

MUSEUMS OF BURLINGTON

IRELAND
HOUSE
MUSEUM
— EST. 1837 —

JOSEPH BRANT
MUSEUM

ANNUAL REPORT

2024

Burlington, as we know it today, is rich in history and modern traditions of many First Nations and the Métis. From the Anishinaabeg to the Haudenosaunee, and the Métis – our lands spanning from Lake Ontario to the Niagara Escarpment are steeped in Indigenous history.

The territory is mutually covered by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy, the Ojibway and other allied Nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

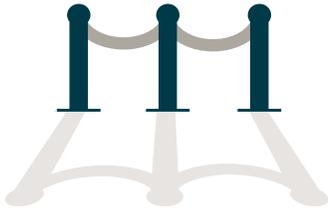
We would like to acknowledge that the land on which we gather is part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Vision

To be a beacon in the community
- the Museums of Burlington is the place for connection, discussion, and exploration.

Mission

To fulfill curiosity by engaging audiences in the sharing of Burlington's rich history, culture, and beyond in creative and innovative ways.



2024 in Review

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



The Museums of Burlington are unique and engaging places of discovery that connect and share our community's stories. This year we developed new relationships with community partners, created innovative programming, presented a host of travelling exhibitions from across Canada and were able to showcase the collection in creative ways. It was a year of accomplishments as we continued to preserve and share Burlington's rich history and culture. Our newly created Strategic Plan provided the roadmap to achieve our objectives related to three overarching pillars: Ensure Organizational Growth & Resilience; Strengthen Community Role, Connections, and Reach; and Advance Truth and Reconciliation.

This year we had 5,745 students participate in our education programs and over 1,300 children enrolled in our workshops, day camps and youth programming. These activities enabled the museums to connect with children of all ages and offer inclusive, unique learning experiences.

In 2024 we expanded our Heritage Garden Initiative, a program in partnership with M.M. Robinson High School Community Pathways Program and the Burlington Food Bank. This important and specialized program provides opportunities for students to learn about the Ireland family and early agriculture in the area, to develop gardening skills and to give back to the community by donating the produce grown to the Burlington Food Bank.

The Museums of Burlington have a small but mighty team who work tirelessly to ensure that the programs, events, exhibitions and visitor experiences are memorable and impactful. We are fortunate to have dedicated staff, volunteers and Board of Directors who believe in our vision. We are grateful to our supporters, funders, visitors and members and look forward to seeing you when you visit the museums.

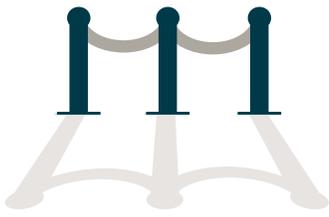
Kimberly Watson
Director of Museums



The Burlington Museums Foundation is the fundraising arm of the Museums of Burlington and inspires the community to invest in heritage, culture and learning opportunities.

When you support the Burlington Museums Foundation you invest in priorities including special exhibitions, public programs and learning initiatives. Find out more at

burlingtonmuseumsfoundation.ca.



2024 in Review

CURATORIAL

Public inquiries relating to donation offers and research requests remained steady throughout 2024. The curatorial department focused on improving the storage rooms for the collections at both Ireland House Museum and Joseph Brant Museum. Some projects included a mass collection inventory, reorganization to create an efficient workspace and flow, and creating specialized storage solutions for long-term care of artifacts. Efforts to record more about Burlington's history and community were conducted through oral history interviews. One project, "Echoes and Reflection: Capturing the Human Story," is an oral history exhibition detailing seven unique immigration stories of individuals who lived in Burlington.

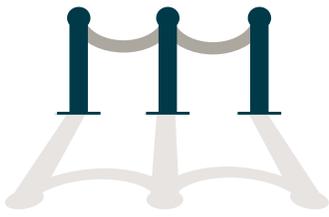
SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

Joseph Brant Museum hosted three exhibitions over the course of 2024. Guests navigated a dimly lit room full of interactive displays in the exhibition called, "Worlds of the Night" (April 6 – August 24). Highlights included a look at the world of nocturnal animals, bioluminescence, and sleep cycles. "Monarch & Bee" (September 7 – October 12) educated visitors about two of the most important pollinators in our natural world. Rounding out the year was, "Refuge Canada" (November 2 – April 19, 2025) which used powerful images, soundscapes, first person accounts, and artifacts to examine Canada's place in the global refugee crisis.



