

Pillar Community Innovation Awards 2018 Finalists Overview

COMMUNITY INNOVATION

The Grand Theatre's 100 Schools Project

In a time when school boards are facing shrinking arts education budgets, London's Grand Theatre stepped up as Canada's first professional theatre company to offer free, in-school professional theatre programming to an anticipated audience of over 30,000 students as a means to ensure youth in our community could access the arts. This was the 100 Schools Tour. The Grand partnered with local school boards to design a plan to reach 100 schools in a single academic year. There were five key principles that guided the 100 Schools Tour development and implementation:

- There would be no cost to the schools to participate
- The tour would eliminate barriers to students with disabilities to participate
- The Tour would prioritize schools that were 'underserved' and who rarely, if ever, attended a Grand Theatre production in the past
- The Tour would place as few logistical arrangement pressures on participating schools as possible
- As often as possible, the entire school would experience the production, not simply a range of grades within the school.

"Theatre for young audiences is the democratic art form - the future baker and garbage collector sit beside the future brain surgeon and astronaut."

Following each show, students were engaged in a 'talk-back session' immediately following the performance while the actors were still on set. Students were encouraged to ask questions, to wander the stage, and were exposed to all aspects of the production - stage management, sound, staging, lighting, set, props - not typically available when attending a show at the theatre. Nothing was hidden. They experienced and were inspired by all aspects of a professional production from start to finish.

Here for Her

Here for Her (HFH) is a social enterprise that aims to reduce the stigma around women's health through awareness, education, discussions and charitable work. Many women, especially young women, do not talk about their health, and there is a stigma associated with vaginas, periods, and other topics that affect women. By providing education, awareness, and community opportunities, *HFH* empowers women to speak up and take control of their health. *HFH* educates women using social media and community based events. *HFH* utilizes social media to spread awareness and education about often stigmatized topics, including menstruation, general sexual health information, disordered eating, body image, and other health issues that often affect women. Specifically on social media, it is a network of health professionals (doctors, chiropractors, physiotherapists, RMT, etc.) providing women advice and tips on how to take control of their health. Through collaborations with community partners, *Here for Her* hosts or co-hosts events with a philanthropic lens. This gives women an opportunity to



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support other women, local companies and organizations, and creates a network of women to empower and help women in our community. *HFH*'s creator Rachel Ettinger has a lifelong passion for women's health and is motivated to help educate women of all ages about their health in order to make informed decisions and advocate for not only themselves, but for others.

School Within a School - Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB)

18 Schools, 57 Teachers, 825 Students. The School Within a School opportunity is changing education one classroom at a time. The world is rapidly changing before our eyes; Students are entering a world that is more competitive, technologically advanced, and globally connected than at any other time in history. The world is changing at a rate to which the education system must adapt. TVDSB explored new approaches to better meet the needs and desires of students, staff, and the broader community. The result:

No subjects, no periods. *SCHO(school)OL*'s goal is to have great community-connected experiences happening all day, every day. Students are no longer expected to solve a problem crafted by teachers but encouraged to look around a community, recognize concerns, and define their own problems based on needs. Rather than providing feedback on the answers, teachers provide scaffolds and frameworks for students to check their own learning and gauge the quality of their own work.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Jeffrey Robb

Jeffrey Robb is a pharmacist and the Owner of Turner Drug Store, which is located in old South, and this year they will be celebrating 80 years in business, the store a fixture in the community for decades. Jeff mentors and employs 12 staff members, his staff is very diverse and inclusive: he employs several students, new Canadians, individuals with disabilities, and many of his staff members have been with him for decades. Jeff believes in giving everyone an opportunity to succeed, and has created a working environment where everyone feels appreciated and respected, like they are part of a family.

Jeff supports, sponsors, and volunteers his time for a very long list of community organizations and nonprofits including Community Living London, the Belong to Song program for mental health (run through the London Arts Council), the Jack Richardson London Music Awards, the Aeolian Hall, the Home County Music & Arts Festival, multiple athletic organizations, as well as sitting on the Board of Directors for the Philip Aziz Foundation of Art. The causes that he chooses to support are very reflective of his belief in the inclusion of the individuals who are often marginalized within the community, and of the importance of music and culture.

