



Muskoka
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Muskoka
Chautauqua

2024
Annual Report

Greetings from Muskoka Chautauqua



It is difficult to compare this year to the past quarter of a century, but one thing is certain—it has been one of the most robust and gratifying years in recent memory. With the addition of new board members and a steady hand on the tiller, we have made meaningful progress in governance and strategic planning. A heartfelt thank you and shout out to everyone who contributed to this important work.

This year's festival was a truly special event. From the opening Steel Orchestra on the shores of Lake Rosseau to the inspiring art workshops, engaging literary talks, nightly concerts, historical walks, and rich community conversations that provided direction and inspiration, every moment of Chautauqua 2024 was one to remember. And, of course, we are proud to have supported bringing back 'Windermere Family Fun Day' at the waterfront with the amazing work from the Windermere community volunteers and our festival partners.

There is no shortage of people to thank for making 2024 such a success—our patrons, supporters, sponsors, volunteers, advertisers, staff and partners who help turn this vision into reality. We deeply appreciate each and every one of you.

As we write this in such turbulent times, we hold dear the principles and values of Chautauqua that uplift, inform, and unify us. More than ever, we are proud to stand together and do our best to foster a welcoming spirit and open heart to all.

With that same spirit, we gratefully acknowledge that Muskoka Chautauqua takes place on the traditional territory of the Ojibway, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Anishinaabe peoples, including the Wahta Mohawk and Chippewa. We honour their enduring connection to this land and commit to walking forward together with respect, gratitude, and care.

Looking ahead to 2025, we invite everyone to walk gently on the Windermere land as we celebrate the incredible gifts and talents of all who make our Festival a reality.

With gratitude and blessings to all,
The Muskoka Chautauqua Team



Charitable No. 889548593RR0001

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About Muskoka Chautauqua



Muskoka Chautauqua is a not-for-profit organization fostering arts and culture, culminating in a summer festival in the historic village of Windermere.

Muskoka Chautauqua is a community for the curious and the creative. Springing from a tradition that started 100 years ago, when the village of Windermere attracted North America's leading thinkers to its shores, Muskoka Chautauqua is one of the longest-running and more iconic cultural institutions in the region.

With more than 15 Chautauqua communities across North America, Muskoka Chautauqua is the only remaining Canadian chapter. After going dormant after the Great Depression, Gary Froude and Gayle Dempsey revived the concept in the late 1990's and officially relaunched Muskoka Chautauqua in 2004.

Muskoka Chautauqua continues to grow and evolve, with a goal of providing a breadth of diverse arts and culture programming to the residents and visitors of the Muskoka Lakes region.

Vision

To be a recognized leader in the provision of inclusive and innovative arts-based programming for enrichment and life-long learning, while contributing to the economic and social vitality and offering a place for all in the community.

Mission

To collaborate with partners, diverse people and communities to present innovative, multi-disciplinary arts-based programs that inspire lifelong learning, well-being and resiliency by celebrating creativity and Muskoka's heritage and natural environment.

Mandate & Purpose

To provide inclusive and accessible arts and culture experiences that advance and enrich people's lives in rural communities, inspire life-long learning, well-being, renewal and resiliency by celebrating creativity and the human spirit. Muskoka Chautauqua is committed to preserving its unique heritage and natural environment and to continuing its contribution to the economic and social vitality of our communities.





