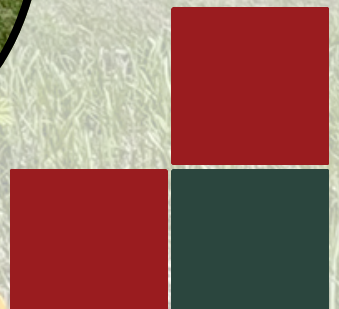


ANNUAL REPORT



Co-Chair's Message

We are extremely pleased to present our 2025 Annual Report. As you will see from the following pages, it has been another very busy year for the Aurora Historical Society. We continue to build on our core activities of education programs, various workshops, highly successful afternoon teas, and guided tours of Hillary House.

Our finances continue to improve, with input of funds from our participation in the Richmond Hill Hall Charity Association (Charitable Gaming), as well as a session of summer bingo at Market Brewing in Newmarket.

Specifically, our net revenue in 2025 was \$11,197 – a vast improvement over our loss in 2024 of \$22,501. Partly as a result of not renewing a staff contract and increasing Charitable Gaming revenues.

It is also important to note (as outlined in the financial report) that our “own source revenues” have increased as a percentage of our total revenue, which bodes well for our overall financial picture.

We were most fortunate to have been awarded a capital grant in the Town's 2026 budget which will be directed towards much needed repairs on the foundation of Hillary House.

Last, but certainly not least, none of this could be accomplished without the support of our dedicated staff (Kathleen & Julie), summer staff (Elyse & JJ), and our tremendous volunteers (listed at the end of the report). We simply could not do this without you!

PS – more volunteers are always welcome!

Sincerely,

AHS Co-Chairs



Geoffrey Dawe Alan Lambert



Co-Chairs Geoffrey Dawe & Al Lambert at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce Home Show, April 2025.

Meet Our Team

Board of Directors

Alan Lambert

Co-Chair

Geoffrey Dawe

Co-Chair

Daniel McGeown

Treasurer

John Green

Secretary

Angela Trevivian

Director

Jai Nargas

Director

Tim McCutcheon

Director

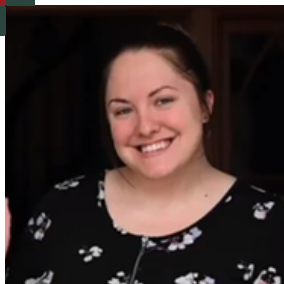
Michelle Primeau

Director

Wendy Browne

Director

Staff



Kathleen Vahey

Curator/Manager



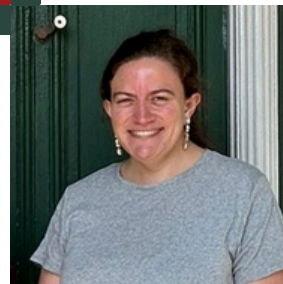
Julie Preston

Admin. Assistant



Elyse Richardson

Assistant Curator



J.J. Doran

Museum Educator

In 2025, AHS maintained its core staff team of Kathleen Vahey, Curator/Manager, and Julie Preston, Administrative Assistant.

The organization also benefited from the addition of two summer staff funded by the Canada Summer Jobs grant and the Summer Employment Opportunities Grant. J.J. Doran, Museum Educator, enhanced AHS's social media presence and assisted with program planning. Elyse Richardson, Assistant Curator, advanced key collections management projects and curated the exhibition 'Pills, Poisons, & Painkillers', enriching the year's interpretive offerings.

Maintenance

Throughout the year, staff, supported by dedicated volunteers, completed several maintenance initiatives at Hillary House NHS. Pest remediation was undertaken around the property, the security system received a required upgrade to ensure continued monitoring, and structural remediation work was completed at the entrance beneath the verandah, to ensure continued safety and stability. Maintenance work also included upkeep of the tennis court and the installation of a new net system.

In addition, and with support from the Electronic Recycling Association, most of the computer systems were updated to align with new Microsoft 11 security requirements, strengthening the organization's digital infrastructure.



West lawn at Hillary House.



Tennis Court at Hillary House.

