

Homer Watson *House & Gallery*

2025 Annual Report



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Board of Directors

Karen Buhlman - Chair

Shelley Wickenheiser - Director/Treasurer

Elaine Seeley - Director

And joining the Board in September of 2025:

Carolyn Stace - Secretary

Jeff Donkergoed - Director

Sandra Afonso Memmolo - Director

Belinda Kemp - Director

With much appreciation to **Colleen Bulla**, Past Chair and **Paige Bromby**, Director who generously volunteered their time, knowledge and experience to the Board until they stepped down from their positions May 2025.

With thanks to **Christine Michaud**, Councillor, Ward 4, City of Kitchener and to **Andrea Hallam**, Manager Arts and Creative Industries, City of Kitchener for their support over the past year.

Staff

Cathy Masterson - Director/Curator

Tanner van Vliet - Education & Public Programs Coordinator

Ralf Wall - Graphic Designer & Retail Manager

Katie Pearson - Storyteller Coordinator

Emilie McNamara - Program Assistant

Shannon Stehr - Program Assistant

Eric Almberg - Events Coordinator

Janet Mayhew - Bookkeeper

Instructors

Alyssa Marie

Andrea Jackman

Anne Schott

Atena Ganea

Emilie MacNamara

Eric Almberg

Gada Jane

Gwen Narimalla

Harry Kooy

Ivonne

Jacquie Herron

Mansi

Moumita Roychowdhury

Neetika

Raheleh Mohammadi

Roq Salter

Shannon

Stephanie Florence

Tammy Nisbett

Tanner van Vliet

Trevor Waurechen

Camp Staff

Adelaide Neuman

Alivia Vanderhout

Dylan Thompson

Jaden Renwick

Malin Westerveld



Chair's Message

On behalf of the Board of Directors at Homer Watson House Foundation, I am pleased to share our 2025 Annual Report—a reflection of the milestones we've achieved together to develop the artistic, cultural, and historical importance of the Homer Watson House & Gallery. Our efforts reflect HWH&G's commitment to the preservation of Homer Watson's legacy and that of the Doon School of Fine Arts.

To accomplish our goals, we recognize and acknowledge the support of the public and private sectors. We are particularly grateful to the City of Kitchener for its ongoing support. The City of Kitchener, owner of the property, recognizes the unique significance that Homer Watson House & Gallery occupies in the Waterloo Region as part of our Canadian history. Funding was also received from the Region of Waterloo through the Major Arts and Culture Organizations Grant Program.

Homer Watson House & Gallery's success lies in the number and variety of programs that are taught by our qualified instructors, our unique exhibit space and support for our local talent all while recognizing the importance of Homer Watson, Phoebe Watson and the Doon School of Art.

Our accomplishments would not be possible without the support of many. I extend my thanks to our staff team, to the many volunteers who are integral to our success and to our Board for their leadership. We are grateful to all who have supported our goals and initiatives to support the long-term viability and sustainability of the Homer Watson House and Gallery beyond our lifetime.

Karen Buhlman, Chair

Director's Message

2025 has been a remarkable year of progress. Our team has a renewed sense of connection to community—both with our neighbours in Doon, and with artists of all ages and mediums.

We have expanded access to meaningful programming—expanding free events such as our Blankets and Books program, our Family Fun days, and Homer Holidays. We have created opportunities for artists to sell their work through new Clothesline sales and “pop-up” events. We have refined our exhibition timelines to provide more opportunities for local and regional artists to exhibit their work in one of our three Gallery spaces.

We have brought students to learn, see, think, and make. We continue to provide art programs for people of all ages and abilities. With the support of our donors, we have subsidized programs in place to support low-income schools with reduced program fees or support for bus rentals.

We would like to thank the Estate of the late John Greer who through the kindness of his wife Joanne Greer donated a significant collection of prints to the Education and Programming section. The framed works have been hung in our studio spaces providing inspiration to students and instructors alike. Additional prints have been enthusiastically used by students in summer camps and other programming over the course of 2025 and 2026. This donation has been much appreciated.

