

March Edition 2022



Highlights

REFLECTION - 6 YEARS LATER

Executive Director Janis Monture, shares her reflections on the last six years of fundraising for the Save the Evidence campaign. As we cross the finish line, Janis looks back over the various phases of the project and their significance.

DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Everyone came together to make this dream a reality. See a list of our top donors over the years and help us celebrate all the work put into such an important initiative to turn the Mohawk Institute into a site of conscience.

STORIES FROM OUR SUPPORTERS

Now that funds have been successfully raised to cover the four phase restoration project, we asked some of our supporters to share their personal stories. Hear from our giving community why it was important for them to help us Save the Evidence!

WHAT IS THE SAVE THE EVIDENCE CAMPAIGN?

The Save the Evidence campaign is an initiative launched by the Woodland Cultural Centre to raise awareness and support for the restoration of the former Mohawk Institute Residential School building. The vision is to turn the building into an Interpretive Historic Site and Educational Resource. The Mohawk Institute building itself is only one of a handful of Residential School buildings left standing in Canada, and the only one in Ontario that offered guided tours until its closure for repairs.



REFLECTION: 6 YEARS LATER

JANIS MONTURE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In 2013, with the former Mohawk Institute Residential School building literally crumbling with major roof leaks, I sat in my office wondering "what was going to happen with the building?" For the past 10 years, I had heard conflicting statements from community members. Some would say to me, "you should just tear this building down," while others would "say you need to keep it." I remember going to Woodland Cultural Centre's Board of Directors and telling them I wanted to go to Six Nations Elected Council to get some direction on whether or not we should make the necessary repairs to the building.

At the council meeting, I was instructed to undertake a community consultation process to survey community members to find out if the community wanted to keep the building and renovate it into a site where people could come in and see what life was really like at the Mohawk Institute (aka Mush Hole). The community consultation that Woodland managed took 6 months, utilizing a variety of engagement methods (in-person information sessions; tours of the building; mail-out comment cards; radio and newspaper announcements), and a whopping 96% voted in favour to keep the building. Now that we had our answer, the real work was just starting to begin.

A building condition survey was conducted by an engineering firm to analyze the extent of repairs that would be needed with fee estimates on the cost of the repairs. The original assumption was that it would cost somewhere around \$13.5 million to renovate, however that number would rise another \$10 million as the renovations got underway.

In 2014-2015, I left my position as Executive Director to take a secondment and Acting Executive Director, Amos Key Jr., came in and started to garner the attention for the restoration project. Amos was the one who coined the now famous 'Save the Evidence' phrase that launched the major fundraising campaign. Amos met with the leadership in the region and started to bring awareness to Save the Evidence. One of our first supporters was Six Nations Elected Council, and Chief Ava Hill, who was the Elected Chief at the time, challenged the City of Brantford's council to match the donation. The City of Brantford met the challenge and donated \$220,000 towards the campaign to restore the building. The Friends and Neighbours, who were allies in the community, was a grassroots initiative who wanted to do their part as well and raise the funds but also raise the awareness. This group took it upon themselves to really look to what they could do to elevate the cause and began hosting lectures at Wilfrid Laurier University – Brantford Campus where the Save the Evidence Fundraising Coordinator could set up and solicit donations at their lectures. This group still meets regularly and continues to advocate for the importance of the restoration work.

Over the next couple of years from 2015-2017, I returned and worked really hard to secure not only donations from the private sector, but also to speak to several ministries within the Provincial and Federal Governments to also contribute to this very important project. In 2016 we received confirmation that funds for Phase 1 of the main roof repair in the amount of \$1.5 million were secured from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs at the Province. Then in late 2016 we received confirmation that the Province of Ontario, as part of The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, committed to provide an infusion of \$10 million to fund Phase 2 of the restoration work. During Phase 2 several third-party fundraisers were coming in as awareness of Save the Evidence was spreading, bringing in the much-needed funds necessary to complete Phase 2.

REFLECTION: 6 YEARS LATER

JANIS MONTURE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The individual donations were also rising as the 'buy a brick' fundraiser was launched where members of the public would purchase 'bricks' to help with the restoration of the former residential school.

