

We Want To Serve and Celebrate

A plan for stability at
Community Arts Guild





Community Arts Guild
makes art of all sorts.

Community Arts Guild
Connects people separated
from each other by
geography, language, ability,
income, age, culture, race.



Community Arts Guild
Creates opportunities to
participate and create.



Community Arts Guild
Builds community through
our art-making.





Who We Are

The Community Art Guild uses art to build community. We are a non-profit arts organization situated in the beautiful and vibrant East Scarborough community. We spark collaborations between professional artists and people of all ages and backgrounds who have different levels of artistic skill, experience and confidence. We use art to realize the creative potential of people and places and form new connections and understanding between people who may not otherwise meet.

Our artwork is often performance-based, and we collaborate across disciplines and traditions, particularly exploring intersections of performance and design. We draw on theatre, puppetry, projection and shadow play, installation (indoors and out) music, dance, culinary and textile arts, and film.

Where We're Headed

We've spent a number of years investing in relationships and developing our art and community-building practices. In that time, we've built a deep and connected foundation of committed funders; engaged participants of all ages and backgrounds; and community partners who know and trust us. In 2020, Community Arts Guild was poised to grow the organization and take it to a new level. When Covid hit, we changed course and instead responded to the pandemic crisis as it unfolded.

Through the Covid pandemic, we found ways to creatively connect people during a time of unprecedented isolation. We discovered that the Community Arts Guild has a lot to offer in addressing the core challenges that not only underpinned the Covid emergency, but continue to hurt our community post-pandemic. Loneliness and isolation; polarization and social stratification; and the pressing need to build resilience at the community level in the face of unprecedented change are all examples of challenges facing our community and world that our work helps to address.

The pandemic highlighted the critical need for creative placemaking to shape the social, cultural and political characteristics of a community. Conversations with our circle of partners, participants, staff, board, and artists have shown us it's time for Community Arts Guild to build on what we do, fulfill our potential, and provide more support and increased offerings to our community. We're ready.

What We're Bringing



Our ability to connect people across differences



Our commitment to animating public spaces



Our connection to the nature of East Scarborough



The unique and beautiful way we weave 'the stuff of life' (trees, flowers, animals, food, gardens, parties, and joy) into our art making.



Our intergenerational approach

We have an excellent team and a unique, extraordinary organization with strong relationships that is positioned to make a big, positive contribution to community building in East Scarborough. Taking stock of what we have, it's clear we are contending with our small size, a need to find more stable resources, and balancing the scale of the need and opportunity against our available staff and time.

We've put together a plan to scale up and respond to the call for more programs and services. In the next three years, we envision moving from an emerging, project-focused organization, to a more substantial and consistent organization that uses our unique expertise to contribute significantly to the wellbeing and vibrancy of our community and city.

Our first strategic plan, *We Want To Serve and Celebrate: A plan for stability at Community Arts Guild*, charts our intentions into 2026, a future where we see the Community Arts Guild as a more stable, consistent and resilient organization with a strong team; a defined programming calendar; increased budget; functional space; and diverse funders and partners. We've envisioned the blueprint of our future and have outlined the strategies and tactics to help us get there.

The Blueprint

Streamline Programs to Increase Impact

We will continue to deliver the high quality artistic programming the community has come to expect of us, and will evolve to more consistent, reliable offerings that make outreach easier, allow for ongoing connection with our audience, and provide more stability for our staff team.

We will:

- Shift to more consistent ways of talking and thinking about what we do to streamline delivery and fundraising.
- Build program stability by planning ongoing and reliable opportunities for community and adding content more fluidly as funding and partnerships emerge.
- Develop an annual program calendar offering a clear plan for activities.

Understand and Express our Impact to Broaden Funding Resources

In our next phase, we will look to increase our funding overall and diversify our funding sources. We will accomplish this by better understanding and expressing the impacts of our work, dedicating more staff time to prospect research and fundraising, and seeking funding outside of the arts sector.

We will:

- Better articulate our impact including the ways we work across different sectors and engage specific groups and populations.
- Build modular programs so that longstanding services and offerings can be used to reach new partners or audiences in response to social need, changing policies, or funding priorities.
- Create an annual fundraising plan.
- Explore the opportunities and process involved in obtaining charitable status.

Strengthen the Capacity of the Team and Organization

As a small and mighty team, our people are our strength. We will unlock potential across the current staff team by creating internal systems and structures with a goal of providing clarity, improving the ways we collaborate and being a great place to work and learn. Investing in the Community Arts Guild as an organization will increase our effectiveness, build resilience and help us better weather change.

Going forward:

- Existing staff will have a higher level of responsibility and more well-defined roles, with regular professional development opportunities to support their growth and learning.
- Organizational systems such as annual/quarterly work plans will better define roles, and allow staff to plan their time and distribute workload.
- A talent strategy will identify gaps in skills and staffing as well as identifying the resources required to attract new skills and experience to the team.

We're ready to put into action what we've learned through this process of reflection, listening and imagining. We know that our work in community decreases isolation and social division and improves mental health and wellness. It offers people a place to express their vision for their lives and community, and supports them to realize it, sparking civic engagement and building employable skills. Building on the foundation we've laid, we'll use our unique skills and resources to strengthen the social fabric of our community and city, contributing to the critical work of addressing the challenges we face.



Funding for this project provided by the Government of Ontario and the Ontario Trillium Foundation

Thank you to our funders and partners

Funders

**Toronto Arts Council
Ontario Arts Council
Canada Council for the Arts
Government of Canada
Government of Ontario
Ontario Trillium Foundation**

Partners

**City of Toronto
Cedar Ridge Creative Centre
Jumblies
and many more**

Community Arts Guild

**c/o Cedar Ridge Creative Centre
225 Confederation Drive
Scarborough, ON M1G 1B2**

**415-556-8427
communityartsguild.ca**