One of our most exciting initiatives in 2025 was working with our partners at the City of Kitchener to launch and complete a Building and Landscape Condition Report. This report will lead to the framework of restoration and rehabilitation work for both the House and the Gardens. We appreciate that the City of Kitchener through the budget process has identified the need for Capital funding streams moving forward. This represents a commitment from both the Foundation and City to continue to build inclusive, accessible programs that honours our Mission while embracing new opportunities.

We are so grateful to all our Friends, volunteers and supporters who have contributed to Homer Watson House & Gallery over the last year. We are also appreciative of all the granting bodies that have made it possible to continue to operate and develop new programs and exhibits. This includes the City of Kitchener, the Government of Canada, Waterloo Region, and many other individual donors. We cannot thank you enough for your commitment to supporting arts in the region.

Cathy Masterson, Director/Curator

Historical Significance

Statement of Provincial Significance:

The Homer Watson House & Gallery was the home, gallery and studio of Canadian-born painter, Homer Ransford Watson (1855-1936). Watson was the first internationally celebrated Canadian landscape painter, rising to fame after selling 2 paintings to the English Royal Family. Homer Watson died in 1936 and was recognized as a National Historic Person of Canada by the Federal Government in 1939.

The Homer Watson House is part of Watson's artistic legacy; he left a significant architectural and artistic mark on the house, adding two additions to the house and painting a frieze in his studio depicting artists who influenced him. A federal plaque was raised at the site in 1955.





Our Mandate

Vision

The vision of Homer Watson House & Gallery is to preserve and celebrate the legacy of Homer Watson's creative spirit by stimulating the appreciation, enjoyment and practice of the visual arts.

Mission

Homer Watson House & Gallery will fulfill its mission by engaging in a three-part program of:

- Preservation and Collection of Homer Watson's art, his home studio and gallery and the heritage of his life, his times and that of Phoebe Watson and the Doon School of Fine Arts.
- Exhibition of Homer Watson's body of work and regular shows of contemporary local and regional artists.
- Education and enrichment through events and instructional programs in the visual arts.

Values

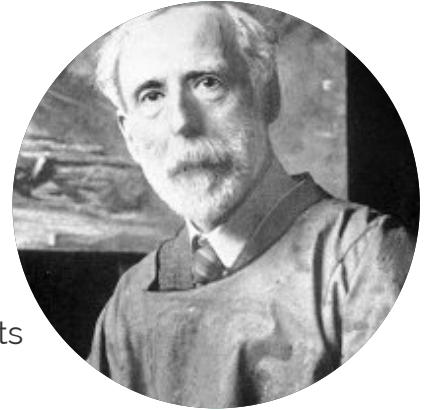
- Inspire creativity, knowledge and ideas through art.
- Celebrate diversity and inclusivity in our activities and working practices.
- Recognize the inherent value of the natural environment.
- Improve accessibility.
- Operate in a fiscally responsible way to ensure long term sustainability of the organization.
- Develop meaningful relationships within our region and the broader arts community.

Core Competencies

Core competencies allow Homer Watson House & Gallery to engage a variety of markets and offer unique contributions to the community that are difficult for other galleries to emulate.

1. Celebrate Historic Significance

- Designated National Historic Site
- Designated Ontario Heritage Site
- Site of the renowned Doon School of Fine Arts
- Unique architectural design of House and Gallery
- One of the oldest operating gallery in province



2. Participate in Art Education

- Wide variety of classes and workshops for children and adults
- School programs for preschool to post-secondary
- Community, Children's, and Family Group workshops
- In-house and outreach community programs

3. Provide Centre for Local Artists and Community Interaction

- Student exhibitions
- Local emerging and established artist exhibitions
- Hands-on teaching and mentoring opportunities



4. Protect Environmental Significance

- Part of the Historical Walking Tour of Lower Doon
- Situated on the Heritage Grand River
- Connected to the Walter Bean Nature Trails
- Affiliated with the Homer Watson Park (Cressman Woods)