2024 Festival Schedule

**Friday
August 2**

**Saturday
August 3**

**Sunday
August 4**

**Monday
August 5**

**Tuesday
August 6**



Flow Wellness Hour

9:30 - Windermere House



Flow Wellness Hour

9:30 - Windermere House



Flow Wellness Hour

9:30 - Windermere House



Flow Wellness Hour

9:30 - Windermere House



Bracelet Making Workshop

10:00 am - Art Tent



Acrylic Painting Workshop

10:00 am - Art Tent



Smartphone Photo Workshop

10:00 am - Art Tent



Windermere Archives Tour

10am - Community Centre



Guided Walking History Tour

12:00 pm - Gallery



Guided Walking History Tour

12:00 pm - Gallery



Guided Walking History Tour

12:00 pm - Gallery



DSLR Photography Workshop

10:00 am - Art Tent



Festival Welcome and Opening

2:00 pm - Theatre



Acrylics & Mediums Demonstration

1:00 pm - Art Tent



Classical Lunch with Jennifer Tung

12:00 pm - Christ Church



Watercolour & Ink Workshop

1:00 pm - Art Tent



Guided Walking History Tour

12:00 pm - Gallery



The Wilding Book Launch

4:00 pm - Theatre



Pop-up Bookstore Open Daily

10am - 4pm - Village Hall



Watercolour Workshop

1:00 pm - Art Tent



Fundraiser Silent Auction Continues

August 2-10



Environmental Lecture

1:00 pm - Art Tent



Gallery Exhibition Opening

5:00 pm - Gallery



Stephen Stigler Literary Lecture

4:00 pm - Theatre



Patrick Boyer History Lecture

4:00 pm - Theatre



Tom Thomson Lecture

4:00 pm - Theatre



Wellness Author Conversation

4:00 pm - Theatre



Northern Lights Steel Orchestra

7:30 pm - Wharf



Folk Night at the Festival

7:30 pm - Theatre



Music Under the Stars

7:30 pm - Theatre



Acoustic Folk with Leah & Friends

7:30 pm - Theatre

Muskoka Chautauqua

**Wednesday
August 7**

**Thursday
August 8**

**Friday
August 9**

**Saturday
August 10**

**Sunday
August 11**



Flow Wellness Hour

9:30 - Windermere House



Flow Wellness Hour

9:30 - Windermere House



Flow Wellness Hour

9:30 - Windermere House



Flow Wellness Hour

9:30 - Windermere House



Bala Plein Air Painting

9:00 am - Village



Windermere Archives Tour

10am - Community Centre



Pottery Workshop

10:00 am - Art Tent



Clay Workshop

10:00 am - Art Tent



Children's Entertainment

11:00 am - Wharf



Plein Air Painting Workshop

9:00 am - Art Tent



Plein Air Painting Workshop

10:00 am - Art Tent



Guided Walking History Tour

12:00 pm - Gallery



Guided Walking History Tour

12:00 pm - Gallery



Beach Games and Regatta

11:00 am - Wharf



Wonders of Alcohol Ink

10:00 am - Art Tent



Guided Walking History Tour

12:00 pm - Gallery



Harmonica Workshop

1:00 pm - Theatre



Ukulele Workshop

1:00 pm - Theatre



Family Fun Art Party

11:00 am - Wharf



Plein Air Painting Workshop

1:00 pm - Art Tent



Plein Air Painting Workshop

1:00 pm - Art Tent



Forest Bathing

4:00 pm - Baldwins



Fundraiser Silent Auction Closes

1:00 pm - Gallery



Bake Sale and Barbecue

11:00 am - Wharf



Community Conversation

4pm - Windermere House



Authors in Conversation

4:00 pm - Theatre



The Endurable Alex Tilley Lecture

4:00 pm - Theatre



Dances & Tales of the Forest

4:00 pm - Baldwins



Toronto All-Star Big Band

7:30 pm - Theatre



Acoustic Concert with Todd & Robyn

7:30 pm - Theatre



Reggae Roots Concert

7:30 pm - Theatre



Muskoka Music Showcase

7:30 pm - Theatre

Home in Windermere

In 1921, Chautauqua first graced the shores of Windermere, launching its inaugural summer season in Muskoka. Over a century later, Windermere Village continues to be the heart and home of our summer festival—embraced by residents, seasonal visitors, and cottagers alike.

In 2024, we continued to deepen our relationships with community partners and neighbours, working together to create a festival that reflects the unique spirit and creativity of Windermere. Throughout the season, we collaborated with Windermere House, Windermere Women's Institute, Taylor Farms, Muskoka Lakes Chamber of Commerce, Muskoka Lakes Association, Windermere Lions Club, Windermere Golf & Country Club, The Lang Family Foundation, Explorer's Edge, Muskoka Tourism, Windermere Christ Church, Windermere United Church, and the Township of Muskoka Lakes, welcomed support from dedicated volunteers, and celebrated the many hands and hearts that make this festival possible.



One of the highlights of this year was our ongoing Community Conversation series, which brought neighbours together at Windermere House to envision the future of the village. These meaningful gatherings have already sparked several inspiring projects. The revival of a community newspaper, the Windermere Gazette, is now underway, offering a new platform for local voices. A brand-new community playground is currently being developed at the Windermere Village Hall in collaboration with the township. Meanwhile, the waterfront planters were brought back to life with donated plants and countless volunteer hours—a beautiful example of community spirit in action.