Gathering testimonials from survivors of the Mohawk Institute was also happening and this videography was assisting Woodland gather as much first-person accounts as we could. It is important that not only the funds were being secured, but more importantly that the Centre was saving the testimonials by Survivors to help with the narrative of the heritage site. We were being told by Survivors to gather as much evidence as we could from other Survivors so that the truth about the Mohawk Institute was being shared with as many people as we could.

Fundraising plans were continuing to be developed in 2019-2020 as Phase 3 of Save the Evidence still needed to be fundraised. Setting goals to raise upwards of \$160,000 for the next 3 years in individual and corporate donations would help Woodland secure the funds necessary to carry out our contribution for our application to Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program for \$9.4 million. In July 2021 we received confirmation that the funding was approved and that we could move forward with the work necessary to complete Phase 3 which looked at the repairs to the masonry, windows, and accessibility.

In May 2021, Canada was forced to come face to face with the horrific truths of residential schools across the country when a mass grave of children who once attended the Kamloops Residential School was discovered. The subsequent discoveries at other residential schools across the country made headlines and the media coverage at these former institutions continued throughout the summer, and in particular at the former Mohawk Institute. There wasn't a day that went by since May 28, 2021 that there weren't several cars and people stopping by the memorial that popped up on the front steps of the Mush Hole. As the headlines continued our team here at Woodland were dealing with the onslaught of thousands of emails, calls and media requests and people reaching out to see what they could do. We couldn't have imagined the attention the Save the Evidence campaign got during this time. With everything that was happening we didn't want to push the fundraising campaign, instead so many of our allies did it for us. Many who had done third-party fundraisers in the past encouraged others to do the same and the result was overwhelming and so humbling. By the end of December 2021, we had raised \$1 million for Phase 4, the Interpretation stage, which is the final piece to this important legacy.

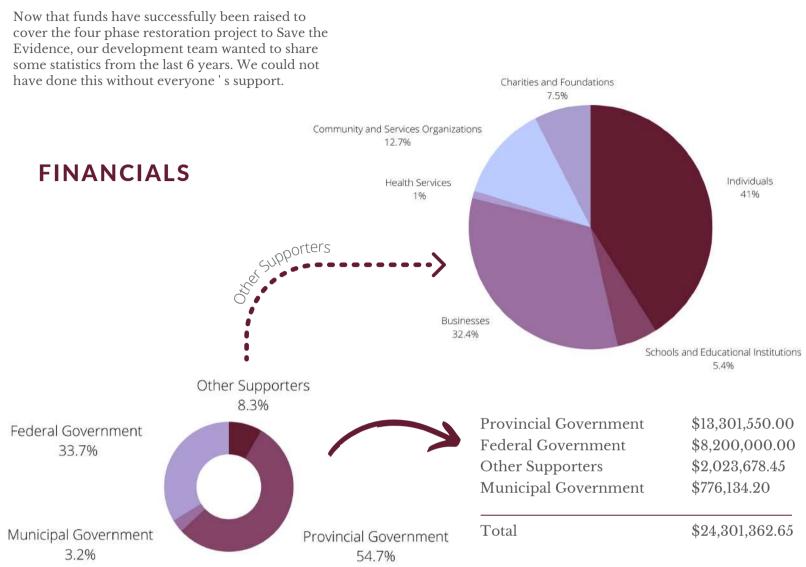
Six years later, it's hard to put into words the end of this chapter. There are so many people to thank. Thank you to the staff who worked tirelessly here at Woodland these last six years to ensure our fundraising was done. Thank you to our donors, without whose overwhelming generosity and support we would not have been able to successfully raise the funds to complete this restoration. Thank you to our government partners who ensured that this important work did not go unnoticed and that it would remain a legacy. But most importantly, to the Survivors of the Mohawk Institute Residential School, those who were forced to be at this institution - we cannot thank you enough for your guidance these last six years, and for trusting us with your truths. Woodland will continue to share these truths and to Share the Evidence with the rest of the world in late 2024 when we hope to re-open the building as a testament to this dark chapter in history.

Nya:węh Go:wah



Janis Monture Executive Director

SIX YEARS IN THE MAKING



READ THE FULL LIST OF SAVE THE EVIDENCE DONORS

NYA:WEH GO:WAH FOR THE CONTINUED SUPPORT OF



REMARKABLE RESTORATION WORK ON THE MOHAWK INSTITUTE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SITE: A TRULY COLLABORATIVE EFFORT!