BY THE NUMBERS...

- New Acquisitions: 18
- Public Inquiries: 69
- Virtual Exhibitions: 1 | Echoes and Reflection: Capturing the Human Story

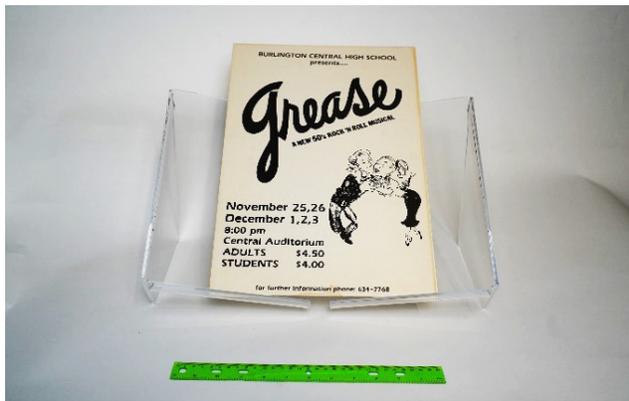


2024 in Review

AQUISITION HIGHLIGHTS

In 2024, the Museums were approached by various members of the Burlington community offering objects showcasing the community's history. Highlights included:

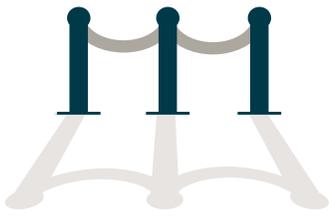
- A large archival collection from Burlington Central High School's 100th anniversary
- Joan Lougheed's council memorabilia from her time on Burlington's City Council



IRELAND HOUSE MUSEUM

There were a few projects this year at Ireland House to improve the aesthetic while ensuring structural integrity. The wallpaper of the "Silver Bedroom" underwent remedial conservation by smoothing out the warping as seen below. The porch was repainted and any deteriorated wood was replaced. In addition, preventative conservation continues to be a priority through maintaining a stable environment, implementing an Integrated Pest Management plan, ongoing cleaning, and accurate record keeping.





2024 in Review

SPECIAL EVENTS

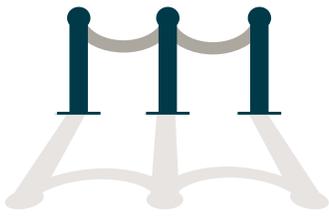
2024 was an exciting year for special events at the Museums of Burlington with the introduction of two new events, new partnerships, and new event formats. With its growing popularity, “An Evening at the Brant Inn” was held off-site for the first time at the Marquis Gardens, located in the Waterfront Hotel. We also took advantage of the Rooftop Terrace’s views at Joseph Brant Museum with events such as “Fireworks from the Rooftop,” “Yoga with a View,” “Summer Music Series,” and “Lights from the Rooftop”. We collaborated with Backed By Bees and hosted “Bees & Brews” at Ireland House Museum. As always, we ended the year with our annual signature holiday events, including “Visit with Santa” and “A Night at Ireland House.”

We continued to build partnerships with local organizations who contributed to events through sponsorships and in-kind donations. These organizations included Tansley Woods Dentistry, Henry’s Burlington, Sash & Garland, Mint Maids Burlington-Waterdown, Thrive Massage Therapy & Wellness, Monarch Tea Co., Bloomers, Brooke Hicks Realty, 13th Street Winery, Smith’s Funeral Homes, Thomson-Gordon Group, Heritage Place Retirement Residence, Stoner & Company Family Law, Cameron’s Brewing, danceScape, Access Storage, PV & V Insurance, Northern Crown Brewing, Boston Pizza Burlington North, St. Louis Bar & Grill, SUGARMOON Salon, Om Massage & Wellness, COBS Headon Forest, Mrs. B’s Gifthouse, Edible Arrangements, Backed by Bees, That Pie Place, King Paving & Construction Ltd., Mann’s Distillery, Evolv Financial, SimpsonWigle Law, and Nickel Brook Brewing Co.