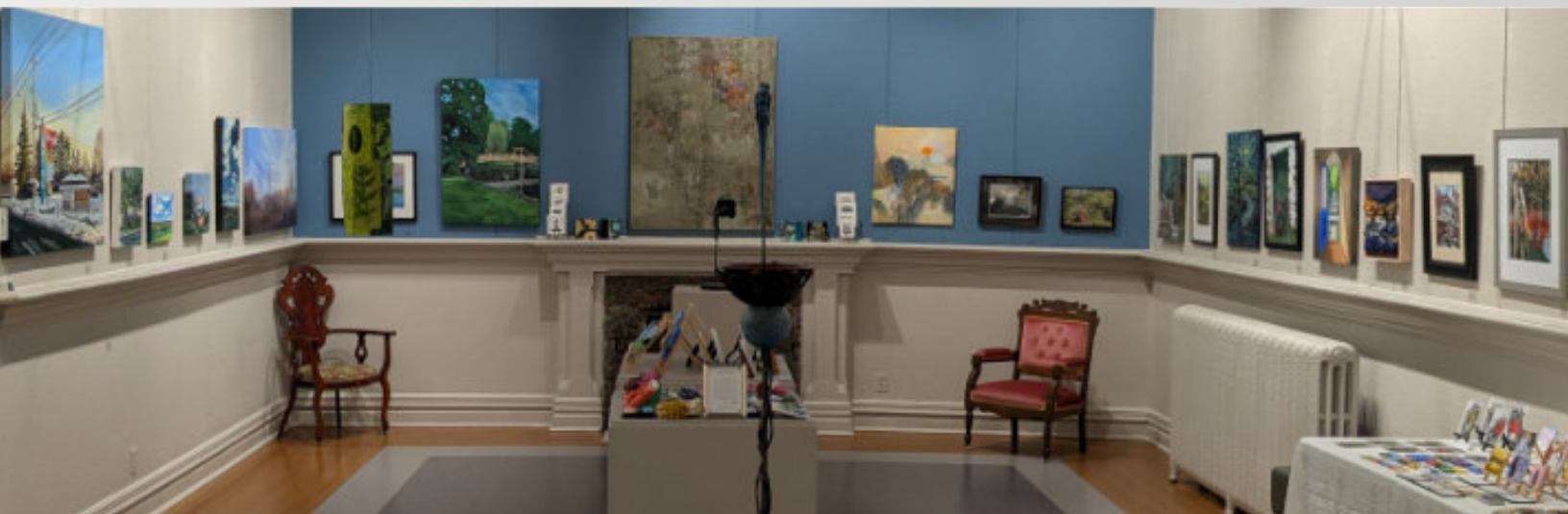


5. Build Community Partnerships

- Regional elementary and secondary school tours
- Local businesses, community groups and individual stakeholder involvement
- Other charitable foundations associated: Grand River Conservation Association; KW Community Foundation; Ontario Heritage Foundation; Community Museum Associations; Waterloo Wellington Museum Network

These core competencies originate from Homer Watson's philosophies of environmental preservation through the celebration of arts, culture and community.

Exhibitions Overview



4 # Group Shows featuring **137** artists

6 # Solo Shows

26 # Homer Watson works

8 # Phoebe Watson works

7 # Doon School works

22,916

Gallery
Visitors

Exhibitions



Intertwine

Featuring Eastwood Collegiate Institute IAP Students

January 12 – 25th, 2025

Homer Watson House & Gallery presents Intertwine, an exhibition celebrating students from Eastwood Collegiate Institute's Visual Arts Program.

An artist's view of reality is coloured by their inner world. When we create art, we strive towards the merging of perception and fact, fundamentally intertwining the two. Seeking to exhibit each artist's unique lens they approach the world through, Intertwine represents the role of art as a vessel for self-expression, using our innermost thoughts as fuel for creation.



Lead Lines

Brenda Mabel Reid

February 4 – March 30, 2025

Lead Lines explores multigenerational family dynamics and intergenerational gifts, trauma, and memory, holding these complexities in queerness. Using the quilts Marion made in her later life as familial leadlines, I interviewed her five children in their homes. I studied five of her quilts, one from each household. The quilts ended up being the way of getting to her story. This was an uncomfortable and, at times, devastating process of receiving oral histories within a family full of silence. It informed me as much about my grandma as it did about who I am: a non-binary artist who unintentionally created an art practice with a quilted centre.