Jeff has the unique ability to see the value in everyone, he believes that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect, and when he is in a position to provide anyone with an opportunity to achieve their goals and dreams, personally or professional, he will make it happen to the best of his ability.



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Marie Fiedler

Marie is a strong advocate for diverse populations. She is a rare leader who asks marginalized communities what they need and takes clear action to make those things happen.

Because of her work as head coordinator of PrideWestern over the past year, the organization shifted from doing minimal advocacy and event organizing to running over two dozen events, holding five monthly discussion groups, conducting a campus-wide needs assessment for LGBTQ2+ students, co-creating a LGBTQ2+ issue of Western's student newspaper, and advocating on issues from all-gender washrooms to better name change processes. Because of Marie's leadership and the people she recruited on her team, the LGBTQ2+ community on campus has a place to go and a platform to express their needs.

Marie continues to emphasize action and advocacy in her role as the co-founder of the InterAction Collective, a grassroots group for youth of colour by youth of colour to discuss their experiences of racism in education and collaborate in their problem solving. Marie's

done everything from disaster recovery research in Fort McMurray to lobbying to increase opportunities for youth involvement and representation in Canadian politics.

Her work covers many areas of interest, but Marie always has an eye for creating meaningful action to support oppressed communities, and making sure her work is driven by community need.

Mustfah Madlol

Mustfah Madlol has shown outstanding dedication and commitment as a community leader, demonstrated through his involvement at the Boys and Girls Club of London, the Cross Cultural Learner Centre (CCLC), and as an incredibly involved member of Oakridge Secondary School.

Having lived the immigrant experience himself, Mustfah has been consistent in trying to reduce the gaps and the barriers often experienced by the population in question. His efforts to improve the quality of life are illustrated through his volunteerism with the above organizations as a tutor for newcomers, interpreter and child care worker. Although he is only in grade eleven, Mustfah has had an incredibly positive impact on his community and has accumulated over 700 community service hours. He does so much for the community while also managing to somehow pull off having a 90% average, maintain a part-time job, and play sports competitively.

He also participates in the Page Program where he assists Members of the Provincial Parliament and the Legislative Chamber. Mustfah also participates in Art Youth Council where he develops leadership skills through the expression of art and the Youth in Philanthropy where he reviews grant proposals and makes recommendations to the Grants committee of London Community Foundation. The list of his contributions to the community goes on. One of the major things that can be learned from Mustfah's example of community leadership is that you don't need to be a full grown adult to be a leader, nor do you need to have a long list of qualifications- the only thing that is required is passion for change and motivation to carry out the plan.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Habitat for Humanity Heartland Ontario

Habitat for Humanity is an international, nonprofit organization that believes in a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live. Habitat for Humanity Heartland Ontario, serving low-income families in Oxford, Elgin, Middlesex and Perth counties, has built 74 homes with plans to complete another 5 by the end of 2018. Habitat for Humanity builds modest and affordable housing that is purchased by families that are facing different barriers or unexpected challenges preventing them from being able to afford or access housing.

In addition to building homes, the organization also has 6 ReStores in our region: a social enterprise that sells new and gently used household products to the public at greatly reduced prices. The ReStores fund their operations, meaning that every dollar given by the community goes directly to building homes for low income families.

Liberal Arts 101

Liberal Arts 101 is a no-cost, 7-week lecture series that gives university access to those who may not have thought it was an option. Tuition, learning materials, food, transportation, and child care costs are covered. Students (aged 19-80 typically) come from diverse backgrounds including but not limited to new Canadians, people with low income, those struggling with mental illness, immigrants, those with disabilities, and those engaged with or receiving services from local community agencies. King's believes that everyone, regardless of their situation, should be able to experience the atmosphere of an university, feel like they are cared about, and possibilities are still available to them.

Each meeting begins with a social dinner followed by a lecture, small group discussions, and final thoughts among the class. A different topic is presented each week by faculty members from various departments at King's University College. After the final session and graduation ceremony, the participants are walking away with a positive experience at a university, connections, confidence, and a better understanding of their strengths, interests, and abilities. Liberal Arts 101 speaks to the inherent value we all share as lifelong learners who deserve the opportunity to engage and contribute to our communities in meaningful and empowering ways.

