

## Co-Chairs Update | October 2021

*The Elora Centre for the Arts is a unique community resource that fosters creativity, a high level of artistic expression, and the belief that a vibrant arts centre is integral to the health of our community. (Vision statement reconfirmed at Interim Strategic Planning, Fall 2020)*

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### Save the date!

ECFTA Annual General Meeting Zoom – **Wednesday, November 24, 7- 8:30 pm** – zoom link will be sent out the week prior. Please join us for highlights of the past year and the chance to meet Staff, Directors and our new Executive!

This update is both a farewell and a celebration of future life at the Centre. We will formally end our term as co-chairs at the AGM in November, remaining on as directors until March 2022. A huge welcome to Deepti Celetti and Kathryn Giffen who will assume the co-chair roles as of November 24<sup>th</sup>. Deepti and Kathryn both joined the ECFTA Board in June of 2019. Our community is very lucky to have such talented individuals willing to guide the Board over the next phase of it's evolution. Deepti comes to the ECFTA with professional experience in education and community development as well as being the amazing chef/fundraiser for our Indian dinner of 2019. Kathryn brings legal and governance expertise and has just wound up her term as Chair of the Canadian Sports Institute of Ontario. They both believe in the power of contributing to one's community. ECFTA is in good hands!

Berry Smith, the wonderful Secretary of the ECFTA Board since October, 2015 has completed his six-year term. Berry has been our in-house parliamentarian: having provided concise agendas and meeting minutes, sage advice re bylaws and changes in not-for-profit legislation, and well-run AGMs. We are so grateful to Berry for his thoughtful questions and comments during meetings, and for the hours he has spent ensuring that ECFTA is run with clarity and transparency. His final contribution this fall was the updating and re-writing of Bylaw #4, replacing it with Bylaw #5. Over the last months Berry has been working with Ellen Helps, who joined the Board in the fall of 2019, and she is now the new Secretary. We are extremely happy to see Ellen taking on this chunk of work for the Board. ECFTA benefits from her strong writing skills and interest in policy, as well as her term of being the Co-Chair of the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival Board.

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## Summer & Fall Highlights

**Staff** – ECFTA has attracted an extremely dedicated and talented staff over the past years. The success of our in-house and outreach programs, artisan shop, satellite gallery at The Mill, long and short term rentals, and Covid19 interim plans is due to their dynamic energy. We appreciate all that they contribute to making ECFTA a vibrant community hub.

Lianne Carter – Executive Director

Judy Anderson – Programming & Arts Administrator

Sonia Cheng – Administrator

Molly Kleiker – Grant Writer

Jody Mount – newly hired Artisan Shop & Gallery Coordinator

Stephanie Lines Toohill - Mindfulness Coach and Supportive Arts Assistant

To find out more about our staff, please visit our [website](#).

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## A look back on our Programs & Exhibitions



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### Re-Opening in June: Kicking off Summer & Fall action in the building & yard

The Centre re-opened in June of this year, launching **7 summer camps** in the outside tent, Yangyang Pan's **exhibition EIPHANY** in the Minarovich Gallery, and a reinvigorated **Artisan Shop**.

A second **exhibition** launched in August, with a wonderful artist reception for '**Earth Poems**' with Janice Mason Steeves and Pearl Van Geest.

The **Fergus Elora Studio Tour** gallery exhibition followed and we welcomed hundreds of visitors over the two weekends of the tour. Many of the artists said it was the best year since the Tour began. Currently we are featuring our latest exhibition by local artist Callie Grey, '**Everything in it's Right Place**'.

**In our yard** we hosted yoga and karate classes, community and private events in the tent - including **Riverfest's** mini 'Wish You Were Here' festival and **Elora Community Theatre's** outdoor theatre events.