Passion, Promise, and Resilience

Carol Folino

February 4 – March 30, 2025

Carol Folino's body of artwork began as an exploration of her journey dealing with grief, loss, and anxiety in the form of portraiture. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic began, a notable shift in her artwork occurred as she became interested in expressing the plight of others who have demonstrated courage in the face of adversity.

During this time, she witnessed the intersection of two pandemics: COVID-19 and racism. 2020 saw a rash of protests arise against racial oppression and brutality. Many of her portraits in the exhibition, "Passion, Promise, and Resilience", reflect this racial reckoning and combine images from both a historical and contemporary context.



S.H.E. is Healing

Suellen Evoy-Oozeer

February 4 – March 30, 2025

"S.H.E. is Healing" art exhibit of 13 painted spirit portraits of all nations of women, as art as social practise done by Suellen Evoy-Oozeer. S.H.E.- Spirit, Humanity and Earth explores the healing powers of these forces combined with the sacred feminine.

Work was done during 2020-2023 creating a community at a time of isolation, these women worked to heal themselves, each other, and the artist. The healing energy has continued throughout its inception with the exhibit, the book "S.H.E. is healing" through events, gatherings, and touring since February 2024.



Life Entwined

John Richer

April 4 – May 25, 2025

Exploring the intertwined beauty of natural forms and the greater forces at work behind them.

Looking beyond the entangled forms in Nature, we can see a continually changing yet structured order within everything.

Fractal & spiral patterns can be seen in rocky landscapes, trees, and the bones of living things – evidence of expansive, inherent universal forces in motion as time passes.

Massive rock formations that were once underwater, eroded and moved by glacial tides have eventually become part of an ever changing forest that now grows on top of them.

Likewise, wildlife that was once animate and part of that ecosystem eventually dies, feeding the earth as it reorganizes into new lifeforms.

We can see this regenerative energy defining the forms of bones – a symbolic image of the death and rebirth life cycle.

Born into this energetically charged environment, we are intrinsically connected – active members defining existence itself.

Art of Nostalgia

Trevor Clare

April 4 – May 25, 2025

Trevor Clare, a visionary artist hailing from Kitchener, Ontario, finds inspiration in painting local hidden gems and landmarks. He enjoys delving into various subjects and styles, drawing techniques from traditional oils and acrylics, and fusing them with contemporary digital art. Rapid brushwork and a fusion of expressionist and digital techniques define his distinctive approach. Trevor's art thrives on emotional connection, evoking a sense of "neo-nostalgia" through the masterful use of colors and light that weave compelling moods and atmospheres. Each artwork tells a captivating story, inviting viewers on a journey of cherished memories and heartfelt experiences.

Mother Earth / Father Sky

Whispers on the Path: A Collaborative Reconciliation & Allyship Project

May 30 – July 6, 2025

Whispers on the Path is a duo of painters: Indigenous artist Annette Sullivan, and allied supporter Angela Found, residents of Southwestern Ontario. The pair focuses on the intersection of reconciliation, equality and identity exploration. Their approach is transformational through mutual allyship, with growth and expansion of heart and mind being driving factors.

The collaborative journey started in 2019 when Annette and Angela began discussions about possibilities of creating art focusing on shared spiritual connections. An artist union was forged in a ceremony. The work centers around social and personal transformation while giving voice to untold ancestral stories. While making the art, intrinsic bonds between Native and non-native (settler) communities grow strong. The spark of this union started a flame that grew into a fire. Visions from the sacred medicine walk are presented for viewing in this collection. Upon considering the complexity of reconciliation the pair discovered that they both collected Canadian postage stamps as children. They recognized that a postage stamp's graphic border represents the political boundaries of the state. The art rearticulates historic scenes symbolizing national identity: "Canadiana". Pre-Covid, the pair gathered to simultaneously paint on one canvas. In 2020, during lockdowns they revolutionized the working model, using video chats and idea sharing to consult on the progress, with couriers delivering canvases between home studios.





A Legacy of Inspiration

Homer Watson

May 30 – July 6, 2025

Canada's landscapes, both natural and urban, have long inspired artists. Homer Watson's deep connection to the landscapes of Doon, Ontario, shaped his artistic vision. Self-taught and committed to authenticity, he captured Canadian landscapes with remarkable spirit. His dedication to portraying Canada's natural beauty set the foundation for generations of artists who followed.