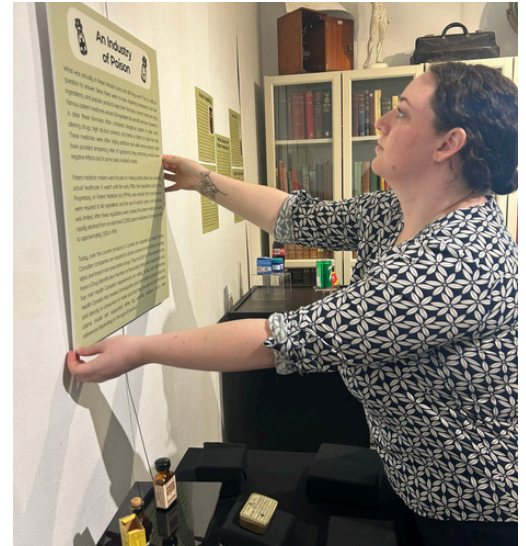
The 2023–2028 Landscaping Plan was updated and approved by the Ontario Heritage Trust, reaffirming a stewardship approach rooted in the site's historical character. The plan prioritizes invasive species removal, the reduction of garden areas to match current resources, and the planting of native species that reflect the Hillary family's relationship with the land. Historical documentation shows that the grounds served as an informal backdrop to the family's vibrant social life for over a century, shaped by a philosophy, articulated by Holly Hillary, of allowing natural growth to remain unless it interfered with daily activities.

This updated plan seeks to balance historical authenticity with the Aurora Historical Society's capacity to maintain the property responsibly.

Curatorial Activities

EXHIBITIONS

The 2025 exhibition season featured three distinct curatorial projects. *A Glimpse of Aurora's Historic Places*, developed in partnership with the Aurora Museum & Archives and presented at Aurora Town Square, celebrated National Historic Places Days and underscored Hillary House's significance as Aurora's only National Historic Site. *I-and-Place*, a collaborative poetry installation created with a McMaster University Master's in English student and Aurora resident, invited visitors to reflect on personal and geographic connections to place. The final exhibition, *Pills, Poisons, & Painkillers: A History of Pharmaceuticals*, examined the transformative medical landscape of the 19th century and explored the remedies available in Canada during a period when the boundaries between healing and harm were often uncertain.



Elyse installing 'Pills, Poisons, & Painkillers' at Hillary House.

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

General inventorying and cataloguing of the permanent collection continued with support from summer staff and volunteers. More than 2,139 artifacts and archival documents were catalogued, photographed or scanned, and added to the collections database, with items rehoused in proper archival storage materials as part of the process. Additionally, two new HOBO temperature and relative humidity data loggers were purchased to monitor the museum environment in alignment with museum best practices.



'A Glimpse of Aurora's Historic Places',
Aurora Town Square

GODFREY COLLECTION

After completing the Godfrey Collection inventory in 2024, the AHS transferred the archival, photograph, and artifact sub-collections to the Archives of Ontario, where the items can be more appropriately preserved and accessed for future research.

DONATIONS

50 items from 3 donations were accepted into the collection. These artifacts are properly stored, accessioned, and catalogued.

Programming & Outreach

Programming and events remained central to the AHS's work in 2025. Despite reduced staff capacity, the AHS delivered a strong year of programming and achieved meaningful impact with 43 programs and events presented to the community. These included:

- 8 Speaker Series presentations
- 2 heritage craft workshops
- 3 themed events including Historic Places Days, Culture Days, Wreath Making workshop, and A Family Christmas
- 1 Slow Museum Day
- 3 Painting events partnered with Royal Rose Art Gallery
- 6 School and Girl Guide programs
- 4 Afternoon teas
- 3 Group tours
- Return of Doors Open Aurora

... and more!

Additionally, throughout the year, 350 people across 140 groups enjoyed guided tours of Hillary House NHS.



Curator/Manager Kathleen,
MP Menegakis, & Co-Chair Geoffrey.



Visitors to Hillary House during Doors Open with AHS Director Michelle.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

The AHS continued its successful curriculum-based programming in 2025, engaging classes from St. Andrew's College, St. Anne's School, Devins Drive Public School, and several local Girl Guides and Scouts groups.

OUTREACH PROGRAMMING

With fewer staff resources available, the AHS concentrated on the outreach events that offered the greatest value, resulting in meaningful engagement with 662 people across nine community events.

OFFICIAL VISITS

In 2025, the AHS welcomed newly elected MP Sandra Cobena and MP Costas Menegakis to Hillary House. Their time at Hillary House provided a chance to highlight the site's history, community role, and ongoing stewardship efforts.

Rentals

The AHS supported a variety of rentals in 2025, including a film project by Toronto Metropolitan University students, who chose Hillary House as the primary location for their short film 'Hand Me Down'.

Additionally, the site provided a unique setting for a bridal shower, parties, meetings, workshops, and photography.



