



## A Message from our Co-Chairs, October 2019

Fall Update from the ECFTA Co-Chairs

Arts, culture, and heritage are viewed not only as amenities to improve the quality of life, but as a foundation upon which the future of these rural/small communities rests. The arts and creative activities can profoundly affect the ability of a town not only to survive over time, but to thrive.

*Quoted in the Community Foundations of Canada report, VITAL SIGNS – ARTS & BELONGING Engagement*

Greetings to all our members and community supporters! It has been another year full of change and growth at ECFTA and we want to start this communiqué with a huge thank you to our wonderful staff for all their energy, commitment and adaptability.

Lianne Carter – Executive Director

Judy Anderson - Programming & Arts Administrator

Molly Kleiker – Office Administrator

Kerry Reid - Bookkeeper

We welcome Molly back from her maternity leave and thank Kim Blair for covering the Administrator position so well during Molly's absence.

If you felt the ECFTA seemed to be bustling with activity over the past year you were right! Here is a quick look at the statistics on our user engagements:

Involvement of 300 artists (including 130 elementary and high school artists involved in our spring Planet Youth exhibition, "See The Forest Through the Trees" in support of mental health)

9,745 gallery visitors

2,000 visitors attended our weekend outdoor art festival, "Creative Spark in the Yard"

1,039 participants in art workshops

Establishment of the ECFTA satellite gallery at the Elora Mill where 6 regional artists exhibit work

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This represents an exciting overall increase from the previous year's 7000 touch points to 12,784!

### Our Facilities

Staff and Board have been able to prioritize and complete many building improvements throughout 2019 with the assistance of a generous grant from The Township of Centre Wellington for capital expenses. This has included: a monthly boiler maintenance program, fire code and electrical upgrades, main floor washroom renovations, proper directional signage, ceiling replacement and painting in the third floor dance academy space and the installation of proper lighting in the Harris Gallery. The municipality has also included us in their schedule for building audits. This will be completed by spring 2020 and will help to guide future capital expenditures.

In addition, we are currently reviewing our design plan drawings from SRM Architects for the renovations covered by the MacDonald Legacy Fund grant. Work on new accessible washrooms, and an enhanced and accessible front entrance is now being scheduled. We have been in preliminary discussions with the Gorge Cinema about the possibility of building a new cinema on our site. This is a long-term growth project that requires more research and a big chunk of funding. We will keep you updated.

### Our Programs

Assessing the needs in our community and discovering how to meet these needs through the arts has become central to our programming over the last year. Lianne and Judy have worked hard to develop links throughout Centre Wellington and the results have been fantastic!

Wander to the south entrance and see the children's sculpture, 'Chairway to Heaven', a 21 foot high testament to perseverance and that the sky truly is the limit

Across from the sculpture you will see our new selfie wall, another collaborative children's project that encourages everyone to get outside into nature and remind us that "art lives here".

Look for the newly published book, 'See the Forest Through the Trees' (on sale in November at our pop-up shop) – the culmination of the wonderful Planet Youth exhibit last spring in support of youth mental health.

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Visit the Centre on Thursday mornings and see the engagement of our Supportive Arts participants. Our program combines wonderful art instruction in our classroom with singing to the grand piano in the gallery, in partnership with Elora Singers. This is a true community-based program and relies on our dedicated staff and volunteers.

We look forward to the start of a new weekly arts program with the residents of Portage Addiction Recovery Centre (see more detail in "fundraising" section below)

For a list of our fall adult workshops please visit our website.

For information on our PD day Art Incubator full day camps please click here.

### Our Exhibitions

The aim for the galleries this year is to focus on dynamic experiences where visitors feel they belong. Our "learn it, touch it, try it" approach utilizes technology to teach and inspire.

"It's opening the doors of arts galleries to many different voices, relinquishing authority but not giving up your expertise. You have to invite people into a space where their knowledge and feelings are as valid as the curator".

Heidi Reitmaier, Deputy Director and Chief of Public Programming and Learning, AGO

"Active engagement is crucial for a community arts hub. It's vital to link issues that matter to people in our community to look at things differently and connect art/creativity to living a better life". - Culture Track Canada Report

The goal with our exhibits in the first part of 2020 is to build community and belonging through engaging and interactive exhibitions:

The Art of Dance: how technology captures motion & influences the creative process - a behind the scenes experience featuring the work of glass artist Jerre Davidson (Minarovich Gallery – January-March)

Animation & Cartoons: Behind-the-scenes of Animation with "try it" animation & technology stations featuring the work of Julianna Cox and Payton Cox (Harris Gallery – January- March)

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Art in the Great Outdoors: Featuring famous artists inspired by the great outdoors - engagement of the 5 senses in a virtual reality "campsite" setting - utilizing virtual reality technology so that visitors are literally "Art Gazing in the Great Indoors". (Minarovich Gallery – March-May).

