram  
Tarryn Andrews  
Wendy Browne  
Zunerah Nasrullah



Wreath-making Workshop participants.



# CONTACT INFORMATION

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# THANK YOU!