

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE MUSEUM & Community Centre



"An Evening with Sir John A. Macdonald" dinner



Volunteer cooking in the heritage kitchen



Summer Camps

Young volunteer at our Christmas event



Facility Rentals



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum & Community Centre Annual Report 2015

Education/ Programming

Our School/ Programming revenue line exceeded budget projections for this year and increased a modest – but positive – 5% when compared to 2014 revenues.

At the beginning of the year, schools were notified that our new program “Discover First Nations” was available for booking. (This program ran as a trial in November of 2014 and then was tweaked based on feedback from the test school.) We also added information to our website assisting teachers to make curriculum connections to our education programs.



In addition to our school programming, we hosted several day camp programs over the summer, Beavers and Sparks, and other group tours.

Our March Break Camp – with a theme of “Amazing Race” was sold out, as was our Easter “Hop-penings” children’s workshop in April. Children got to make an Easter craft and go on an Easter egg hunt around the museum. Other children’s workshops included “Valentine’s Day Cupcakes and Cards”, “Ghoul-icious” near Halloween and “Elves in the Workshop” before Christmas. We also continued to offer programming for preschoolers. Our “Animal Tales” program starts with sharing an animal-related story, then the guests take a trip to a heritage building (when possible) and then create a theme-appropriate craft or baked treat.

In response to the success of last year’s camps, we added another full week of camp for a total of seven weeks. Two of the camps - both with cooking themes - were sold out with waiting lists. Other camp themes included: Mystic Museum, Art Adventures, Mix & Match, and Wacky Wheels. Our Programmer and Camp Counsellors continue to bring in theme “experts” to enhance the campers’ experience. For example, one of our Parks staff talked to the campers about creating container gardens and each one took home a beautiful pot full of herbs!



Museum staff set up a learning station during the ‘Keep Calm and Get Your Spark On’ conference for Librarians at the North York Central Library of Toronto Public. The goal of the presentation was to demonstrate ‘station based – self-directed’ museum programming in order to encourage librarians to incorporate these techniques in their programming.



Summer students and interns assisted with updating exhibits and new heritage-themed hands-on baskets in our Discovery Room. Families continue to enjoy exploring the many options and learning opportunities in this space, and it is important for us to change the themes and exhibits there to encourage return visitation. (For our summer students, we gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada (Youth Employment Strategy) through the Department of Canadian Heritage for the Young Canada Works Program.)

Collections Management

Inventories were completed in the Barn and Shed. As this inventory was completed, numerous items were identified for deaccession.

Just over 200 items were added to the Museum's collection, including:

- A collection of items from a local resident who served in World War II, including his RCAF jacket and hat, his military issue suitcase sewing kit, shaving kit and toothpaste! Numerous photos showing some more casual time were also donated and will make for excellent story telling in the future. (See 2015.3.2.1,.2; 2015.3.2, 2015.3.4, and 2015.3.24.)
- Several photos connected to the Grove family of Whitchurch. (See 2015.1.38) This collection included an amazing original photo of Daley's Hall in downtown Stouffville. This building was built in 1885 and was a main meeting point in the Town at one time. It held a farmer's market on the main level and a dance hall on the second floor. It burned in 1923. (See 2015.1.39) The collection also included an indenture for a 12 year old young man, signed by his widowed mother in 1897. She was apprenticing him to a farmer until the age of 21, and the boy agrees not to marry before his term is ended, nor play dice, nor "unlawfull games," while the farmer agrees to instruct him in farming methods, see that he attends church and school, and pay for his funeral if he dies before age 18. It is the first indenture we have in the collection.
- A beautiful bedroom chair, one of a pair. Family history dates the chair to the 1870s and belonging to Anthony and Mary Ann (Bartholomew) Hamilton. The chairs were saved from a fire at the family's home in 1900. (See 2015.5.1)
- The Tweedsmuir history from the Bogarttown Women's Institute. These books contain a wealth of information about early community life. (See 2015.9.1)
- A lovely communion set with an interesting carrying handle from the Ballantrae United Church. The church's earliest records date back to 1878, although this set is probably newer than that. (See 2015.8.2)

2015.3.24 – donor wearing jacket and cap shown at right



2015.3.3



2015.3.2.1,.2

2015.3.4



2015.1.38 – Photo taken during threshing bee. The rail cars appear to be moving over temporary tracks. Very interesting!



