

MUSEUMS OF BURLINGTON

IRELAND  
HOUSE  
MUSEUM  
— EST. 1837 —

JOSEPH BRANT  
MUSEUM

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2025

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.

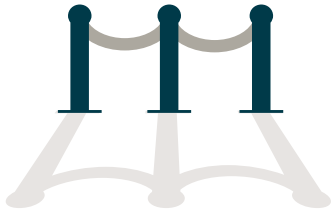
We would like to acknowledge that the land on which we gather is part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit.

## 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.



# 2025 in Review

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



At its core, the Museums of Burlington is a place of reflection and connection. As we welcomed the community through our doors, whether they were visiting the galleries or participating in a program, we were reminded that museums are more than spaces that house collections – they are places where communities gather, ideas are exchanged and history is continually reinterpreted.

Throughout the year, our team worked diligently to expand our exhibitions, educational initiatives, and community partnerships. We introduced three new special exhibitions at Joseph Brant Museum that invited visitors to explore our collections while highlighting stories that resonated with today’s audiences. Our education department expanded its reach through workshops, lectures, and school collaborations, ensuring that learners of all ages and abilities could engage with history in meaningful ways.

We also made significant progress behind the scenes. Investments in conservation and digital access have helped us to preserve our collections while making it more accessible to audiences beyond our walls. These efforts ensure that the stories and objects entrusted to our care are preserved for future generations. None of this work would be possible without the dedication of our staff, volunteers, board members, donors, and community partners.

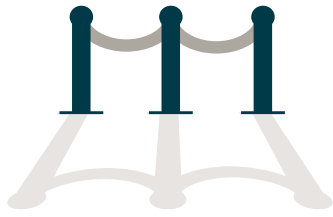
As we look ahead, we remain committed to expanding access, deepening engagement, and strengthening the role of the museums as a welcoming and inclusive cultural space. We are grateful for your continued support.

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](http://burlingtonmuseumsfoundation.ca).



# 2025 Community Impact

The Museums of Burlington help facilitate a connected, civically-engaged community through stories, exhibitions, public programming, and education. The permanent collection of artifacts and archival materials, which is comprised primarily of donations, serve to illustrate the historic founding, settlement and development of the Burlington area. However, community museums are not just about artifacts, they are also about people. Our programs and initiatives are designed to encourage participation and education, as well as foster community pride and cultural continuity. We develop and host a variety of programs and events including:

- school programs and field trips
- special events for all ages
- day camp and home school programs
- educational and entertaining special exhibitions
- complimentary admissions programs for community groups and newcomers
- speaker series and lecture programs
- Heritage Garden Initiative at Ireland House Museum in partnership with M.M. Robinson High School and the Burlington Food Bank

## BY THE NUMBERS

Over **25,000** artifacts in our permanent collections

Over **14,000** museum visits annually

**1,634** summer day camp participants

**532**

lbs of fresh produce donated to the Food Bank from the Heritage Garden Initiative

**89**

active volunteers contributing over 3,600 hours

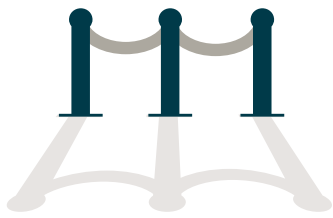
**822** free admissions for qualifying community groups and individuals

**40**

local business sponsors and event partners

**5,720**

field trip students and education program participants



# 2025 Community Impact

Our staff and volunteers take pride in delivering quality programming and memorable experiences for visitors of all ages. As the role of museums in our society continues to evolve, so do our events and programs, continuing to play a relevant and important part in serving the needs of our community.

“Visited [Joseph Brant Museum] and had a delightful experience. Packed with interesting facts about the city, the museum is small yet engaging, allowing you to explore everything in about an hour. The staff is friendly, adding to the welcoming atmosphere.”