Work on the restoration of the Mohawk Institute started in 2016 when the building was condemned due to deterioration and structural damage. Since that time, led by the Woodland Cultural Centre (WCC) staff and Board of Directors, a dedicated group of Survivors, visionary leadership from Six Nations and WCC support communities, support from all levels of government, generous individual, corporate and non-profit sector donors, a very talented and committed architecture firm, Quartek Group, and a dedicated and gifted general contractor, Ultimate Construction, the restoration has slowly unfolded and revealed it stories.

Now in the home stretch to complete Phase 3, which is the last phase of physical restoration, much of the major work has been completed. Phase 3 has some key components which are now underway; creation and paving of driveways and parking lots, completion of accessibility features (ramps, washrooms and an elevator), replacement of the remaining 120+ windows and very importantly, restoration of the masonry.

Phase 3 has started and we will do updates as it proceeds. The team is aiming for a late 2024 opening date and we look forward to welcoming visitors in person to learn about this important history and the stories of the Survivors.

You can see some of the remarkable transformation here:





Melanie Fernandez Development Team Woodland Cultural Centre

SEE THE FULL PRESENTATION

WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!



Over the last 6 years, so many community members have come together to support the Save the Evidence campaign.

We've seen bake sales and 20km runs, pottery, T-shirts, and even tattoos all contributing to the mission to preserve the Mohawk Institute Residential School. It has been very inspiring to see how many people joined us on this mission.



GOOD MINDS BOOK STORE'S ONGOING SUPPORT OF SAVE THE EVIDENCE

GoodMinds.com is honoured to be part of the Woodland Cultural Centre and the Save the Evidence campaign to raise awareness about residential schools through the restoration of the former Mohawk Institute Residential School.

GoodMinds.com supports Indigenous stories and storytelling, Knowledge and Language Keepers, and our Elders. Through our authors, illustrators, and books, we contribute to the telling and re-telling of our stories.

We have a wide range of books on residential schools including stories about the experiences of Survivors of this residential school. Other books talk about the impact of the residential schools on family and communities. By supporting the campaign, it will ensure that this will never be forgotten or happen again.

This is why it is important for GoodMinds.com to support this Campaign and give back to Survivors, families and communities and to help others listen and learn.

Achilles Gentle GoodMinds.com

OUR NEW TRADITION written by Kayla (Age 14)

Around 4 years ago my brother Conor and I decided to start a new tradition. We decided that we would work over the summer and fall to earn money of our own. Then at Christmas, rather than giving gifts to our extended family, we would donate to a local charity.

Each year, Conor and I choose the charity together. The donation would be in honour of the members of our family, and we would give them a letter letting them know about the foundation, cause, and effect the donation will have.

This year we chose to donate to the Woodland Cultural Center. After doing some research, we decided to donate to Woodland Cultural Centre given the recent discoveries about the children at residential schools in Canada.

We are incredibly lucky to be able to have had our lives the way they are and wanted to be able to honor the children who never had that opportunity. While we were making our donation, we were able to explore the Woodland Cultural Centre and to see the Mohawk Institute Residential School.

It was an extremely breathtaking experience that really showed the realities of the past and how real they really were. We are proud to be able to donate to such a worthy and important cause this year around the holidays.

WOODLANDCULTURALCENTRE.CA

HAMILTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AND GIVING TUESDAYS!

For over four years, Hamilton Community Foundation has generously supported the Woodland Cultural Centre and the Save the Evidence campaign. Key to their mission, Hamilton Community Foundation aids by contributing time, leadership, resources and networks, and financial supports to initiatives that provide community benefit, based on an understanding of local needs and opportunities.

In the last two years of our Giving Tuesday campaign, WCC has been honoured to have the support of the Dufresne-Ray Fund at Hamilton Community Foundation to match the first \$5,000 raised for the day. The Dufresne-Ray Fund states, "the Woodland Cultural Centre stands as a place of hope and reconciliation for generations to come. Every dollar raised in the community brings this important restoration project closer to completion."

Hamilton Community Foundation donors choose to support in continuance of Woodland Cultural Centre's mission and vision. The donations that have been facilitated highlight each member's participation in taking action and work towards the restoration of the Mohawk Institute and transforming the building into an educational and interpretation space. Hamilton Community Foundation celebrates the act of doing good for your community, those around you, and for future generations.