“I had no idea what to expect [at a Night at Ireland House] as I’ve never visited before, but the food offering was outstanding! Staff were very knowledgeable too!”

“We loved the games, hot chocolate and photos with the bunny! The staff were so kind and my kids had a blast! We will definitely be back next year!”





2024 in Review

HERITAGE GARDEN INITIATIVE

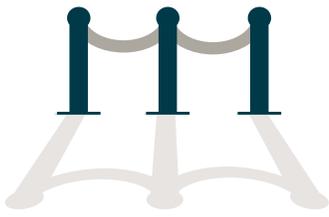
The Heritage Garden began as a passion project during Covid-19 and has blossomed into a shared community space.

The initiative was conceived as a collaboration between the Museums of Burlington and M.M. Robinson Secondary School's Horticulture Therapy Program, a part of the school's Community Pathways Program. Under the guidance of their teacher, students visit the garden twice a week beginning in April. Students germinate the seeds at school, till the soil, transplant their seedlings, water the plants, weed the garden, and harvest the produce. Students also learn about the importance of gardening in Burlington's history and plant items that traditionally would have been grown by the Ireland family, referencing the 1861 Agricultural Census we have in our collections. Produce harvested from the garden is donated to the Burlington Food Bank.

We are the proud recipient of a grant from The Burlington Foundation, as part of its recent annual call for grants. Funding is provided from the Burlington Community Fund, which aims to support the greatest needs of our community. We are also very thankful for funding support from Weatherdon Fund for Early and Lifelong Nutrition (a fund held within the Oakville Community Foundation).

In June, 2024, the Heritage Garden Initiative was featured on CHCH Morning Live on-location, the on location taping featured interviews with staff, educators and participating students from MM Robinson. Future plans include expanding the garden space to increase the amount of produce that can be donated to the Burlington Food Bank.





2024 in Review

EDUCATION

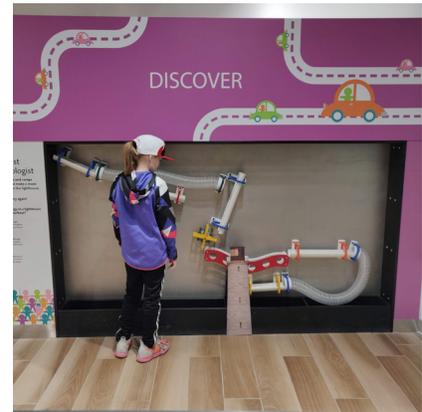
The Museums welcomed 5,745 participants in Education programs throughout 2024. These included class field trips and home school sessions, badge programs, children’s day camps and clubs, off-site lectures, workshops, and more.

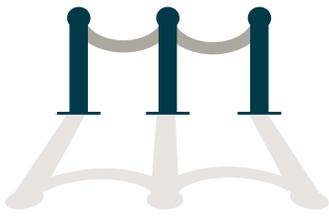
A new format was launched for outreach with respect to school programs. Museum Educators brought program materials to the schools, and facilitated programs in-class for the students. Outreach opportunities make the Museums’ programs accessible to all, eliminating the costly bus rental fees. We hope to expand the outreach program offerings as demand increases.

Day camp programs saw 1,392 participants in our various Winter, March Break, PA Day, and Summer Camps. Themes ranged from popular culture influences like the Wizard of Oz, to art-based camps like Exploring Art Mediums. Summer camps were divided by age group, camps for 5 – 8 year old children were offered at Ireland House Museum, and camps for 9 – 12 year old children were offered at Joseph Brant Museum. With this structure, activities could be effectively tailored to suit participants’ needs and interest. We received positive feedback on this new structure.

“Thank you for all the effort, creativity, and kindness you put into making this summer unforgettable [for our child].”

“Great museum. Love all the activities and classes they have!!”





2024 in Review

GIFT SHOP & MEMBERSHIP



Gift shop inventory is curated in keeping with exhibitions including specialty books, locally made gift items, logo giftware and low tech toys for kids.