2015.1.39



2015.5.1



2015.9.1



2015.8.2



Special Events

Two FREE admission days were provided at the Museum this year – one being the closest Saturday to International Museums' Day and the other being the Saturday of "Culture Days" in the fall.

Highlights included:



- The Museum presented the 11th annual Doors Open Whitchurch-Stouffville on June 6th. This year's event had 12 sites & an historic walking tour that promoted the provincial theme of local sport's heritage. Six sites were new, three sites participated in 2014, and the remaining sites had participated in previous years. Promotional videos were created for each participating site by planning committee members to increase the event's online profile. There were approximately 3706 site visits (best attendance to-date) and approximately 118 volunteers contributed a total of 630 hours to this event. One of our sites, "Tree Top Trekking" was named on the provincial Doors Open website as one of the top 10 "Kid Friendly" sites to



- Dove Workshop: This event was offered free of charge for young girls and their mentors was full for the second year in a row. To complement Dove's national campaign, this workshop focusses on improving self-esteem and individual empowerment.

- Haunted Museum: For the second year in a row, this popular event was held. Wellington County Paranormal Investigators shared their research results with guests, and led them on their own ghost tracking in our 19th century farmhouse.

- An Evening with...Sir John A. Macdonald: This was another new and successful event to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Macdonald's birthday. Re-enactors, Sir John A. and his wife, hosted a discussion accompanied by a five course Victorian-style dinner. The menu was based on a Museum artifact detailing an 1881 fundraising dinner held in Sir John's honour. This event was sold out and received rave reviews.



Our regular annual events - Pancake Brunch, Antique and Classic Car Show, Victorian Tea, and Candlelight Christmas Tour – continued. Revenue from the Car Show transferred the largest amount to date into the Car Show Reserve.

Facilities and Maintenance

Projects completed in 2015 included:

- Extension of the fire laneway to meet the laneway near the tennis courts
- Completion of deck replacement at front of Bogarttown
- A re-created General Store – wall and service counter – was completed.
- A leak in the Vandorf Public School was identified in November. As the temps were too cold for complete re-roofing at that time, the roof was patched and this item has been added to the capital budget list for next year.
- We also received quotes for sound baffles in the Main Foyer although installation has been targeted for 2016. The installation of these pieces should help reduce high noise levels in this very “live” area.

Projects anticipated in 2015, but carried over to 2016:

- Additional camera(s) installed for security system on north side of Bogarttown and in Vandorf exhibition room; additional piso on Vandorf basement door
- Completion of brickwork repair at front of Bogarttown
- Tie-in of heritage buildings to fire panel in Main building

Minor maintenance jobs were completed by volunteers – small repairs and paint jobs, etc.

Volunteers completed the annual building review using our Building Inventory Survey Sheets. Any areas requiring attention are noted on these sheets and staff use this information to prioritize needs for the following year.

Staff are currently cycling three hygrometers through our exhibition and storage spaces to track any temperature and humidity fluctuations. We also purchased a light meter and are tracking light levels in various exhibition spaces.

Planning has begun for a major project in the Bogarttown Schoolhouse. The goal is to return the classroom on the main floor back to its full width. This will include the removal of the wall that used to separate the schoolroom from former office spaces, reworking of the pressed tin ceiling and some lighting and likely refinishing or replacement of the wood floors. We already have additional school desks and some additional slate boards ready and waiting to be added to the updated space.

As usual, the Museum hosted spring and fall work bees to plant and clean up gardens and grounds, as well as conduct thorough cleanings of the Cabin, Brown House, and Barn.

Exhibits

The Museum created several exhibits this year:



"Small Town Theatres" (winter exhibit).