Woodland Cultural Centre would like to say Nya:weh Go:wah (big thank you) to Hamilton Community Foundation and their donors for their continued support of the Save the Evidence campaign.



A LETTER FROM THE HEALING OF THE SEVEN GENERATIONS

To the amazing staff of the Woodland Cultural Centre;

I wanted to share our journey about our orange shirt campaign. Once we heard about the 215 children remains being found, it was devastating, but also a relief, as we knew this, but no one believed us. Then the discovery of the 751 children's remains being found, again it was devastating, but now the mainstream people were coming to H7G to share their dismay, because we had a sacred fire burning at the Centre.

The staff and I had a conversation about doing up some orange shirts for the community and off we went. The process was quite easy, we had community members involved in helping make shirts for us. It was moving along very well, then all of a sudden, shirts were flying out our front door and we couldn't keep up with the demand. We were getting calls from mainstream organizations, factories, unions, school boards, municipal offices, it was so overwhelming, but so wonderful at the same time. As every orange shirt we sold was an education for those who wore it. First it was 20's, 30's then 100's of more shirts, the final count was 6,000 shirts. After our cost the rest went to the donation, every penny.

People were so humbling, compassionate and generous but, also grief stricken. When they came in to pick up their shirt, they shared their concerns and sorrow for those children that have been found, their sorrow for those families and communities, some days were more overwhelming than others, but we made it through. People paid for their shirt/s and gave more than the cost of the shirt for a donation. We knew right then that the donations would go to the STE at the Mohawk Institute (Mush Hole) now the Woodland Cultural Centre. Doing that was important to me, as my Father was there for 9 years of his life.

During that time we decided to have a walk on September 30th to honor "Truth and Reconciliation Day". When the 30th came we walked from our Centre down to Victoria Park, there was a sea of orange. Some say that there was approximately 3000 people and from start to end it was 2km long. It was truly amazing!!

I'm thinking for next year we are going to have to prepare a bit sooner than June, to have shirts ready to go out the door. So, next year 2022, expect another large donation..... Nia:wen

Donna Dubie Executive Director All amazing staff of H7G



NYA:WĘH GO:WAH / BIG THANK YOU: WOODLAND CULTURAL CENTRE NEEDS YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

Development Team



As the Woodland Cultural Centre re-emerges post Covid-19 pandemic upheaval and into our 50th anniversary year, we need your support more than ever.

"Woodland Cultural Centre, along with many other organizations, had to make the shift to a digital platform to remain relevant in these ever-changing times" – Janis Monture, Executive Director

The Woodland Cultural Centre was not "at rest" during lockdown but rather reinvigorating our Educational programs for schools and the general public, our exciting range of historic and contemporary art exhibitions, our vital Language programs, and has developed a new innovative line up of performing arts and film programming.

Now more than ever, we must widely share that vibrancy and resilience of our communities.

We are so excited to share new upcoming Woodland Cultural Centre programming in the very near future!

"A museum may be a wonderful building, but we have to change the way people experience it. We've got to be more userfriendly; we've got to relate the building to the community, the earth. We've got to talk about ideas, we've got to talk about issues, and we've got to talk about beautiful things too. We've got to talk about humour and about all of the things that make human beings the way they are." - Tom Hill, *All Roads are Good: Native Voices on Life and Culture*, Page 186.



The Development team have been preparing this final Save the Evidence newsletter; compiling all the monumental and special moments of the past six years, seeing all the people and organizations we've had the opportunity to meet, and the awareness we've spread about the history of Residential Schools in Canada and the lasting impacts it's had on Indigenous communities; it truly is awe-inspiring to see what we've achieved with your help. To have completed this successful campaign over six years is all in thanks to our incredibly generous donors and supporters.

We cannot thank you enough for choosing to support the Save the Evidence campaign!

NYA:WĘH GO:WAH / BIG THANK YOU: WOODLAND CULTURAL CENTRE NEEDS YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

Development Team



Amid our reflections and the reality that we were quickly approaching the end of the Save the Evidence campaign, the Development team has had the exciting opportunity to think about what's next. What are our goals for the future?

As a Centre of excellence, the Woodland Cultural Centre serves to preserve, promote, and strengthen Indigenous language, culture, art, and history while envisioning a future where Hodinohsho:ni people will speak their language, know and practice their culture, and share their history. The Woodland Cultural Centre wants to be the pinnacle destination for cultural and educational programming and resources, but we need your help!