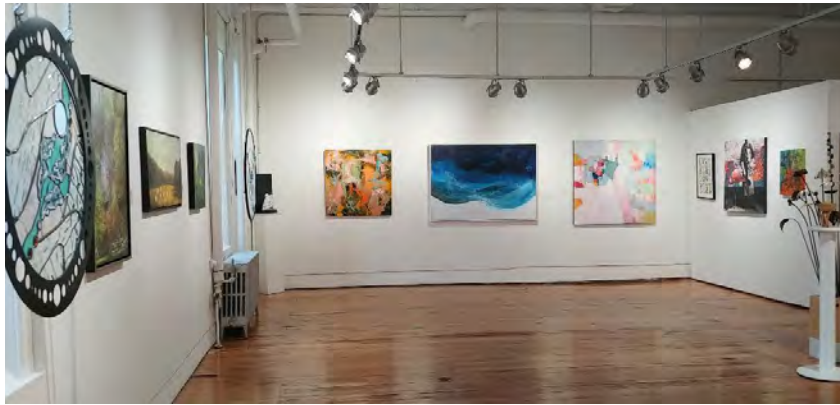
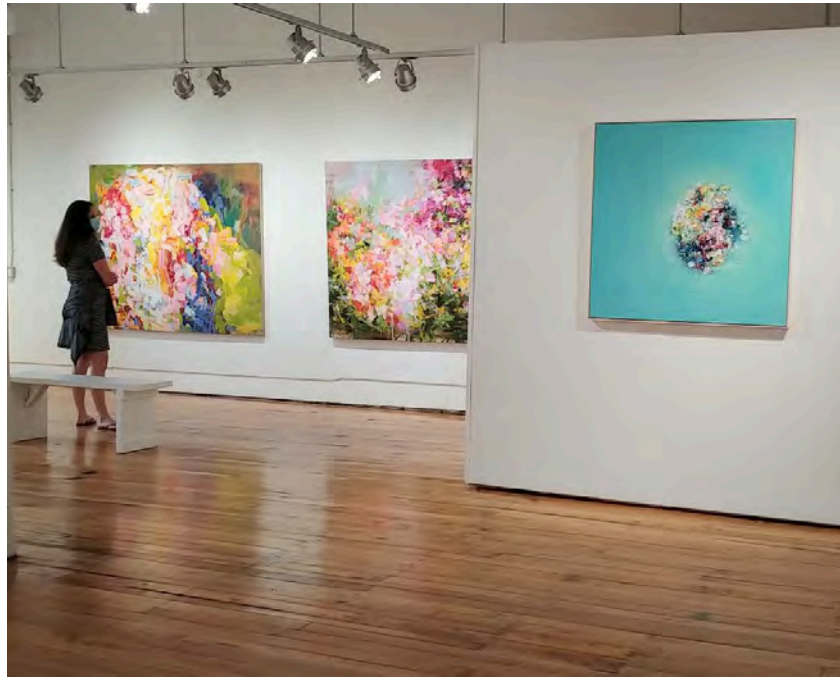
**Supportive Arts was back to in-person this September!** Our expanded Supportive Arts

program (funded by the OTF grant) is back on site after a year of virtual sessions! It is magic to see how Judy Anderson and Steph Toohill have developed such compelling programs through Covid and beyond.

We also curated and organized new **original art installed at the Elora Mill**, including Barry McCarthy, Yangyang Pan and new work from Rachel Albano.

All ECFTA rentals and activities follow Public Health guidelines.







Images from top: outdoor summer camp fun under the big Tent, 'Epiphany' exhibition, Elora Fergus Studio Tour gallery exhibition, local artisans and makers dropping off their handmade items for the Artisan Shop, Supportive Arts program for young adults with (dis)abilities back to in-person sessions, Riverfest mini event in the yard - shown here The Trews on stage (photo credit Wayne Simpson).

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## Finance & Capital Expansion

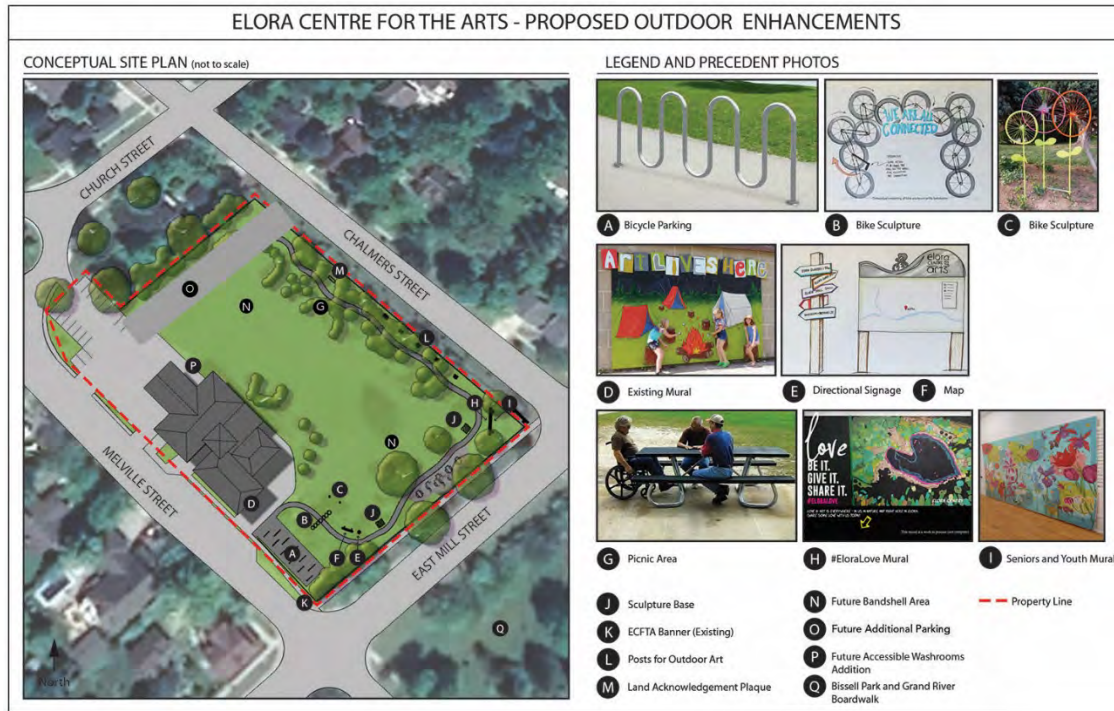
**Brad Henderson**, who joined as a director in January, 2021, has assumed the role of **Treasurer**, taking over from Lee Bonnell who remains on the Board as a director. ECFTA is fortunate to have Brad's accounting talents and his knowledge of granting systems. He has been working with Sonia Cheng to get accounts aligned for more accurate budgeting and forecasting.

