
For Information

REPORT TITLE: **Peel Art Gallery, Museum and Archives Annual Report**

FROM: Sean Baird, Commissioner of Service Excellence and Innovation

OBJECTIVE

To share the achievements of Peel Art Gallery, Museum and Archives (PAMA) over the past year.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Vital work in the areas of community engagement, digital programming, internationally recognized online exhibitions, collections stewardship, mould abatement, digitization and education continued despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, including the public closure of PAMA.
 - PAMA has supported the Regional COVID-19 response through redeployment of staff.
 - PAMA has worked with over 50 community partners and co-creators to ensure continued support and an ongoing connection to residents.
 - Grants of \$1,780,380 have been awarded to PAMA for the 2020-2021 operating years in support of digital innovation, internships, operations, facility upgrades and the Creative Expressions program.
 - The facility closure has provided staff with an opportunity to continue mould abatement of Museum storage.
 - A third-party vendor has been engaged to provide transportation, cleaning, and storage services for historical artifacts to ensure that critical work in the Museum storage can be completed and timelines of grant funded HVAC construction and upgrades are met.
 - In accordance with Public health guidelines, staff have implemented safeguards such as increased sanitization stations, handwashing areas and physical distancing markers to ensure the safety of visitors and staff in support of a proposed partial reopening in 2021 and a full reopening of the facility in 2022.
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

Since the re-opening of the Peel Art Gallery, Museum and Archives (PAMA) in 2012, PAMA has been committed to establishing itself as a “Cultural Hub” for the Region of Peel. Serving the municipalities of Brampton, Caledon, and Mississauga, PAMA has demonstrated leadership in community engagement through partnering to deliver local, national, and international content and experiences that resonates with residents.

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As a result of impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, PAMA has been closed to the public since March 2020. Vital work in the areas of community engagement, digital programming, internationally recognized online exhibitions, collections stewardship, mould abatement, digitization and education continued despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, including the public closure of PAMA.

2. COVID-19 Response

As a result of the facility closure, PAMA was required to pivot the operating model, which relied heavily on in-person visitation and outreach to ensure a continuation of service delivery to the residents of the Region of Peel.

Through new initiatives such as digital web exhibitions, online programming, and digital school resource kits, approximately 15,027 visitors were tracked as part of in person attendance, virtual programming, and visits to the PAMA exhibitions page for 2020.

PAMA@Home was introduced at the start of March Break in 2020. PAMA@Home connects family audiences with creative ideas and activities online. Weekly social media games and highlights were created, such as Mystery Object Mondays, Time Capsule Tuesdays, and Feature Fridays to build connections and provide content during the PAMA closure. Video content creation has been increased to provide behind-the-scenes ways to connect virtual visitors with PAMA collections and programs.

In partnership with the Region of Peel Communications team, the virtual exhibitions site was developed, allowing visitors to the PAMA website the opportunity to engage with art and museum exhibitions in both static digital and 360-degree formats despite the closure. The virtual site provides an opportunity for accessible arts and culture engagement, which will continue beyond the pandemic.

PAMA continued to find ways to partner and support likeminded organizations as well as local media to provide good news stories to our community, connecting them with arts and culture. In efforts to broaden resident engagement and awareness, PAMA partnered with Field Trip Canada, an online digital platform delivering arts experiences from leading arts organizations. Works from Winnipeg based, contemporary landscape artist Simon Hughes were featured on Field Trip as part of the 360-degree exhibition created by PAMA. PAMA also presented When Night Stirred at Sea: Contemporary Caribbean Art on the Field Trip platform, in addition to PAMA website. When Night Stirred at Sea garnered both national and international interests resulting in articles about the groundbreaking exhibition being featured in publications from the United Kingdom, the Caribbean, and the Toronto Star.

PAMA staff were early participants of the Regional redeployment program to support staffing needs in Long-Term Care Centres, the Customer Contact Centre (CCC) and the Public Inquiry Centre (PIC). Many PAMA staff continue in these roles today and have expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to contribute to the delivery of essential services to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Community Engagement

PAMA works with an array of community groups, organizations, and individuals to plan exhibitions, education, and public programs. In 2020, we were thankful to our over 50 community partners and co-creators for their contributions, ensuring continued support and an ongoing connection to residents (see appendix I).