My Sisters Place

My Sisters Place (MSP) of CMHA facilitates access to the resources and people required to maintain and improve mental health and community integration, build resilience, and support recovery from mental illness and addictions. Serving approximately 200 participants, MSP's core purpose is serving women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. They can have a hot home cooked meal, feel safe, participate in programs, access resources and connect with each other and community partners.

Not only that, MSP has begun a Micro Enterprise "ME" which has not only reinforced the participants' ability to become successful entrepreneurs, but through collaboration with other community expertise and networking opportunities has created a business that's established a hold within the community. This peer driven enterprise has solid foundation and sustainability for a successful future.



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COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Junior Achievement and Fanshawe Kinlin School of Business

Junior Achievement (JA) London and District is a nonprofit organization delivering experiential business education programs to students in grades 5-12, providing them with the opportunity to develop valuable life skills through programs focused on financial literacy, work readiness and entrepreneurship. The Lawrence Kinlin School of Business (LKSBS) at Fanshawe College provides the most current, flexible and integrated suite of business programs that enables students from around the world to succeed.

For the past 5+ years, LKSBS has provided in-kind support, including venues for program events and their business professors to lend their expertise to JA's budding entrepreneurs. In the summer of 2016, the opportunity to collaborate was identified and finalized for the 2017-2018 school year. The largest challenge for JA is to access volunteers with the knowledge and availability to deliver the in class programs (this year will exceed 300.) LKSBS students complete a course in presentation skills and therefore benefitted from the opportunity to practice the skills they are learning while also creating positive impact. By having the LKSBS students facilitate a JA program as part of their curriculum, the partnership significantly increased the number of students who are able to participate in JA programs while providing enriched learning opportunities for Fanshawe students.

London Middlesex Suicide Prevention Council

The London Middlesex Suicide Prevention Council's role is to reduce suicide and suicidal behaviour, and its impact on individuals, families and communities. One of the ways they have achieved this is by collaborating with member agencies and individuals to provide suicide prevention training in London. Some of those sitting on the council represent CMHA Middlesex, Vanier Children's Services, and London Family Court Clinic.

The partners involved bring a variety of different resources including trainer certification, access to spaces, connection with interested agencies, credibility and more. If not for these existing resources, it would be more difficult to start up and run suicide prevention training.

Nearly 4,000 Canadians die by suicide each year. In one day, there is an average of 11 people who die by suicide and 210 individuals attempting to end their lives by suicide. Suicide is one of the top ten leading causes of death in Canada. It does not discriminate against gender, status, age, race, or culture; it can affect every member of society. Such a group is essential to ensuring that suicide prevention is given the time and effort needed to reduce suicide and suicidal behaviour.

London's Temporary Overdose Prevention Site

In response to London's overlapping drug-related crisis and the announcement of the public health emergency in December 2017, the shared vision started for an Overdose Prevention Site in London with the collective goal to ensure those accessing the service would have a range of supports available to meet the complex needs of these vulnerable individuals. "Supervised consumption services" are a variety of different service models that offer



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supervision to people who are using drugs, with the goal of preventing overdose, serious infections, and other negative outcomes. All models include trained personnel who can administer naloxone to reverse an opioid overdose, clean injection equipment and education on how to prevent infection, and a legal exemption from drug prosecution laws. With a Temporary Overdose Prevention Site (TOPS) being the most basic model, partners involved have strived to establish a service that goes well beyond the basics.

As important as agency support was, it was critical to include people of lived experience in the development. These people, along with 11 other agencies created TOPS which has supported over 3,234 client visits, and served approximately 1,100 unique clients. They have reversed five opioid poisonings, and each supervised injection helps prevent the transmission of HIV and/or HCV.

Treating people with the basic level of respect that all human beings deserve can have benefits well beyond the specific service provided. Since opening, there have been several examples of clients helping each other reduce harm, and helping ensure that the TOPS service is well run and respects the neighbourhood.