The Centre benefitted from the federal and provincial programs that were established to mitigate the lack of revenue during the lockdowns. We are now beginning to see revenue streams pick up as the support programs taper off. Our grant revenue, including government support programs, has been successful - \$232,310 over the 2020-21 fiscal year. These funds have been invested in upgrading technology, our satellite learning space, summer camps and summer students, air purifying systems, 1500 square foot outdoor tent, marketing support for our planned sculpture garden, salary support for a new curatorial position, and additional funding for the accessible washrooms included in our capital expansion plan. Kudos to Lianne and Molly for their exceptional teamwork in fine tuning programs, and preparing applications and budgets for these grants.

As we await final confirmation from the **Canada Cultural Spaces Fund** grant application that we submitted for our building expansion we are excited about the **fundraising initiatives** related to our capital project! Stay tuned for more details in the near future! We offer thanks to SRM Architect, **Edward Thomas**, who has been so instrumental in the conceptual planning stage, and who will guide us through the process as the funding becomes available. The planned expansion, based on the original grant from the MacDonald Legacy Fund, includes a new and accessible entrance with an atrium, accessible washrooms, storage space, and an upgraded kitchenette. Our goal is to enhance the multi-use facilities at ECFTA, ensuring that the Centre can be used by a broad spectrum of the community.

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# Outdoor Plans: Community-use Pathways Project featuring outdoor art



Our "Paths that Connect Us" project is underway. You may recall that we received a federal grant through the Community Foundations of Canada to enhance public outdoor spaces, in response to Covid. Our 2-acre property is about to get a face lift to make it more engaging for our community including accessible 450 ft. of pathways, outdoor art installations (artists have been selected and are hard at work), a community bike map, bicycle parking, picnic table area and more! Construction begins in a few weeks, with art installations planned for early Spring. Stay tuned for updates!

We also have plans in development for an **outdoor MacDonald Pavilion** in the yard that will allow for community use and outdoor performances in the future. Timing for this installation is Fall 2022.

## Interim Strategic Plan

Given all the changes that came with Covid19, the Board and Staff developed an interim plan in the fall of 2020 to take us through 2021. Our staff has rebooked and re-planned weddings and events that had to be delayed. Resources have been channeled into developing technology, marketing programs and exhibits, finding grants to support existing programs and staffing, and



keeping in touch with the needs in our community. One of the ongoing goals for the Board which will need to be addressed significantly in 2021-22 is fundraising, particularly a promotion for monthly donors and a search for corporate sponsors. These initiatives will be in tandem with our upcoming capital campaign.

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## Farewell from the Co-Chairs



It has been hard work, many hours, and a great honour to contribute to the “rebuilding” of the Centre since March, 2016. A community-based direction for ECFTA grew as we were able to re-engage tenants (and revenue) and gradually bring programs back to the Casson Room and exhibits back to the galleries. A visit to a Supportive Arts session on Tuesday mornings brings it all to light: individuals gathering, the guidance of artists who know the power of creative expression - trust, awareness and joy.

We wish Deepti and Kathryn all the best as they take over. We will be nearby, and continuing as community members to guide and fundraise for the Capital Expansion Project. Thank you to all who have contributed so much to ECFTA since 2002 – artists, artisans, volunteers, tenants, staff, board members, program participants, event goers, donors, neighbours – you make the Centre a community hub where the arts and Elora love reside.

Sheila & Matt  
Retiring CoChairs

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## The Elora Centre for the Arts



**The Elora Centre for the Arts exists to serve our community.** We are a not-for-profit charity, run by a Board of volunteers from our community and a small committed staff team. It is for the love of art and creativity, and the ways we can nurture, heal and support each other through the arts, that we exist.