A donation to the Woodland Cultural Centre will directly go towards:

- Presenting contemporary Indigenous artists in all disciplines, visual arts, crafts, music, dance, theatre, film and more.
- The Dwadwenaga:dat Language Resource Centre which is dedicated to strengthening, revitalizing and maintaining First Nations Languages locally, regionally, and nationally. The Language Department has actively worked for over 35 years with language speakers, learners, Knowledge Keepers, and teachers to produce community resources in Indigenous languages.
- Education, which has a critical role to play in educating Indigenous and non-Indigenous people by creating educational programming that makes a personal connection with students and the public and advances understanding of, and respect for, Indigenous cultures, languages, histories, rights and perspectives.
- And the Library, with a collection that consists of books, journals, newspapers, exhibition catalogues, vertical files, microfilm, and theses on Indigenous content.



NYA:WĘH GO:WAH / BIG THANK YOU: WOODLAND CULTURAL CENTRE NEEDS YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

Development Team



Your donation to the Woodland Cultural Centre supports our continued efforts to deliver excellent opportunities and programming to our communities and the public. We hope to share more on these initiatives in depth over the coming months.

Please consider supporting the Woodland Cultural Centre to support:

Ka'satsténshsera – power/strength, to get things done (generosity, collective thinking)

Ka'nikonhrí:yo – good mind (commitment, respect, responsibility)

Skén:nen – peace (resolution, love, gratitude)

Click here to make a donation to the Woodland Cultural Centre!

Please feel free to contact us by email at development@woodlandculturalcentre.ca, or by phone at 519-759-2650 ext 232. We're here to answer your questions and offer support, and we would love to connect with you!



Trisha Kelley & Melanie Fernandez Development Team Woodland Cultural Centre



WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!

History should be accurately recorded, archived and the best "Evidence" comes from a lived experience. The Woodland Cultural Centre had a very important, yet difficult job, ethically and morally, to ask survivors to relive childhood abuse and trauma. The gathering of evidence occurred over several years and through the collaborative efforts of the Woodland Cultural Centre, many survivors were able to have their truths documented and archived. The former school will now educate, not destroy.

"Save the Evidence" opened the doors for any and all survivors that were able to speak about the horrific circumstances they were forced to endure during their time at the former Mohawk Institute Indian Residential School. Even though the Save the Evidence campaign has ended, according to a conversation I had with John Elliott "We are not done yet, there is more to tell" and as evidenced by the voices of the survivors, "We Are Still Here".

Roberta Hill Mushhole 1957-1961



SURVIVORS ASK FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE MOHAWK VILLAGE MEMORIAL PARK

The Survivors of the Mohawk Institute Residential School are working to develop a memorial park adjacent to the residential school site.

The mission/mandate is to develop and maintain the Mohawk Village Memorial Park to honour the children who attended the Mohawk Institute Indian Residential School (also known as the Mush Hole), which operated from 1834 to 1970.

For more information or to donate to support their efforts, please visit: <u>https://mohawkvillagepark.com/</u>

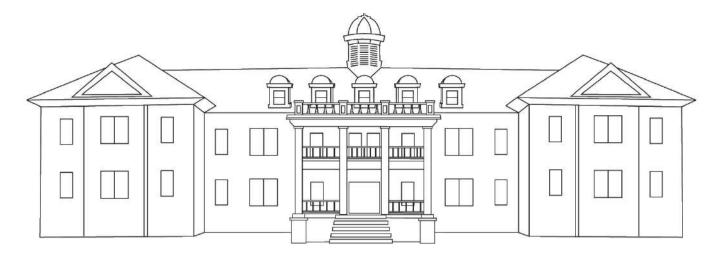
The Mohawk Village Memorial Park is a registered charity.

Board of Directors

- Chair Roberta Hill
- Board Secretary Dawn Hill
- Board Member Sherlene Bomberry
- Board Member John Elliot
- Board Member Shelley Clark
- Treasurer Amanda Hill
- Board Member Virginia Ninham

Check their website and reach out online to support, donate, or host an event!





A SHORT STORY FROM FRIENDS & NEIGHBOURS

"Friends and Neighbours, we need your help to raise funds to repair the roof on the Mohawk Institute."