Students filming at Hillary House.

Marketing & Public Relations



New banner along Yonge Street.

Marketing and public relations efforts remained active throughout 2025. Three editions of The Attic newsletter were published and shared with members and supporters, supplemented by monthly AHS News updates to keep audiences informed of ongoing activities. Staff continued to refine the AHS website to ensure clear, accessible information for visitors and program participants.

AHS maintained strong relationships with local media, receiving regular coverage in community newspapers. The partnership with Village Media's Aurora Today continued, with AHS contributing a monthly article in collaboration with the Aurora Museum & Archives and volunteers. Cross-promotion with community partners and tourism networks further extended the organization's reach.

Staff continued to engage audiences online through social media throughout 2025. With reduced staff capacity, overall activity on Facebook and Instagram was lower than in previous years, resulting in a slight decrease in followers and a decline in total engagements compared to 2024. Even so, AHS generated 5,962 interactions through consistent and varied content, reflecting ongoing community interest in the organization's digital presence.

To strengthen on-site visibility, AHS introduced new branded signage, including a fence banner along Yonge Street and an A-frame parking sign, complementing refreshed promotional materials used across programs and events.

Volunteers

The AHS Board of Directors provided thoughtful strategic and hands-on leadership throughout 2025, guiding the organization's work at Hillary House. Equally essential were the 48 volunteers who contributed approximately 1,815 hours of service across nearly every aspect of operations - from visitor services, programming, and community events to collections care, research, gardening, and ongoing maintenance of the historic property.

As a small heritage organization, the AHS relies deeply on the dedication and expertise of its volunteer community. Their skills, generosity, and commitment ensures that Hillary House remains a vibrant, well-cared-for National Historic Site and community hub.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all who contributed their time in 2025.

Contributions Based on Area of Volunteering

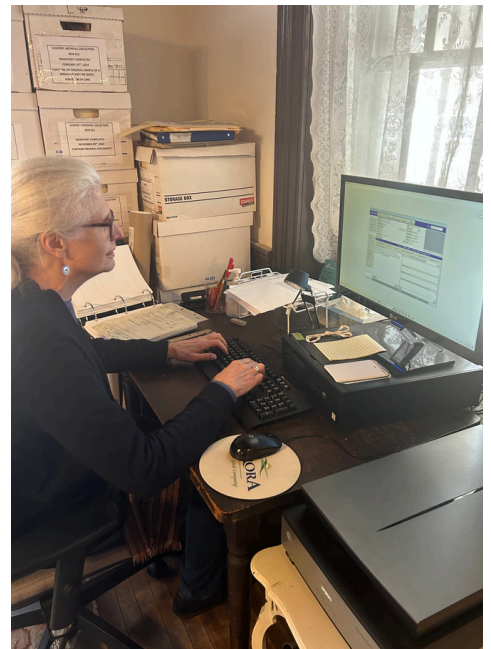
Board of Directors Management = 865 hours
Collections Projects = 518 hours
Garden & Landscape Maintenance = 251 hours
Event Assistance = 96 hours
I.T & Newsletter Assistance = 53 hours
Charitable Gaming = 32



Board Director Angela with the winner of Market Brewing bingo.



Volunteers from Garden Aurora after decorating Hillary House for the holiday season.



Collections and gardens volunteer Kate digitizing the archive collection.

Comparative Statistics

Performance Measure/Metric	2023	2024	2025
Exhibitions	2	3	3
Collections: Accessioned/Cataloged Artifacts and Archival Materials	9,541	13,345	2,139
Number of Programs and Special Events	62	51	43
Number of Individuals Reached: Admissions, Rentals, Programs, Outreach, Online	2,615 in person and virtually	2,383 in person and virtually	2,449 in person and virtually
Social Media Followers	9,241	9,255	9,234
Online Engagements	22,964	14,085	5,962
Membership Totals	146	150	150
Total Volunteers	51	65	48
Volunteer Totals (Hours)	2,036	1,751	1,815
Number of Sponsors and Event Donors	10	2	5
Revenue from Fundraising Events (Gross)/Donations/Other	\$32,187	\$45,836	\$60, 216
Grants Awarded	4	4	4
Grant Revenue	\$122,974	\$123,729	\$118,128



Participant at the Basics of Macrame Workshop, March 2025.



Paint Night at Hillary House, June 2026, in partnership with Royal Rose Gallery.