-- Google review

“We learned a lot about Joseph Brant and the history of Burlington. My father used to be a regular at the Brant Inn to see all the big band leaders back in the 1950's. The rooftop terrace offers some great views of the city and the Lake. There are also several EV spots available in the free adjoining parking lot. Well worth a visit for any Burlington resident!”

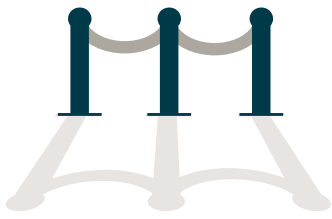
-- Google review

“Kate was a wonderful guide!! She offered to accommodate my vision disability immediately, was knowledgeable, fun, and has such a deep love for history and the [Ireland] family. It's amazing to be in such a beautiful restoration with such deep, deep love put into it. There's so much care in this property and it serves an important role in the community via a seed garden for local kids.”

-- Google review

“Attended a local event at the Ireland House Museum here in Burlington. What a night for the senses. The organizers did a splendid job of presenting their visitors with the sights, sounds and smells of a Christmas in a family farmhouse in the 1800's. On our walking tour, we had chestnuts outside on an open fire with a cup of hot wassail while inside we were served cookies, fudge, soup and a complete turkey dinner complete with Victorian Apple Cake for dessert. It's a not to be missed event for next year for sure.” -- Google review

“I took my 4yo daughter here. Robin gave us an awesome tour around the [Ireland] house and kept my little one engaged and entertained, while highlighting interesting details of this outstanding family.” -- Google review



# 2025 in Review

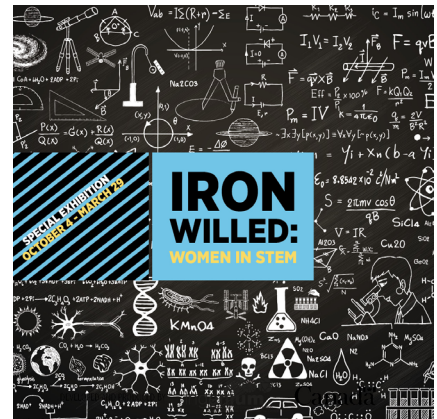
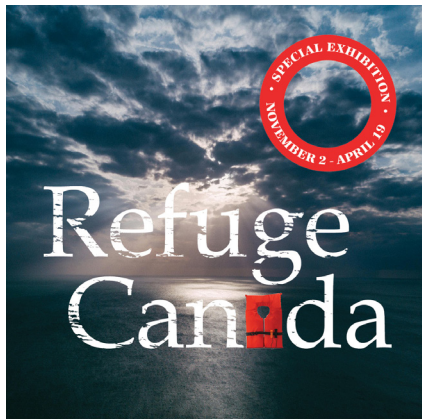
## CURATORIAL

Public inquiries related to donation offers and research requests remained steady throughout 2025. The Curatorial Department focused on improving collection storage spaces at both Ireland House Museum and Joseph Brant Museum. This work included deaccessioning projects to create additional capacity for future collection growth, the implementation of specialized storage solutions, and construction projects to support the long-term care of artifacts.

Progress was also made on initiatives to improve public access to the collection online. In addition, preliminary efforts began to record stories and collect artifacts related to the history of Burlington Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math).

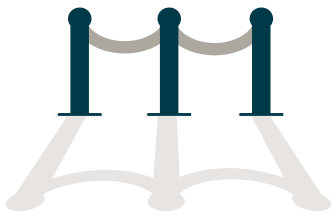
## SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

Joseph Brant Museum hosted three exhibitions in 2025. Continuing from 2024 was Refuge Canada (November 2, 2024 – April 19, 2025), which used powerful images, soundscapes, first-person accounts, and artifacts to examine Canada's place in the global refugee crisis. Game Changers (May 7 – September 15, 2025) explored the history of video games and examined how the combination of audio, storytelling, graphics, and gameplay creates the immersive experiences of modern gaming systems. Rounding out the year was Iron Willed: Women in STEM (October 4, 2025 – March 29, 2026), which highlighted the crucial contributions of women in STEM. Through text and images, the display shares both historical and contemporary stories, celebrating achievements, acknowledging challenges and bringing awareness to systemic barriers.