This was the Facebook post by Amos Key Jr. that caught the attention of some community members, who took it upon themselves to reach out to Amos.

Our first meeting in 2015 was held to discuss a strategy that would best benefit the community and Woodland Cultural Centre for the long term. With the help of Wilfrid Laurier University, Brantford campus, we decided that education was a key component in letting the non-Indigenous community know about the history of the Mohawk Institute Residential School.

Many Brantford residents were unaware that this institution was located within the city, let alone know the story that needed to be told about the history of the Mohawk Institute from 1828 to 1970.

In October 2016, we hosted our first speakers – Lt. Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell and Nathan Tidridge. The group decided that all events would be free and open to all – and we would ask those attending for a contribution to the Save the Evidence campaign. We held up to five events each year until we were halted due to COVID-19.

We have hosted speakers on topics ranging from restorative justice to survivors who continue to speak about their journey. We've also shown films including Colonization Road, In Jesus' Name and Rumble.

Among our speakers have been Senator Mary Jane McCallum, Laurier's Darren Thomas, Tom Wilson speaking about the Sixties Scoop, and Allan Downey, author of The Creator's Game: Lacrosse, Identity, and Indigenous Nationhood. Bob Rae spoke



about reconciliation and how everyone can learn to embrace reconciliation as part of their own personal journey. The release of the 94 Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Report were guides we could follow.

Our most prominent event was to be held in March 2020. Tanya Talaga was to speak on "Rights Before Reconciliation" at the Sanderson Centre in Brantford. In a short time, we had every seat in the 1,100-seat venue reserved. However, we had to postpone until October 2021, when we settled for a virtual event. We are currently planning our 2022 events. Unfortunately, the pandemic has made in-person events unsafe again.

Stay tuned to our Facebook Page – Friends & Neighbours of Save the Evidence – where we will announce events for 2022. We have much to learn and our journey has only started. Please join us to learn and help raise the funds needed to complete the restoration of the Mohawk Institute. Once restored, survivors will lead us in re-opening the building as an interpretive centre – and a "site of conscience."

Thank you everyone who has helped support our group over the past years. We will be back in 2022.



KEEP SUPPORTING WCC Donation Levels

- \$100 \$499 -will receive acknowledgement on the WCC website updated twice per year (downloadable PDF)
- \$500 \$1,499 -will receive invitation to screening of a special virtual tour event and Q & A session and acknowledgement in the WCC Annual Report
- \$1,500 \$4,999 will receive preview invitation to exhibitions, acknowledgement on the WCC website for the fiscal year period of the donation and invitation to donor recognition event
- **\$5,000** + will receive a copy of WCC anniversary and other publications

INTERESTED IN SPONSORSHIP?

Interested in learning more on how you can sponsor Woodland Cultural Centre for an upcoming exhibition or event?

Contact our Development Coordinator, Trisha Kelley at:

 $\frac{Development@WoodlandCulturalCentre.ca}{or by phone at 519-759-2650 \ x \ 232}$

INTERESTED IN HOSTING A FUNDRAISER?

We can't thank our fundraisers enough for all the hard work they put into 2021! We can't wait for the year ahead!

If you're interested in running a fundraiser for the Woodland Cultural Centre, please contact us at 519-759-2650 x 232 or <u>email here</u>

We are here to support you and we can't wait to work with you!

VISIT OUR CANADAHELPS PAGE NOW!

PAYMENT DETAILS

□ I have enclosed a cheque (payable to Woodland Cultural Centre)

Donate online
(www.woodlandculturalcentre.ca/donate/)

Charitable registration number: 891177990RR0001

Woodland Cultural Centre respects your privacy. We protect your personal information and adhere to all legislative requirements with respect to protecting privacy. We do not rent, sell or trade our mailing lists. The information you provide will be used to deliver services and to keep you informed and up-to-date on the activities of Woodland Cultural Centre through periodic contact. If at any time you wish to be removed from any of these lists, simply contact Woodland Cultural Centre at 519-759-2650 X 232.

With my gift of \$ _____ I am please to support the Woodland Cultural Centre

CONTACT DETAILS		
NAME	E-MAIL ADDRESS	
STREET NAME		SUITE/APT #
CITY	PROVINCE	POSTAL CODE
PHONE	CELL PHONE	