As part of our efforts to build a more connected and vibrant future, we've also begun mapping the current cultural landscape of Windermere and the surrounding area. This important work will help identify future opportunities for engagement and growth, and we look forward to building upon this living resource with further community input.

Our beloved community banner project also came to life in a beautiful way this year. Volunteers lovingly stitched together several years' worth of collected banner squares, which were proudly displayed during the festival. New squares were created on-site under the theme "Give Thanks," forming the 2024 banner. This stunning piece will be displayed again at the 2025 festival as a symbol of gratitude, creativity, and the deep-rooted community spirit that defines Windermere.

The festival itself culminated in the return of a cherished tradition—the Windermere Family Fun Day at the waterfront. This joyful celebration brought together families, artists, and neighbours for a day filled with art, play, and shared connection, truly showcasing the collaborative heart that makes Windermere such a special place to call home. We also launched an exciting new tradition this year with the inaugural Great Windermere Business Canoe Race, where local businesses competed for glory and the coveted Golden Paddle!

Throughout the Year

While our flagship arts and culture festival in Windermere remains the highlight of our summer, Muskoka Chautauqua continues to bring vibrant arts programming to the region year-round. The very popular 'Company of Good Cheer' Coffee Houses hosted by Brandy Creek Music & Publications returned to The Muskoka Place Gallery during the fall and winter months. Every night saw packed houses and lively performances, keeping the community connected through music during the shoulder seasons.



In 2024, the Board of Directors embarked on a new strategic planning process that will guide the next phase of Muskoka Chautauqua's growth and impact. This work is grounded in our ongoing commitment to inclusion, accessibility, and community-building.



**2024
Strategic
Plan**



**Rainbow
Registered
Arc-en-ciel
Officiel**

We're also proud to share that Muskoka Chautauqua became Rainbow Registered in 2024, demonstrating our dedication to fostering safer, more welcoming, and respectful spaces for 2SLGBTQI+ guests, artists, and community members. We remain committed to regularly reviewing and improving our DEI practices to ensure that everyone feels at home here.

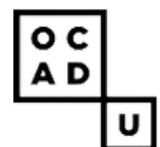
Our programming and partnerships remained strong throughout the year. We were delighted to lend our hand bells to students from Watt Public School for their Christmas concert with plans to continue using them again in 2025.



Finally, our partnerships with Trillium Lakelands District School Board, Rosseau Lake College, OCAD University, and Queen's University allowed us to host student placements and summer job opportunities, helping to inspire the next generation of arts and culture leaders. We're excited to continue these partnerships in 2025 and beyond.



**Queen's
UNIVERSITY**



Thank You to Our Team

Board of Directors

Our board of directors plays a key role in shaping the direction and strategy of Muskoka Chautauqua. All directors are deeply committed to the value of arts, culture and heritage programming in Muskoka. We are grateful for their unwavering support and oversight.

Glad Bryce, Chair
Beverlie Robertson, Secretary
Cheryl Hollows, Treasurer
Diane Adamson-Brdar
Bonnie Newell

Dr. Bernie Gosevitz
Jen Morgan Anderson
Susan Hindle
Maureen Cubberley
Leah Leslie

Founders/Administration

Gary Froude, CEO
Gayle Dempsey, Director of Development

Volunteers

Muskoka Chautauqua is proud to have many volunteers and we would like to express our deepest gratitude and special thanks for their exceptional efforts. We could not do it without them!

Festival Team

Sean Dempsey, Executive Producer
Joan Bendon, Festival Director
Tori Grant, Event Specialist
Caroline Bissonette, Summer Student
Jolie Gagnon, Summer Student
Grace Hayes, Summer Student
Dale McIntosh, Onsite Producer
Mary Ellen Shrimpton, Onsite Producer

Thank You to Our Supporters

Muskoka Chautauqua is so thankful for the generous support we received to continue arts & culture programming in our community. A very warm thank you to all of our artists, partners and donors.