## BY THE NUMBERS...

- New Acquisitions: 21
- Public Inquiries: 55

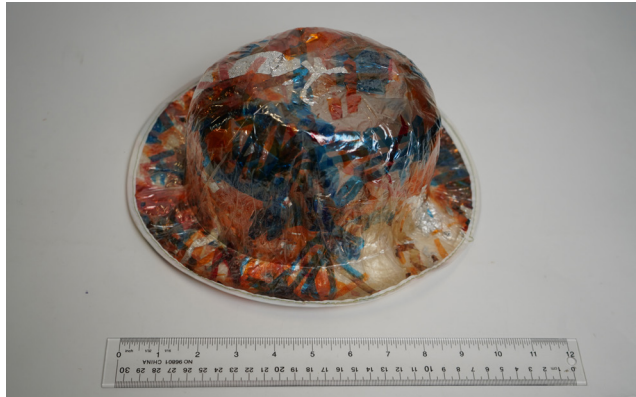


# 2025 in Review

## AQUISITION HIGHLIGHTS

In 2025, the Museums received a range of offers from the Burlington community reflecting the city's history. Highlights included:

- Brant Inn Party Hats (2025.2.1-3)
- Burlington Teen Tour Band Quilt (2025.12.2)

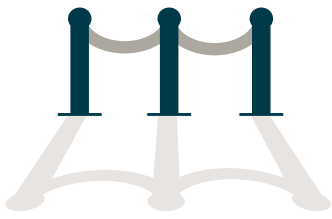


Key conservation and collections care projects at Ireland House Museum included:

- Mould Remediation: Treatment of objects housed in Storage Room 2 within the Oakridge Interpretive Centre.
- Storage Room 3 Construction: Addition of dedicated storage space for artifacts.
- Summer Kitchen Stove Conservation: Completion of a condition report and treatment proposal, followed by dry cleaning, rust removal, wet cleaning, and protective finish.
- Windows: Replacement of select cracked window panes and installation of UV-filtering film on south-facing windows with the greatest sun exposure, helping to protect artifacts from ultraviolet light damage.

In addition, preventative conservation remained a priority throughout the year. Efforts focused on maintaining a stable environmental climate, implementing an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan, conducting ongoing cleaning, and ensuring accurate and up-to-date record keeping.





# 2025 in Review

## SPECIAL EVENTS

2025 was a busy year for events at the Museums of Burlington. Our holiday events—including Visit with the Easter Bunny, Visit with Santa, and A Night at Ireland House—have become cherished traditions for many Burlington families. We also held several new events in 2025, including Dad’s Night Out, Classic Cars & Carnival, and Heritage Fibre Fest.

Our summer schedule was full, featuring the Music from the Rooftop series at Joseph Brant Museum and Doors Open Burlington, which took place at 10 locations across the city. In the fall, we launched our Ireland House After Dark tours. These themed tours, held during seasons such as Hallowe’en and Christmas, were a popular addition to our event roster. We also partnered with the Halton Environmental Network to present the Heritage Garden Speaker Series, which offered free educational workshops on best gardening practices.

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, Thrive Massage Therapy & Wellness, Monarch Tea Co., Craig’s Cookies Burlington, Northern Crow Brewing, Mr. Pretzel, Access Storage, PV & V Insurance, Boston Pizza Burlington South, St. Louis Bar & Grill, Kawartha Dairy, SB Partners, Mint Maids Burlington-Waterdown, Om Massage & Wellness, COBS Bread Headon Forest Bakery, Mrs. B’s Gifthouse, UltraStor, 13th Street Winery, Smith’s Funeral Homes, Thomson-Gordon Group, Heritage Place Retirement Residence, Stoner & Company Family Law, Hearing Well Matters!, The Dan Lawrie Family Foundation, Utter/Morris Insurance Brokers Limited, Holiday Inn Burlington Conference Centre, danceScape, Creature Comforts, Drummond Farms, and Nickel Brook Brewing Co.