We brought in an exhibit from the Archives of Ontario and supplemented it with our own artifacts and research. Our contribution focused on our own downtown Stanley Theatre and the types of entertainments that early townspeople would have enjoyed there.

Annual Exhibit, "Fun and Games in Whitchurch-Stouffville" (summer exhibit). To complement Toronto's hosting of the Pan Am Games, this exhibit allowed to visitor to walk through each of the seasons and engage with the past as they looked at some of the favourite sports and leisure pastimes for early residents of our community.



"Eat, Sleep, Play: A Child's Life" (fall exhibit):

This exhibit explored what it was like to be a child many years ago. Items were borrowed from local residents and Richmond Hill Heritage Centre's collection. Guests were encouraged to share their favorite childhood toy memory as part of their exhibit experience.



“Permanent Exhibit on the history of Whitchurch-Stouffville”

Following renovations to our Vandorf Public School, we celebrated the completion of the museum’s first permanent exhibit in November with an official catered opening. The exhibit traces the developments of the communities, resulting in the creation of our current municipality in 1971. A beautiful full wall size timeline, showcasing important dates in the history of the community and a re-created general store are highlights. Plans are to change certain portions of this exhibit annually to keep it fresh and to encourage repeat visitation.



With the goal to get more of our framed prints out on display, staff chose seasonally connected images and hung them in our Main Hall.

Our summer students and interns contributed immensely to the development and installation of the permanent exhibition. Our Centennial intern created several exhibits for our Main foyer with themes of spring/ floral items, artifacts celebrating the “International Year of Light”, and a mourning exhibit to complement our Halloween programming.

To celebrate (and to promote) the 11th anniversary of Doors Open W-S, we put up a temporary exhibit in the Library case for the month of May. And we created small displays to help enhance the atmosphere for our dinner event “An Evening With...Sir John A. Macdonald”.



Volunteers

In 2015, the Museum received assistance from 84 volunteers (including 19 youth or high school volunteers), giving 2115 hours for the year and including 14 **new** volunteers. Given that our overall volunteer numbers decreased, this number of hours given is even more amazing! When you consider that a full time staff person works 1820, we gained the equivalent of 1.15 staff people or 302 full workdays of assistance. Amazing!

For this year's volunteer dinner – scheduled during National Volunteer Week – our curator Stephanie Foley showed us her non-work related talents as her Sweet Adelines International competitive quartet entertained us. Quartet members introduced guests to the four part acapella art form and discussed details about competition, coaching, and music selection. Board members and staff cook the dinner for our volunteers so they can relax and enjoy the evening.



In 2014, we identified that close to 1/3 of the photo collection had not yet been digitized and volunteers began scanning those items. This project was completed this year. This is a great help to staff as they prepare exhibitions, but also to researchers looking to do historical research and family genealogy.



Using results compiled by a focus group of volunteers, research and installation of the museum's first permanent exhibition was completed. Volunteers were primarily responsible for choosing and populating the re-created General Store component of this exhibit, as well as pulling many other items needed for this display.

Our team of Collections Management focused volunteers assisted by completing accession sheets for newly received items and condition reported items coming off exhibit and returned them to storage.

For the second year in a row, we continued to receive much-needed help from youth volunteers who assisted in our summer camps. These young people helped with behind-the-scenes prep for craft projects or clean-up which allowed our counsellors to concentrate on the campers themselves.

Volunteers also assisted us in all areas of operations, including special event delivery, garden and building maintenance, exhibition preparation, food services and general organization. We obviously could not accomplish all that we do here without the help of our fantastic volunteers!



Marketing

With increased funding for marketing available, the Museum has been able to have a larger presence in the local papers. Advertising has been taken out for rental-specific target audiences as well – specifically www.intimateweddings.com. We also took out an ad in Wedding Belles magazine (Spring/Summer issue) and advertised with www.schoolshows.ca. This new website is intended to inform teachers about curriculum-related field trips. We will monitor this year's bookings and hope the website will assist in increasing our educational bookings.