Continuing Watson's artistic spirit, the Doon School of Fine Arts, founded in 1948, nurtured artists in the same inspiring surroundings, fostering a deep bond between art, nature, and heritage.

Today, that legacy lives on at Homer Watson House & Gallery, where art programs and exhibitions ensure that this enduring connection remains a source of inspiration for future generations.

Diversity

Art District Gallery

July 10 – September 7, 2025

DIVERSITY is a condition of being different with a variety of points of view. It is the utmost importance to recognize people's differences and embrace new perspectives and ideas. The Art District Gallery artists reflect this within this group art exhibition.

DIVERSITY best describes this exhibition by eleven artists who display an exciting exhibit by melding different artworks from encaustic, painting, mixed media, and digital format to metal creations and wood sculptures on plinths.

Each artist is individual in their approach and technical skills that express their creativity and points of view. Art Cards displayed by artworks gives an opportunity to be inspired and learn about the artists inspiration, tools and process.

Alison Lucy, Cathy Amos, Daniel Anstett (the Dead Ant), Deb Flynn, Dominique Cinq-Mars Delay, Faith Hieblinger, Harry Kooy, Nancy Peng, Roslyn Ramsay, Tracy Blackwood, Guest artist: James Nye



Blue

Connections Fibre Artists

September 11 – November 9

Connections Fibre Artists have made the decision to challenge ourselves, and delve into the colour blue to create an entire exhibition highlighting this very special corner of the colour wheel. We want to indulge ourselves in the many tones, shades and tints of each variety of this amazing colour. Ultramarine blue, indigo blue, azure blue, lapis lazuli, aqua, turquoise, Prussian blue, robin's egg blue, sky blue, cobalt blue, sapphire blue, royal blue – the list (like the sky), seems endless. Our plan is to immerse the gallery in a sea of blues – inviting our audience to feel all the emotions that blue can create.

Impression

Wen Li

September 11 – November 9

The "Impression" series artworks offer an interpretation of landscapes that are recognizable, yet less detail oriented, merely an "impression". The title for the series also echoes the embossing procedure and the texture on the paper. The subtlety of the artwork enhances a sense of tranquility that nature provides.

This series includes distinguished embossment prints both blind and tinted with wood burning residues from the laser etching process. The residues are gradually reduced during the process; hence each tinted print is unique and non-repeatable with different colour intensity and contrast.

HWHG Juried Show 2025

Hiding in Plain Sight/Site

Nov 14, 2025 – Jan 4, 2026

Our annual juried exhibition showcases artwork from across the Waterloo Region and celebrates the creativity shared throughout our community. In keeping with this year's theme, Hiding in Plain Sight/Site, we encourage artists to embrace their relationships with our physical, natural, and artistic surroundings. These explorations can be captured in a variety of ways; therefore all artistic techniques are welcome.



Exhibiting Artists

Anca Seger

AnnaMaria Vasco

Anne Williamson

Barry Smylie

Beatrice Powell

Brenda Hunniford

Carol Walthers

Charity Konrath

Christina Vogiatzis

Craig Campbell

Darcy Davis

David Gollop

Deb Flynn

Deb Reimer

Emma Nowak

Frances Gregory (1st Prize)

Gerald Pisarzowski

Greg Kimmett

Greg McCann

Heather Hager (2nd Prize & HM)

Heather Masse

Holly Atkinson

Jacquie Herron

Jesse Strong

Jill Mathers

Jim Blomfield

Justin Mathews

Kate Wyatt

Kathleen T Kelly

Lynne Ramage

Maria Antoniv

Marion Anderson

Marlene Kawalez

Mary Flatt

Michelle Stelter

Monique Campbell (HM)

Moumita Roychowdhury

Murray Tucker

Nancy Brent

Nikola Lang

Paul Smith

Paule M Charland

Rachel Kochistry

Raheleh Mohammadi

Robbin Pulver-Andrews

Roger Young

Ruth Linda Morton

Sandra L Bethell

Sarah Lewis

Shannon Patte

Sheila Thompson

Sheryl Teasell

Sulakshana Shanmuganathan

Susan Mann

Thelma Ross

Thomas Stewart Robertson

Tracy Willard (3rd Prize)