“The event was interesting and very well organized, but also very relaxing and natural at the same time. And the food was great! Looking forward to next year.” -- A Night at Ireland House attendee

“[The musician] was very talented and his sound was lovely! Even people on the street stopped to hear. This event was flawless...” -- Music from the Rooftop attendee at Joseph Brant Museum





# 2025 in Review

## HERITAGE GARDEN INITIATIVE

It was another bountiful year at Ireland House Museum as we continued to grow and enhance the Heritage Garden. With support from the Weatherdon Fund for Early and Lifelong Nutrition—established through the Burlington Community Foundation and also held within the Oakville Community Foundation—we expanded the garden by an additional 21 feet. This allowed us to plant and harvest more produce, increasing our donations to the Burlington Food Bank. We also purchased two raised planter boxes to support more accessible gardening. Our partnership with M. M. Robinson’s Community Pathways Program remains strong, and we are grateful to the dedicated group of volunteers who help maintain the garden in the summer and fall months.

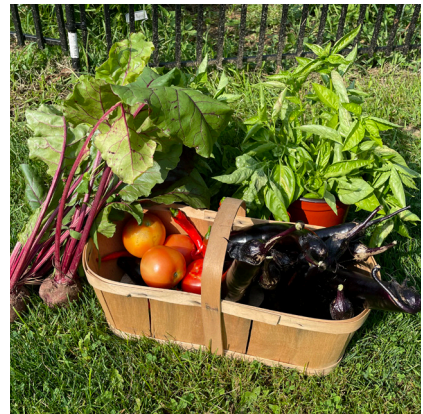
Congratulations to Heather Howell, teacher of M.M. Robinson High School’s Horticulture Therapy Program, on receiving the 2025 Governor General’s History Award for Excellence in Teaching. Heather was recognized for her work with the Heritage Garden Initiative – a project that stands as a model of inclusive, experiential learning through meaningful historical inquiry. The Heritage Garden Initiative demonstrates that all learners are capable of not only learning their community’s history, but also of playing an important role in preserving it. We look forward to expanding this project to Joseph Brant Museum in 2026!

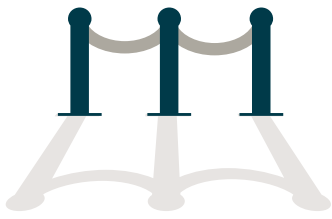


**Heather Howell**  
M. M. Robinson High School, Burlington, Ontario



Heritage Garden Initiative





# 2025 in Review

## EDUCATION

Education programs include school and home school programs, badge programs, kids camps and clubs, Toddler Days, off-site lectures, and workshops. The museums welcomed 5,720 education program participants in 2025.

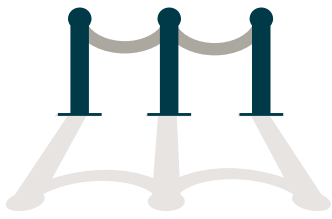
A new offering in the form of specialty workshops for children of varying ages was developed by partnering with local organizations to bring hands-on, engaging education experiences to Joseph Brant Museum. Our partnership with Zebra Robotics Burlington taught participants between the ages of 5 – 12 all about engineering, creating simple to complex machines, and engaging in creative problem solving. We also partnered with STEAMULATION Lab, whose science experiments on density and pressure, surface tension, and chemical reactions provided an exciting, messy learning experience for participants between the ages of 5 – 9 years old. We look forward to continuing and expanding on these partnerships.

Our summer camps through 2025 underwent another refinement; in 2024 we had divided the age groups between the sites: 5 – 8 year olds at Ireland House Museum, and 9 – 12-year-olds at Joseph Brant Museum. For 2025, both sites offered camps for children between the ages of 5 – 8 years, which proved incredibly successful, as summer camp is most in demand for that age bracket. We welcomed 1,634 campers through July and August, a 17% increase over 2024. We look forward to continuing to offer summer experiences for the 5 – 8 age bracket in 2026.