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WINDERMERE
GARDEN CENTRE



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WINDERMERE HOUSE



ENGEL & VÖLKERS
RUTHANN BROWN



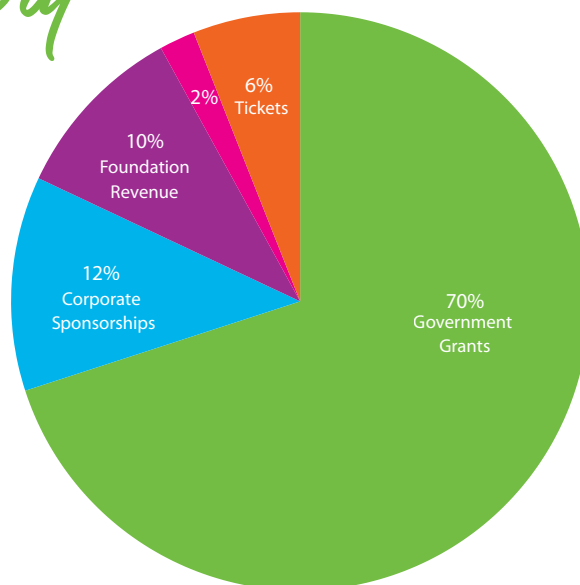
Hellyer Foundation
Don & Karen Lang
Jackman Foundation



2024 Financial Summary

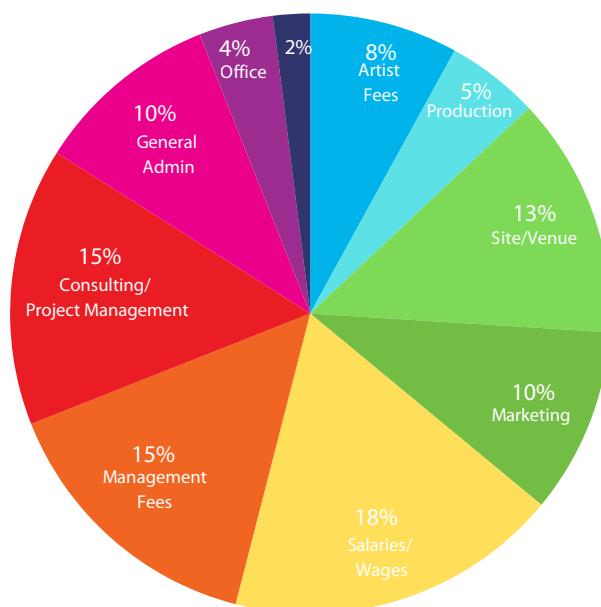
Revenues

Government Grants	\$221,345	70%
Corporate Sponsorships	\$ 37,650	12%
Foundation Revenue	\$ 31,000	10%
Donations	\$ 6,122	2%
Tickets	\$ 20,164	6%
Total Revenue	\$316,281	



Expenses

Artist Fees	\$ 23,736	8%
Production	\$ 16,502	5%
Site/Venue	\$ 41,257	13%
Marketing	\$ 30,881	10%
Salaries and Wages	\$ 56,867	18%
Management Fees	\$ 46,773	15%
Consulting/Project Management	\$ 45,343	15%
General Administration	\$ 31,558	10%
Office	\$ 13,544	4%
Amortization of Capital Assets	\$ 6,146	2%
Total Expenses	\$312,607	