Financial Management

The AHS reached a turning point in 2025! By carefully managing our expenditures while augmenting our revenues by adding the funds achieved from our volunteer work with the Richmond Hill Hall Charities Association (Charitable Gaming) and a \$10,000 bequest from Claire Granie, we are reporting excess funds from operations of \$11,197.00. This marks a significant improvement from 2024, when the year closed with a \$22,501 deficit. We are pleased to report strong financial stewardship resulted in an overall positive shift.

With new energy infused on the Board and an incredibly talented and committed staff, we will strive to increase revenue while keeping costs down. For 2026, we have budgeted another operating surplus. With additional fundraising opportunities, our goal is to increase the percentage of revenue that we earn from charitable events, fundraising and charitable gaming, while keeping expenses in check in order to better fund our programming and special events.

We will continue to work with the Town of Aurora, our valued partner in the preservation of Hillary House National Historic Site, to ensure the proper restoration, maintenance, and preservation of the museum as a site of medical and architectural history.

Respectfully submitted,



Dan McGeown, AHS Treasurer

SUMMARY	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Revenue	\$178,344	\$169,565
Expenses	\$167,147	\$192,066
Excess Revenue/Expenses	\$11,197	-\$22,501

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Special Events & Fundraising	8%	6%
Charitable Gaming	13%	6.2%
Donations	8%	8.1%
Grants	66%	73%
Memberships	1%	1.1%
Sales & Other	4%	5.6%

Funding

GRANTS

The AHS secured several important grants in 2025 that played a vital role in sustaining operations and supporting staff capacity. The Community Museum Operating Grant (CMOG) from the Province of Ontario continued to provide core funding. Canada Summer Jobs and the Summer Employment Opportunities Grant (SEO) enabled the hiring of two 15-week summer staff, strengthening program delivery and collections work. The Town of Aurora further supported AHS through its Operating Grant, underscoring the municipality's ongoing commitment to the stewardship of Hillary House.

DONATIONS

The AHS is grateful for the generosity of its members and community, who contributed \$4,908 in donations in 2025. This support was complemented by a \$10,000 bequest from the Estate of Claire Granie, a dedicated Board member from 2015–2018 and an AHS Life Member. We deeply appreciate all who chose to support AHS this year.



Claire Granie and Christian Desenclos
at the 2016 Hillary House Ball.



Holiday Wreath-making Workshop,
November 2025.

CHARITABLE GAMING - RICHMOND HILL

In 2024, AHS took an important step toward diversifying its revenue by obtaining a lottery licence through the City of Richmond Hill and OLG and beginning Charitable Gaming assignments at Bingo World and Gaming – Richmond Hill. This initiative proved highly successful, generating \$23,125 in 2025 through the efforts of volunteers who represented AHS during each assignment. These funds have directly supported the ongoing operation of Hillary House and strengthened AHS's ability to offer meaningful programs, exhibitions, and community experiences. AHS looks forward to continuing this work in 2026.

Governance

BOARD RECRUITMENT & STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE

In early 2025, the AHS Board of Directors undertook a rigorous recruitment process to strengthen governance and ensure long-term organizational stability. This effort successfully brought the Board complement to its full capacity of nine members - the first time AHS has reached its maximum since 2020. The expanded Board brings a diverse range of experience, skills, and interests, enhancing AHS’s ability to provide strong oversight, strategic direction, and informed decision-making.

In addition to recruitment, the Board focused on strengthening overall governance practices throughout the year. New Board members participated in orientation and onboarding sessions to familiarize themselves with AHS policies, operations, and the stewardship responsibilities associated with managing Hillary House. The Board also reviewed key governance documents to ensure clarity of roles and effective oversight. Regular collaboration between Board and staff further supported informed decision-making and reinforced a shared commitment to organizational stability and long-term planning.



Dan, AHS Treasurer and Geoff, AHS Co-Chair at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce Home Show, April 2025.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR 2026–2031

With a full Board in place, the AHS began the development of its 2026–2031 Strategic Plan. This work drew on multiple sources of insight, beginning with the results of the 2024 public consultations conducted in partnership with the Town of Aurora, which provided valuable direction on community priorities and expectations for Hillary House. The Board balanced this community input with its own strategic perspectives and governance responsibilities, while staff contributed operational knowledge, program experience, and on-the-ground insights into feasibility and capacity. Together, these perspectives shaped a planning process that is both community-informed and organizationally grounded, ensuring that the next five-year plan reflects the needs of the public, the stewardship responsibilities of the Board, and the practical realities of operating a National Historic Site as a small non-profit charitable organization.