Flyers for our special events and programs (like the one on the right) are created in house. We continue to participate on social media through the Town's Facebook page and Twitter account. The Town's Facebook page has 1269 (a 75% increase over last year) likes and the Twitter page has 1395 followers (an increase of 36%).

"#ThrowbackThursday" continues every 4th Thursday of the month. A photograph or image was uploaded on these target dates with the intention to create general conversation and interest in the community, the Museum, and the collection. We will monitor posts for comments, shares, likes etc.

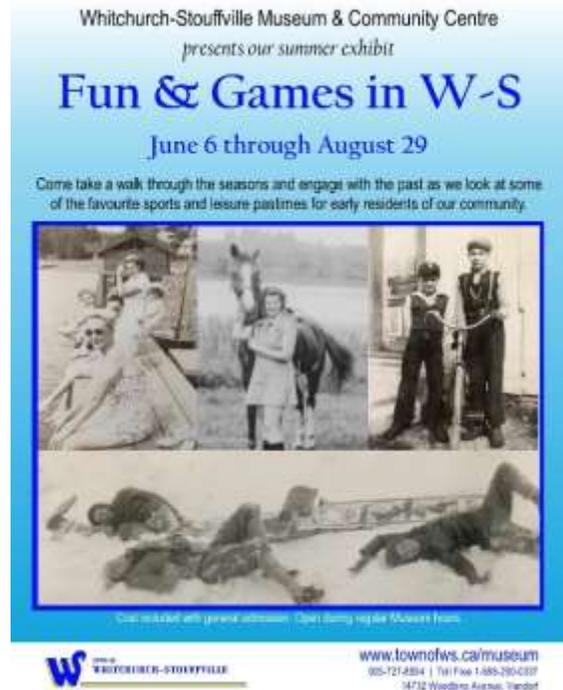
Our winter interns have worked with our Programmer to plan the social media schedule for the year – which can be input early in the year to automatically post on our target dates. Not only has this assistance helped staff but it has given the intern practical experience in this area as well.

The museum received a grant from Central Counties Tourism for rental site promotion (to be shared with our local theatre – 19 on the Park). The grant included funding for membership/promotion on a new website and printing of updated brochures and work will continue into the new year. We're hoping this new membership will increase our rental numbers.

Clerks continued to update the museum's website photo gallery with fresh photos. We are also working to increase our email contact lists as an efficient way of sharing our events with interested residents.



The Curator and the Program Coordinator regularly speak with the local press to answer questions about upcoming events. They also film frequent video spots for Stouffville.com. In addition, this year the Curator conducted in a radio interview with Josh Holliday from 105.9 The Region for a show called "The Feed" on our winter exhibit.



Rentals

Rental *attendance* numbers kept pace with last year's numbers. *Financial* revenues exceeded our projected target by 7% and increased **58%** when compared to 2014 revenues.

In 2015, we hosted weddings, birthday parties (including the increasingly popular one-year old party!), memorials, meetings, baby and wedding showers.

We continue to serve as the primary training facility for the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals – whose office is just up the street. And beginning in the fall, the York Region District Board of Education began a long term rental with us as they host an ever-expanding number of students in this area studying ESL.

Challenges to securing certain rentals continue as we are currently unable to provide wifi to potential renters. We will continue to work with the IT staff at the Town to improve this service in the future.

Staff are continually working with Facilities and Parks staff to make sure we are meeting the logistical and legal requirements for our rental events. This year, we hosted our first wedding with a large tent installation (photo at right) \. The couple actually had to install a temporary electrical panel to meet their lighting needs. (We continue to learn new things with every rental!)



Photo packages continue to be a good source of revenue and we are developing good working relationships with several excellent photographers. They allow us to use their photos for our publicity needs and we, in turn, share their information with those looking for a photographer.