Donate

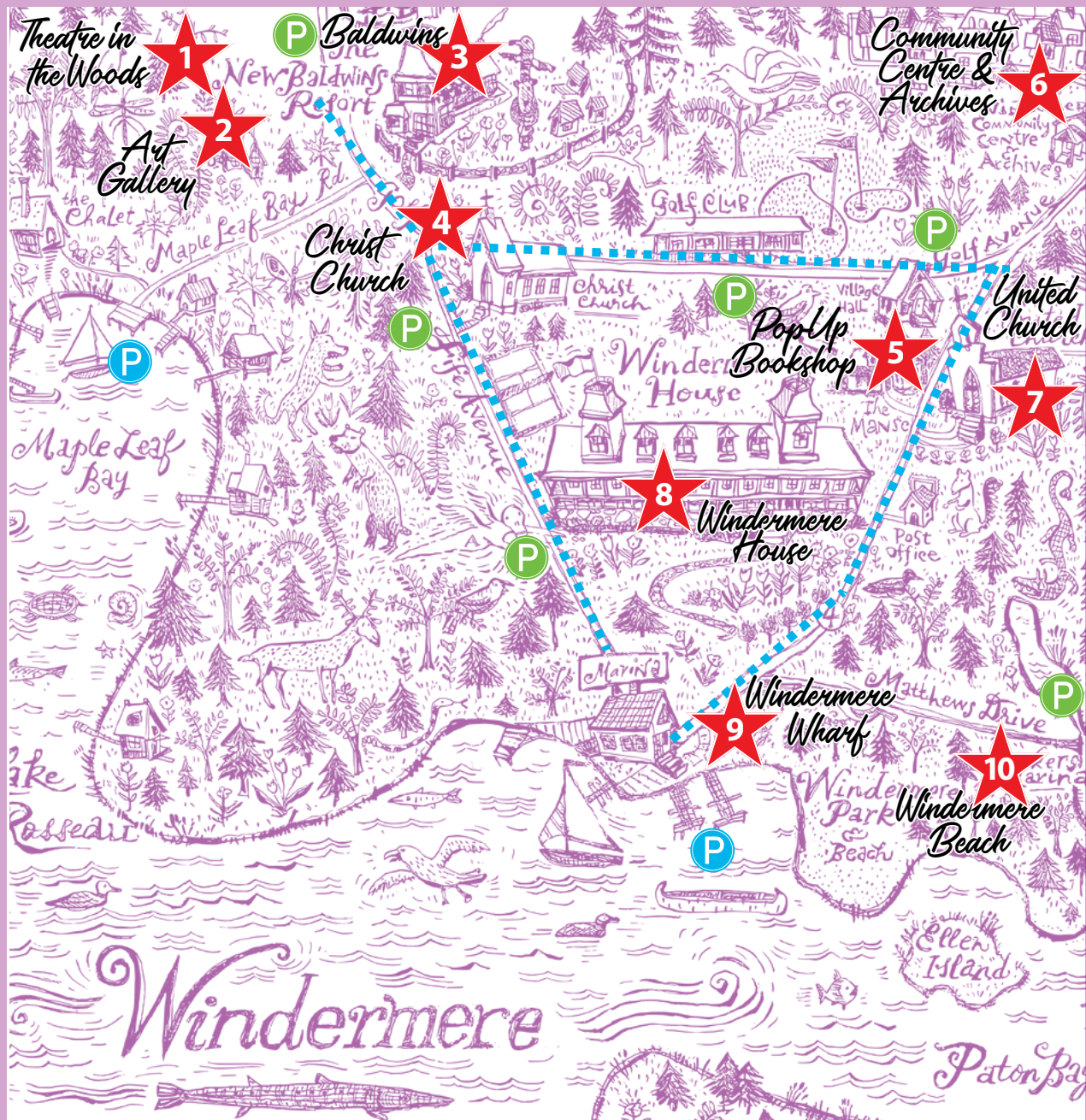
In order to ensure that Muskoka Chautauqua is able to continue providing engaging and enriching arts and culture programming in Muskoka that is accessible to everyone, tickets to some of our events in 2025 will be pay-what-you-can. Arts organizations like ours depend on the generosity of our patrons. Your donations cover the cost of artists and production, and makes programming accessible for all.

This year's festival will proudly employ over 60 artists, staff and production crew. We hope you'll join us in supporting them with your applause and your cheers and, where appropriate, your dollars. Donations of \$25 or more will receive a tax receipt.

[Donate Here](#)

If you are interested in sponsoring the 2025 Muskoka Chautauqua Arts & Culture Festival, please contact us at mci@artsinmuskoka.com.

Muskoka Chautauqua



Festival Venues

The festival takes place in venues throughout historic Windermere village:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Theatre in the Woods: 1039 Golf Ave. | 6. Community Centre: 2416 Windermere Rd. |
| 2. Gallery in the Woods: 1039 Golf Ave. | 7. United Church: 2497 Windermere Rd. |
| 3. The 'New' Baldwins: 1024 Golf Ave Rd. | 8. Windermere House: 2508 Windermere Rd. |
| 4. Christ Church: 1018 Fife Ave. | 9. Windermere Wharf: 2510 Windermere Rd. |
| 5. Pop-Up Bookshop: 2496 Windermere Rd. | 10. Windermere Beach: 2510 Windermere Rd. |

Historic Walking Tour



Follow the trail app, or join a guided tour during the festival



Walking Path