Valerie Thomson

Vanessa Pejovic

Victoria Uribe Perez

Wen LI

Wendy L Schell

Yan Gong

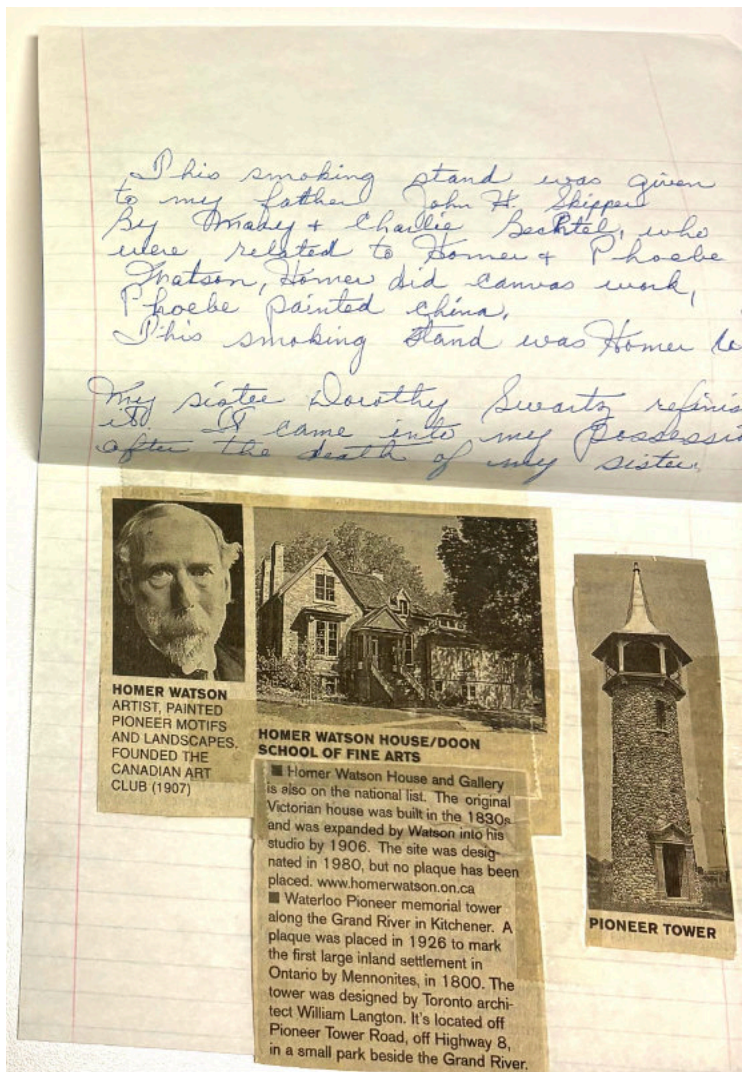
New Acquisitions

Homer Watson's Smoking Stand

2025 saw a new addition to the collection at Homer Watson House & Gallery. Mary and Charlie Betchel (relatives of Roxa Watson) gave Homer Watson's Smoking Stand to John H. Skipper after Homer's passing. It remained in the Skipper family with Cameron Skipper generously donating it to the Gallery in December 2025.

This smoking stand was given to my father John H. Skipper by Mary & Charlie Bechtel, who were related to Homer & Phoebe Watson. Homer did canvas work, Phoebe painted china. This smoking stand was Homer Watson's.

My sister Dorothy Swartz refinished it. it came into my possession after the death of my sister.



Programs Overview

82

Adult Programs

600.5

Hours Taught

444

Participants

28

Children/Family
Programs

79.5

Hours Taught

278

Participants

17

Youth & Adult
Camp Programs

401

Hours Taught

312

Participants

27

Clay

12

Watercolour

5

Drawing

Adult Courses By Medium

4

Textiles & Specialty
Workshops

4

Acrylic Painting

17

Mixed Media &
Printmaking

Field Trips

35

Schools & Groups

35

Bookings

1539

Participants

583

Clay Objects
Created

553

Paintings
Created

403

Prints
Created

"An engaging workshop. I really enjoy the process and product we make! A great entry point into the arts."