Professional Development/ Strategic Planning

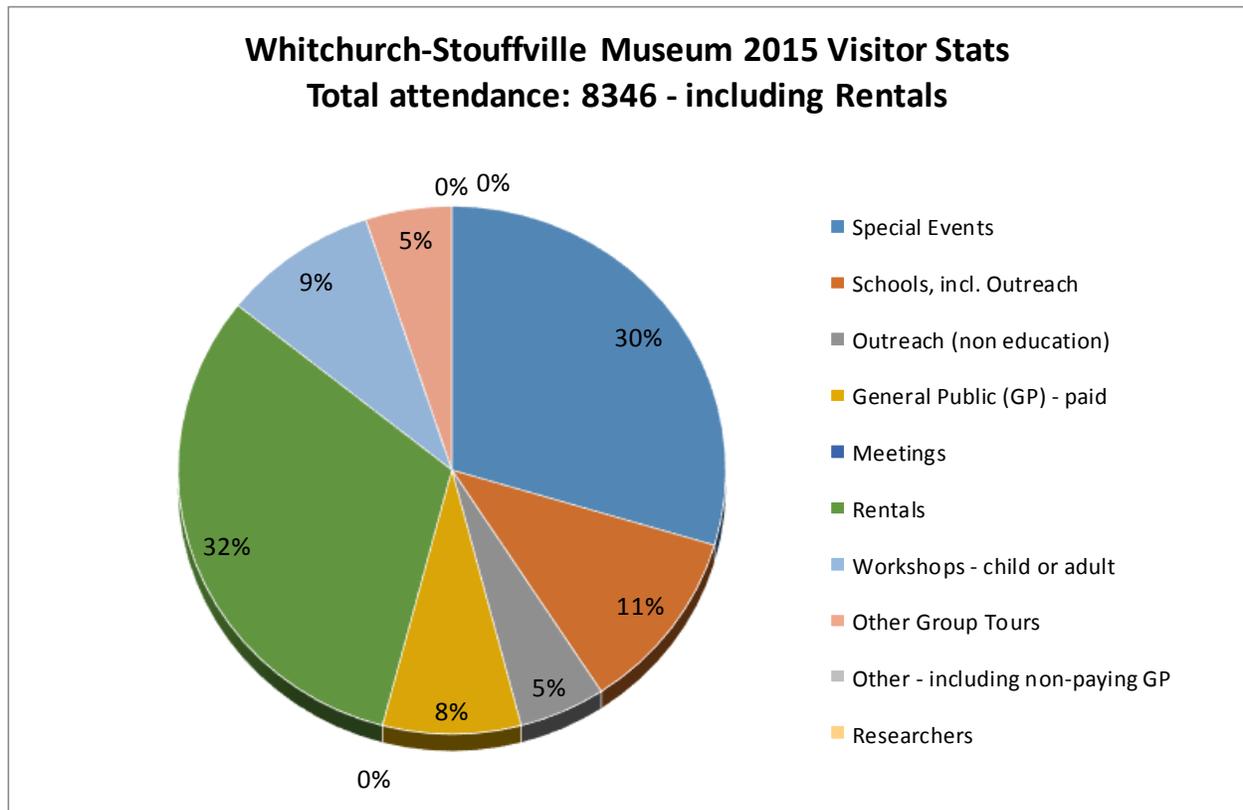
- Between January and April, our site hosted a Centennial College co-op student from the Culture and Heritage Site Management program. The student worked on several exhibition projects, as well March Break and summer programming and special event assistance.
- In the summer, we hosted an intern from Sir Sanford Fleming College. The student completed an amazing amount of exhibition planning and installation. As well, the student completed an Interpretive Guide for the Barn – a tool that we haven't had before and that will be very helpful to our interpretive staff – and assisted with numerous special events.
- For the first meeting of the newly appointed museum Board, the Town's Council coordinator attended to assist with Board orientation. Museum staff then provided updated Board manuals -- complete with copies of all policies, emergency contacts, ethical guidelines, and historic information on the properties on site.
- The Program Coordinator completed an online Ontario Museums Association course entitled "Organization and Management of Museums". The Curator attended supervisor training dealing with interpersonal relationship entitled "How to be More Awesome!" and completed First Aid recertification in the fall.
- Regular staff meetings were held throughout the year. These are extremely helpful since not everyone in the Culture division physically works at the museum site. As noted above, based on the information collected with the completion of our Building Inventory Survey Sheets, maintenance priorities for next year are set.
- After many years of hosting a Pancake Brunch – which many years ago used to be the official annual opening of the museum when we were seasonal – we have decided this was the last year. Numerous churches and conservation areas are now offering similar events and our attendance has been dropping. We are working to incorporate the maple syrup/ pancake ideas into a new event for 2016.

