



ECFTA MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD – AGM 2024 (fiscal year 2023-24)

Deepti Celetti and Kathryn Giffen

Good evening, everyone!

On behalf of my co-Chair Kathryn Giffen and the Board of Directors and Staff here at the Arts Centre, I want to extend a heartfelt welcome to each and every one of you. It is truly a pleasure to see so many familiar faces and new ones as well, gathered here tonight. Your presence is a testament to the incredible spirit of our community. Kathryn and Molly are currently presenting at the Town Council meeting on our behalf, and she will be joining us as soon as she can.

We are constantly reminded that “it takes a village” to build a strong and thriving community, and that has never been more true than here at the Arts Centre. We are incredibly fortunate to have a staff team that is passionate, dedicated, and deeply believes in the work we do to serve this vibrant community. And, of course, we are deeply grateful for our wonderful volunteers, who consistently go above and beyond to help bring our programs to life.

Our new tagline, “Find Yourself at the Centre,” really captures the essence of what we hope to provide here. This is a place where each person can discover something that resonates with them—whether it’s through art, performance, learning, or connection. We want you to feel that this is a space where you can not only participate but truly engage and thrive. Just as a sportsplex or rec centre serves as a gathering place for physical activity, we are here as the hub for bringing people together through the arts.

This Arts Centre is for you, the community. It's a place where creativity flows, ideas are sparked, and connections are made. Whether you're here to discover a new passion, explore your creativity, or simply enjoy the many programs we offer, we want you to feel at home.

Thank you for being part of this incredible journey with us. We are so grateful for your continued support and involvement, and we look forward to another year of growth, creativity, and community-building together.

Kathryn and I wanted to take a moment to highlight a few of the top-line successes before we dive into the more detailed year-in-review that Lianne will be walking us through.

Strategic and Financial Guidance:

- Throughout the year, we've continued to be guided by our **Strategic Plan** and our **financial plan**, ensuring that every step we take aligns with our long-term goals for sustainability and community impact.

Strengthened Sub-Committees:

- We've seen real progress through the hard work of our **sub-committees: the Governance Committee, Finance Committee, Building Committee, Capital Campaign Committee, ECFTA Fundraising/Gala Committee, Young Philanthropist Group, and the CAPCAM Cabinet and Advisors**. Their dedication has been instrumental in moving us forward.

Dedicated Board of Directors:

- Our **Board of Directors** continues to be a dynamic and engaged group, bringing a wide range of skills and experiences. We are deeply committed to ensuring the Centre's sustainability and long-term impact in our community.

Grant Success:

- This year, we've seen **great success with grant applications**, both for ongoing programming and for our ambitious **capital expansion project**—ensuring that we are well-resourced to support our goals.

Financial Health:

- I'm happy to report that our finances remain **in great shape**, which you will hear more about in detail as our Treasurer Jean Pritchard walks us through the financial updates tonight.

Capital Campaign Progress:

- One of the most exciting milestones this year has been the progress on our **Capital Campaign**. We've made incredible strides, culminating in the **launch of our public fundraising campaign this past September** and the **groundbreaking in October**. While this won't be part of tonight's fiscal report, it marks a significant achievement in our journey, and we will give you an update at the end of the agenda when we give you a glimpse at our plans for the year ahead.

Record-Breaking Visitor Numbers:

- We've also seen a tremendous uptick in the number of people visiting the Arts Centre. This year alone, we welcomed:
 - **22,932 visitors** to the gallery, classrooms, yard, and artisan shop.
 - **50,000 visitors** when we include the traffic generated by our arts-based tenants.
- Clearly, the Arts Centre is becoming more of a **hub of creativity** for our community!

Thriving Programs:

- Our programs, both for **adults** and **children**, continue to thrive and grow, offering more opportunities than ever for individuals to engage with the arts.

Summer Pavilion Activation:

- This summer, we were excited to see the **new pavilion** come to life, with the community embracing it in ways that really brought it into the heart of our activities.

Facility Upgrades:

- Thanks to **grant funding**, we completed several **building upgrades**, including an **accessible door** at the south end and a **fire escape replacement**, making our spaces safer and more welcoming.

Building Community Relationships:

- Our relationships with **community organizations** and **individual donors** continue to strengthen, providing the foundation for sustained growth and support for the Centre in the future. We've also created more organized ways of cultivating donors and supporting our fundraising efforts, ensuring our long-term sustainability.

As you can see, it's been an incredibly busy and impactful year, full of growth, progress, and new opportunities for all of us.

And with that, it's my pleasure to hand over the microphone to our **Executive Director, Lianne Carter**, who will now walk us through a detailed report of the past year and highlight all of the amazing activities, growth, and impact we've experienced together.

Thank you again for your support and dedication to the Arts Centre.

Lianne, over to you!