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In 2020 we launched the virtual exhibition *Art Voice: Expressions of Youth in Peel*. Over 70 youth artists participated in this co-curated project undertaken by the Community Leadership Program ambassadors under the mentorship of the Regional Diversity Roundtable and PAMA.

Members and donors are essential to PAMA. They provide support financially, attend programs and events and, most importantly, are PAMA's ambassadors in the community. Maintaining relationships during the COVID closure was top of mind, as such PAMA created exclusive opportunities to share art, go behind-the-scenes with our staff and participate in projects like the Peel Time Capsule.

PAMA's collections of art, artifacts and documents tell the stories that provide our community with a sense of place, pride and an understanding of the people and events that have shaped Peel. Through the generosity of donors and a purchase program supported by donations, PAMA continues to build collections to increase public awareness and an understanding of history and art.

4. Grants and Funding

PAMA staff and the Friends of PAMA Advisory Board members work with community, funding agencies and regional partners to achieve outcomes that build financial stewardship capacity, inclusivity, innovation, engagement, and a shared sense of community.

Grants of \$1,780,380 have been awarded to PAMA for the 2020-2021 operating years in support of digital innovation, internships, operations, facility upgrades and the Creative Expressions program. Agreements for HVAC funding are still pending, and information regarding funding for these projects cannot be shared in any public forum nor communicated to the media.

Included in the above figure is \$100,000 awarded to PAMA from the Museums Assistance Program (MAP) in support of continued business operations and activities that allow for the continuous care of a heritage collection. Member of Parliament, Sonia Sidhu graciously attended PAMA to announce the MAP funding. This grant was used to support records digitization and mould abatement.

Restrictions related to the pandemic clearly demonstrated the need for the increased digitization of records and remote access to the Archives. Grant funding has been used to support the Archives long-term digitization plan which includes use of the Kaiser digitization system to digitize each page of the Perkins Bull annotated land records files, the two most fragile volumes of Peel County Land Registry books and Abstract Index to Deeds volumes, 1807-1995.

The Museum also utilized the grant funds to support mould abatement work, in which contract staff assisted in the cleaning of approximately 1,200 of 14,000 artifacts impacted by level one mould in the Museum storage area.

5. Collection Stewardship

The facility closure has provided staff with an opportunity to continue mould abatement of Museum storage.

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A third-party vendor has been engaged to provide transportation, cleaning, and storage services for historical artifacts to ensure that critical work in the Museum storage can be completed and timelines of grant funded HVAC construction and upgrades are met.

Staff will continue to identify required and ad-hoc maintenance work as part of routine building upkeep and capital planning to ensure a good state of repair.

The deaccessioning process will be utilized to remove duplicate, hazardous, unsalvageable, and irrelevant items for the Museum collection to reduce storage needs in future.

A fulsome update is being provided to Regional Council under a separate report.

6. PAMA Reopening

Buildings 7 and 9 which house the Museum and Archives will remain closed to the public to enable mould abatement and HVAC construction activities in 2021.

Buildings 3 and 5, home to the old courthouse and Art Gallery will reopen at the end of 2021, in accordance with public health guidelines to present in-person exhibitions and programming.

In accordance with Public health guidelines, staff have implemented safeguards such as increased sanitization stations, handwashing areas and physical distancing markers to ensure the safety of visitors and staff in support of a proposed partial reopening in 2021 and a full reopening of the facility in 2022.

CONCLUSION

PAMA is a well-established and trusted cultural institution serving Peel residents through dynamic exhibitions, programs, and quality experiences that foster inclusivity, connectivity, and collaboration. PAMA will continue to work on objectives that support a Community for Life, including upgrades to the facility which will provide an environment in which visitors feel safe to explore, learn and connect.

APPENDICES

Appendix I – PAMA Partnerships

For further information regarding this report, please contact Rene Nand, Manager, Community and Cultural Engagement, Ext. 3679, rene.nand@peelregion.ca.

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