March will also see the launch of the curated Permanent Wall in the Harris Gallery where local artists will be able to reserve a wall for their work. Our artisan shop has been very well received and we will continue to feature artist-designed, handmade and/or eco-friendly products throughout the year in the Harris gallery.

The ECFTA satellite gallery at The Mill has been a great success. This gallery is curated by ECFTA in collaboration with staff and designer at The Mill. All sales of art go through ECFTA and we are pleased that 5 works were sold in our first collection of paintings and photographs. Again, congratulations to Lianne Carter for her incredible work in establishing this gallery. Wonderful exposure for local artists and for ECFTA!

To see what is happening now in our galleries, visit our website and select "exhibitions".

### Fundraising

We are very excited that our newly established Fundraising Advisory Bunch (FAB!) will be gathering in early October to review our fundraising goal and strategies for 2020.

An increased focus on fundraising at the ECFTA will contribute to our goal of long term sustainability at the Centre. Fundraising is also a good companion to the challenging world of researching, writing and receiving grants in an increasingly difficult sector.

Income from fundraising and grants helps tremendously with delivering our charitable mandate. Some of the areas of our operations that benefit are:

Programming - the highest priority! We are excited about our direction for this year:

Our weekly all-abilities Supportive Arts program for adults 18+ with learning (dis)abilities celebrating art and music in partnership with Elora Singers

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School Art Outreach Program - taking "art on the road" to fill the gap in reduced arts funding and support the value of the creative process to our well-being and building resilience.

Youth Mental Health Program - Utilizing art and creativity to open up gateways of discussion with youth. Planet Youth 2020 #therealselfieproject outreach program for elementary and high school students, includes self-reflection, the artistic process, and a 3 week youth exhibition.

Youth & Addiction Recovery: The Healing Power of Art & Creative Expression - through art and reflection in collaboration with professionals, this program uses creativity and imagination to work together and independently to expand forms of communication in order to better convey their experiences and recovery - this program is ready to go and just needs funding!

Publishing - printing costs for the photo book version of this past year's Planet Youth program 'See the Forest Through the Trees' in support of youth mental health.

Renovations & Improvements - additional funds for completing accessible washrooms and expanded foyer (as our plans include redoing the kitchenette at the same time).

The most important strategy for our fundraising plan this year is to develop our donor base. We will work on this in concert with a 2020 membership drive.

### **Annual General Meeting**

Mark your calendars now! Thursday, November 14 from 6-8 pm. We'll have refreshments and some light entertainment from 6-7PM, and then our meeting from 7-8PM.

Thank you for your support

As always, thank you for your support. It really is amazing to see how ECFTA has evolved over the past few years. With the recent release of the Centre Wellington Community Foundation Vital Signs Report, we are able to track the ECFTA response to the needs in our community, ensuring that the arts are helping to shape the sense of belonging that is so important. At each event, when we see

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our old friends and greet new visitors, we are reminded of the importance of gathering and celebrating creativity and the arts.

Fostering Creativity, Fostering Community.

Sheila Koop and Matt Ladner

CoChairs, ECFTA

**Join us this Thursday night at 7PM in the gallery**

Thursday October 10th at 7PM

'The Air Conditioned Nightmare' launches this Thursday night at the Elora Centre for the Arts! Everyone is welcome to meet us in the gallery at 7PM, and enjoy cocktails from our friends at The Porch Light!

Tim's exhibition is a social commentary using satire and dark humour, often from a place of human disconnection and isolation, to shine a black light on the underbelly of our corporate world. "The Air Conditioned Nightmare is a dark and humorous look at the absurdities of modern day existence", says Murton. "It's not pretty, but hopefully thought-provoking" he says.

The exhibition will run during Monster Month in Elora & Fergus and continue until November 17th. Admission is free.

**Fall workshops to inspire creativity**

Make sure you check out our fall line-up of adult creative workshops for all skill levels. A reminder that there are 2 PD days in November - there are a few spots are left in our Arts Incubator all-day camps.

For information or to register please visit <https://eloracentreforthearts.ca/>

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ECFTA GALLERY IS OPEN 6 DAYS A WEEK

Tuesday - Friday: 12PM - 5PM

Saturdays: 10AM - 5PM

Sundays: 12PM - 4PM

Stay connected with what's going on at the Elora Centre for the Arts by visiting our website, liking us on Facebook, or following us on Instagram.