2026 Planned Activities

AHS BOARD & GOVERNANCE

The AHS Board will finalize the 2026–2031 Strategic Plan and begin implementing its priority actions according to the established timeline. This work will guide organizational focus and support staff as they move the plan into practice across programs, operations, and site stewardship.

STAFFING

Staffing capacity will remain a key focus, maintaining the current permanent staffing complement through 2026, while exploring opportunities to enhance seasonal and year-round operational coverage.

MAINTENANCE & RESTORATION

Routine maintenance projects will continue. The AHS will also endeavour to start critical restoration work on the foundation of Hillary House, supporting the long-term preservation of the National Historic Site. Furthermore, phase two of the new landscaping plan will continue under the guidance of the Landscaping Committee.



Hillary House, October 2025.

CURATORIAL ACTIVITIES & EXHIBITIONS

AHS will continue advancing collections care and documentation in 2026, with staff and volunteers carrying forward ongoing cataloguing projects in the Collections Room and Archives.

At Hillary House, the exhibition “Within These Walls: The Women of Hillary House” will highlight the stories of the many women who called the house home - narratives often overshadowed by the doctors who lived and practiced there. In addition, in collaboration with St. Andrew’s College and the Aurora Museum & Archives, AHS will present a display marking the 100th anniversary of SAC’s move to Aurora.

PROGRAMMING & OUTREACH

In 2026, 37 programs and special events are planned. AHS will focus on evaluating offerings and prioritizing programs that reach more visitors and deliver the greatest impact within available resources. The organization will continue working with community partners to broaden its reach and develop innovative offerings.

2025 Acknowledgements

GOVERNMENT FUNDERS

- Town of Aurora
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, Government of Ontario - Community Museum Operating Grant and Summer Employment Opportunities Grant
- Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada - Canada Summer Jobs
- Charitable Gaming - City of Richmond Hill

BUSINESS SUPPORTERS

- Aurora Today
- Delmanor Aurora
- Electronic Recycling Association
- Hurst Bakery
- Lesley's Party Sandwiches & Catering
- Tim Hortons - 304 Wellington St. E.
- Rent Source Aurora

COMMUNITY/HERITAGE PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

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



Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy
enjoying afternoon tea at the
Victorian Harvest Tea, September 2025.

ANNUAL APPEAL & GENERAL DONATIONS

- Arlene Adams
- Susan Aldridge
- Tessa Bair
- Sylvia Balicki-Jones
- Margaret Blackie
- Lawrence and Carol Crump
- Geoffrey Dawe
- Bill Fleury
- Claire Granie
- Robert and Angela Grattage
- Susan Hanna
- Michael Heath-Eves
- Marion Hillary
- Christine and Donald Hutchinson
- Darlene Mathews
- Jim McGuckin
- W. John McIntyre
- Sue Miller
- Bill and Nancy Newman
- Sharon Nisbet
- Shirley Pattenden
- Diane Rennie
- Marilyn Russell
- Rhonda Sanders
- Cindy Scythes
- John and Deborah Smale
- Jacqueline Stuart
- Paul van Nostrand
- Lesley Watterson
- Helen Yielding
- Tasleem Zulfi
- Shannon Buskermolen
- Robyn Corbett
- Jacob Dalal
- Geoffrey Dawe
- Paige Eadie
- Colin Guenther
- Linda Gargaro
- Nadia Gargaro
- John Green
- Lev Green-Wells
- Allyse Grodzinski
- Ronen Grunberg
- Selin Kahramanoğlu
- Sonia Koczekan
- Alan Lambert
- Terry Laurin
- Kaia Lee
- Taylor Leuofff
- Donna Lewis
- Camryn Mair
- Timothy McCuthcheon
- Dan McGeown
- John McIntyre
- Christine McLure
- Beatrice Moldoveanu
- Jai Nargas
- Mike Norris
- Hilary Oosterhof
- Heather Parno
- Layla Pasdernick
- Behrad Poorakbar
- Michelle Primeau
- Shane Rafferty
- Sonja Rebus
- Cindy Scythes
- Steve Scythes
- Jacqueline Stuart
- Tannaz Toyserkani
- Angela Trevivian
- Teodora Vassileva
- Lesley Watterson

VOLUNTEERS

- Darren Berezowski
- John Bare
- Marjorie Bare
- Linda Blatchford
- Kate Brewitt
- Wendy Browne
- Sandy Bundy
- Lesley Watterson

Contact Us



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THANK YOU!