Member benefits include: unlimited museum admission on regular days; 10% discount on facility rentals and gift shop purchases; member rates for select special events. 10% discount on select education programs (Family Members only); The largest proportion of our membership base is families.

VOLUNTEERS

**ADMISSION & GIFTSHOP
1157 HOURS**

**COLLECTIONS & RESEARCH
130 HOURS**

**EDUCATION & TOURS
1882 HOURS**

GARDENING | 65 HOURS

**SPECIAL EVENTS
274 HOURS**

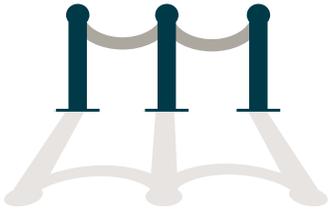
Museum volunteers gave over 3,500 hours of their time in 2024. Typical duties include assisting with education programs, camps, and curatorial research. Specific to Ireland House Museum, volunteers provide guided tours of the historic home to a variety of audiences, including school groups, special event guests and special interest groups such as paranormal groups. At Joseph Brant Museum, volunteers cover admission/gift shop duties Wednesdays through Saturdays.

We are grateful to all our volunteers for their help and most importantly for their generosity in giving their time, service and talents – what they do is very much appreciated not only by museum staff but by our community.

FACILITY RENTALS



The facilities at Ireland House Museum and Joseph Brant Museum continue to be rented out for a variety of uses by local organizations, business and community members. Events include company meetings, corporate luncheons and events, weddings, engagements, birthdays, baby showers and celebrations of life.



2024 in Review

MARKETING

Key performance indicators such as social media and website visit numbers continue to grow steadily. The substantial increase from last year is partly attributable to a newly implemented point of sale system and more accurate website visit tracking.

Special exhibitions, education programs and unique events remain effective in connecting with visitors – inspiring and informing them, while also encouraging them to relate content to their own lives. In analyzing audience feedback via surveys, website and membership analytics, our family and children’s programs/events continue to be a strength and opportunity.

3,487

 PAGE LIKES ON FACEBOOK ▲ 25%

3,119

 FOLLOWERS ON INSTAGRAM ▲ 9%

4,475

 EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS ▲ 23%



51,382

 WEBSITE USERS ▲ 35%

VISITOR OVERVIEW

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Joseph Brant Museum	2,672 to Mar. 13 (closed Mar. 14 to Jul. 14) 753 from Jul. 15 to Dec. 31	2,828 (closed Jan. 1 to Mar. 1 and Apr. 3 to Jul. 19)	6,972 (closed Jan 5-31)	8,867	8,710
Ireland House Museum	848 (closed to public admission since Mar. 14, number reflects private groups)	1,842 (closed to public admission, number reflects private groups)	6,579 (closed Jan 1-May 2 and Dec 19-31)	5,273 (closed Jan 5-31)	4,705

Note: Visitor numbers include general admission, day-use visitors (paid & unpaid), education program participants, youth group participants, booked tours, complimentary admissions (teachers, supervisors), facility rentals (# of people), special events/programs, off-site events/programs and volunteer visits. As we strive for increased guest satisfaction overall, large scale special events are being replaced with smaller, niche, experiential programming, resulting in a slight decrease of visitor numbers.

CONTACT US

Staff

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Jessica Benjak-Waterous
Curator

Lynna Nguyen
Acting Curator

Robin Hill
Volunteer and Venue Rental Administrator

Kate Almeida
Manager, Education and Outreach

Miriam Martens
Manager, Events & Programs

Amanda Berardi
Collections Coordinator

Shelby Forsyth
Educator

Kerrie Smith
Educator

Lauren Tawse
Educator

Janet Stephens
Manager, Marketing & Community Engagement

Rodel B. Adolfo
Maintenance

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905.634.3556

Board of Directors

Bryan Beatty | Chair

Len Collins | Vice-Chair

Julia McNulty | Treasurer

Adam Belovari | Director

Simone Bilato | Director

Greg DeLazzari | Director

Kim Hannigan-Daley | Director

Kelly McCrory | Director

Councillor Shawna Stolte | Director

Gerald J. Park | Advisor



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