"Taking this class has opened up a whole new area of interest for me and a passion that brings me great joy."

Outreach

6

Groups

10

Workshops

226

Participants

26

Schools that have visited us.

- Blenheim District Public School
- Bridgeport Public School
- Caramel New Church School
- Cedarbrae Public School
- Courtland Avenue Public School
- Forest Glen Public School
- Forest Hill Public School
- Grand River Christian School
- Hespeler Public School
- Jean Steckle Public School
- J W Gerth Public School
- Lester B Pearson Public School
- Lexington Public School
- Mackenzie King Public School
- New Dawn Alternative School
- Prueter Public School
- Queen Elizabeth Public School
- Riverside Public School
- Saint John Paul II Catholic School
- St. Aloysius Catholic Elementary School
- St. John's Kilmarnock Independent School
- St. Josephine Bakhita Catholic Elementary School
- St. Peter Catholic Elementary School
- Victus Academy - Private Academy
- Wilson Avenue Public School
- Woodland Park Public School



9

Bookings

100

Participants

A group of children are sitting around a long table in a room, engaged in a painting activity. They are using various art supplies like paint palettes, brushes, and containers. A woman is standing behind them, likely supervising. The word "PARTIES" is overlaid in large, stylized letters across the middle of the image.

PARTIES

Bring A Friend Promo

10% Discount when you sign up with another person



240

Times
Redeemed

Camps



17

Camps

298

Participants

395

Camp Days

Events



7
Paid Events

140
Vendors

1,517
Visitors



5
Musical Performances



4
Free Events



3
Pop-up Markets

35
Pop-up Artists



Website & Social Media



73,531

Website
Visitors



4,055

Instagram
Followers
with 183,500 views



2,479

Facebook
Followers
with 177,100 views



1,315

Newsletter
Followers



Thank You to Our Supporters

Total Donors: 41

Total Donations: \$8,774.33

Donors

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Margaret and Steve Shaver
Maria Minutillo
Nyssa Wilfong
Paul Bulla
Peggy Cookson
Seena Arjmand
Susan Mann
Waterloo Region District School Board
Wen Li

Funders

City of Kitchener

Region of Waterloo



Grants

City of Kitchener: Tier 1 funding

Region of Waterloo: Major Arts & Cultural Organizations Grant

Canada Summer Jobs

Waterloo Region Community Foundation –
The Waterloo Region Record – Lyle S.
Hallman Foundation Kids to Camp Fund

Friends of the Gallery



Total Friends of
the Gallery



Individual



Family



Students/Senior



Treasurer's Report for Year Ended December 31, 2025

BDO continued as the approved auditors for the year ending December 31, 2025.

Municipal funding from the City of Kitchener of \$258,510 continues to provide the core annual funding necessary to fulfil our mandate. Additionally, the Region of Waterloo through the Major Arts and Culture Grant provided \$35,000 in funding.

Canada Summer Jobs funding supported the hiring of 5 camp Councillors. The receipt of this grant allowed the Foundation to provide important work experience for local students interested in pursuing a career in the cultural sector.

This year, with thanks to the Waterloo Region Community Foundation – The Waterloo Region Record – Lyle S. Hallman Foundation, we were able to provide scholarship opportunities for those who needed financial support to attend the camps.

Earned Revenue consisting of registration and program fees together with public fundraising combined to \$543,604 in 2025 (compared to \$578,739 in 2024). Expenses totaled \$511,862 for the year.

It should be noted that one new project was completed outside of the approved 2025 Operations Budget. The Board supported the use of funds from the Special Projects Fund to contract an architectural firm to complete a Building and Landscape Condition Report with the understanding that this report will create the framework for multi-year restoration and rehabilitation work of the property. We look forward to working with the City of Kitchener in future years to ensure this historically significant property continues to be a community asset. The year ended on a solid financial footing for the Foundation to enter 2026..

Shelley Wickenheiser, Treasurer



homerwatson.on.ca