“We have been so impressed with this camp and the camp staff have been so amazing with [our child]. He’s has been so excited to attend camp everyday, just wanted to say a big thank you...”  
--Summer Day Camp feedback from a parent

“We loved this program! The staff were so friendly, there was a wide variety of activities offered - something for everyone. We will be back next year!” -- Summer Day Camp survey feedback





# 2025 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



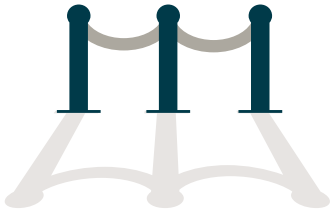
Museum volunteers gave over 3,600 hours, during 750 visits in 2025. With 89 active volunteers, this calculates to an average of 41 hours per volunteer. Volunteer duties include gardening/grounds maintenance, collections, research, providing guided tours, assisting with education, camp and badge programs, assisting during special events, and admission desk/gift shop sales.

We are grateful to all of our volunteers for their generosity in giving their time, service and talents – their contributions are vital to our operations.

## 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, businesses and community members. Events include company meetings, corporate luncheons and events, weddings, engagements, birthdays, baby showers and celebrations of life.



# 2025 in Review

## MARKETING

Digital tools and channels including email, social media and our website continue to be leveraged to reach various audience segments and present a unified brand presence. Website visit numbers and social media following continue to grow.

Unique events, education programs and rotating special exhibitions remain key in connecting with new audiences and encouraging repeat visitors and program participants. The revival of destination marketing meetings comprised of local stakeholders, city attractions and destination marketing organizations has served to deepen community ties and collaborate with community influencers, contributing to bringing awareness to the museums.

**3,657**

 PAGE LIKES ON FACEBOOK ▲5%

**3,440**

 FOLLOWERS ON INSTAGRAM ▲10%

**5,512**

 EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS ▲23%



**56,764**

 WEBSITE USERS ▲10%

### VISITOR OVERVIEW

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Joseph Brant Museum</b>	<b>2,672</b> to Mar. 13 (closed Mar. 14 to Jul. 14) <b>753</b> from Jul. 15 to Dec. 31	<b>2,828</b> (closed Jan. 1 to Mar. 1 and Apr. 3 to Jul. 19)	<b>6,972</b> (closed Jan 5-31)	<b>8,867</b>	<b>8,710</b>	<b>8,870</b>
<b>Ireland House Museum</b>	<b>848</b> (closed to public admission since Mar. 14, number reflects private groups)	<b>1,842</b> (closed to public admission, number reflects private groups)	<b>6,579</b> (closed Jan 1-May 2 and Dec 19-31)	<b>5,273</b> (closed Jan 5-31)	<b>4,705</b>	<b>5,350</b>

**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.

# CONTACT US

## Staff

Kimberly Watson  
Director of Museums

Marrienne Paley  
Administrative Associate

Jessica Benjak-Waterous  
Curator

Lynna Nguyen  
Collections Manager

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

Keegan Charlton  
Educator

Kerrie Smith  
Educator

Janet Stephens  
Manager, Marketing & Community Engagement

Rodel B. Adolfo  
Facility Operator

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Burlington, ON L7P 5A8  
905.332.9888

Joseph Brant Museum  
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Burlington, ON L7S 1C5  
905.634.3556

## Board of Directors

Bryan Beatty | Chair

Len Collins | Vice-Chair

Julia McNulty | Treasurer

Adam Belovari | Director

Simone Bilato | Director

Cathy Bowles | Director

Jaime Garbett | Director

Dianne Pearce De Toledo | Director

Robert Price | Director

Councillor Shawna Stolte | Director

Gerald J. Park | Advisor



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