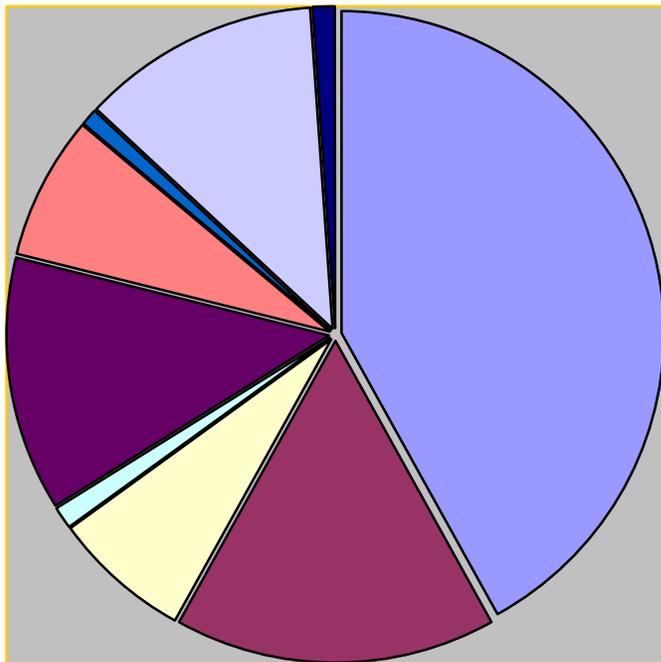
Governance/ Policy:

- Several policies were revised this year to follow our own revision schedule and to meet additional Ministry requirements. These included the Community Policy, the Physical Plant Policy and the Human Resources Policy. Based on new requirements from the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Sport, we have learned that, moving forward, policies are to be reviewed every **three** years, instead of **five**. So we will be reviewing 4 policies next year instead of the "regular" three.
- Two new education staff were hired in the spring to assist with education program delivery and development as well as special event assistance. This followed an analysis and determination that more interpreters were required to allow for greater programming flexibility.
- Customer Service files are provided at each Board meeting for members to look through. These files hold guest reviews for education programs and rentals as well and show that we are consistently meeting – or exceeding – visitor expectations.
- Brand new sponsors were secured this year for various events. We are branching out from our traditional "Car Show sponsorship focus" to include other events – like our themed dinner – where a good business/ event connection can be made.
- Museum staff continued to work with Town staff to incorporate new policies and procedures that impact our financial and rental operations.

Comparison of 2015 Statistics to 2014

	2015 Statistics	Percentage	2014 Statistics	Percentage
Special Events	2436	29.2	1739	20
Schools– including outreach	903	11	1776 No outreach schools	21
Other Group Tours	406	4.9	32	<1
Meetings	29	<1	169	<1
Rentals	2633	31.6	2601	30
Workshops	731	8.8	430	5
Outreach – non-education related	410	4.9	880	10
Researchers	9	<1	53	<1
General Public (GP) Visits	699	8.4	123	<1
Other (including non-paying GP)	<u>90</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>867</u>	<u>10</u>
Total	8346	99.8	8670	99.6
TOTAL without Rentals Numbers				
	5713		6069	
Website Visits	13,608		12,990	
Doors Open Whitchurch-Stouffville – facilitated by Museum	3706 – highest ever event attendance			1836





- Special Events
- Schools - including Outreach
- Other Group Tours
- Meetings
- Workshops
- Outreach - no educ
- Researchers
- General Public - pd
- Other - incl non-paid GP