



Marsh Street Centre

Performing Arts & Community Centre



Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Our Impact
- Recent Achievements
- COVID-19
- What we need now
- The Value to the Town

Introduction

We are one of only two community owned performing arts and community centres in Ontario.

- The Marsh Street Centre is a charitable, not-for-profit organization,
- Charitable registration # 87468 8526 RR0001.
- Local people are proud to volunteer and help out in many capacities.
- Our Centre has been a focal point in the Town of the Blue Mountains for the past 20 years.
- Many theatre, music, art and artisanal shows are hosted within the Marsh Street Centre.
- We are also one of the main hubs of the community.

Over 5000 people pass through our doors each year

- Rock/Contemporary Music Concerts – that include dancing!
- Marsh Street Rocks
- Jazz Concerts
- Senior's Coffee at the Marsh
- Artisan Markets
- Latin, Ballroom and English Country Dancing
- Local Theatre shows
- Dance Meditation Classes
- Senior's Painting Classes
- Special need adult Dancing Classes
- Yoga

- Dance Recitals
- Summer camps
- Open Mic Events
- Patio Parties
- Artsburg Paint Battle & other events
- Free Community Christmas dinner
- Children's Halloween party
- Breakfast with Santa
- Numerous additional rental events which can include: Celebrations of life, meetings and other gatherings

Our Impact

We positively impact the Town of Blue Mountains in 6 ways

1. Enhancing Town Sustainability (see also slide 9)
2. Serving Vulnerable Populations (see also slide 10)
3. Supporting local talent
4. Keeping the Arts Alive
5. Providing a meeting place for the community
6. Attracting Tourists

Enhancing Town Sustainability

As a publicly accessible building, The Marsh Street Centre has a responsibility to positively contribute to the well-being and longevity of our Town.

We assess our rental and centre-run programs against the following four sustainability goals of:

- Providing a unique and fun, musical and artistic atmosphere
- Adding to the economic, social, physical, mental and emotional health of our Town
- Helping to attract new residents to our Town and
- Persisting, improving and growing our centre to create a legacy that will benefit future generations.

We are important to our residents!

Serving vulnerable populations

- We are a critical hub and heart of the community
- 33% of our population are single, divorced, separated or widowed
(Source: Statistics Canada 2016)
- 33% are seniors; 36% have a total income less than \$30,000 per year
(Source: Statistics Canada 2016)
- Seniors, people who live alone, children, unemployed or low-income residents, minority groups, special needs groups – all are welcome at the Marsh Street Centre – as volunteers, participants in programs, attendees at events and as leaders or board members
- The value we provide to our vulnerable people is largely invisible within the community – but it has changed lives – we see it every day

Recent Achievements

Over the past three years we have:

- Increased members from 30 to 300
- Varied, improved and increased our concerts and attendees
- Increased Marsh Street Rocks attendees to 110+
- Introduced the very popular Bistro/New Musician Series
- Hosted unique/popular events such as Paint Battle, the Artisan Market
- More than doubled our rental activities
- Made massive physical improvements to our old but beautiful building
- Increased our revenues by 150%

Every penny of our increased budget has been used

We have improved existing programs, funded new programs, improved our operations and helped fund repairs/improvements to the building.

- We have had two part-time employees – who are currently volunteering their time
- The majority of our operating and construction work is completed by volunteers and board members
- Creating a reserve fund is a big challenge given our building and community priorities
- We have had to react very quickly to the COVID pandemic and be very prudent with our expenditures since March 2020.
- The future is so uncertain and our budget is so tight, we have had to be very careful not to go into debt. We cannot currently foresee a way to repay any loans.

COVID-19

COVID has had a devastating impact on the Marsh Street Centre

- **2019 Operating Budget: \$235,000**
- **2020 Operating Budget: \$20,000**

No events =

- Employees laid off
- Cleaning suspended
- Maintenance suspended

We've only been able to “leave the lights on” – for now

What we need now

We need operating funding

- We can't generate new operating funds until we can re-open our doors and host a full house
- This is highly unlikely to happen in the near future
- We are continuing to search for operating grants

We REALLY need operating funding

- Our current funds will last – *at most* - 4 more months on current, minimal expenses
- Then we may have to shut the doors forever

We also need capital funding

We currently have no way to raise the \$36,000 needed from the community to qualify for the ICIP (Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program) grant.

We have just passed the first hurdle – provincial approval – for this \$135,000 grant that would pay for:

- (1) upgrading the building façade
- (2) replacing the stage ceiling (that was dangerously damaged by the leaking roof which we just replaced) and installing a proper light grid with new lights
- (3) renovating and soundproofing the music practice rooms
- (4) installing new handicapped entry buttons and an emergency button in our handicapped washroom and
- (5) completing an engineering inspection of the building – the last one was completed in 2000.

We need funding now

We need to be able to:

- bring employees on **now** to get organized for a “soft” re-opening event in September and a “big bang” re-opening when restrictions fully lift
- hire people to clean the centre following COVID protocols
- re-start rentals and small allowable events
- find new ways to start raising funds again
- finish replacing our back roof
- provide our employees and our community with the re-assurance that we are and will continue to be **alive and well**

We are looking for:

\$56,000 Now

- \$36,000 – ICIP Grant – MSC portion
- \$20,000 – To restart operations

\$45,000 from Oct. 1 - March 31

To hire:

- 1 Full-Time Executive Director \$40,000 p.a.
- 1 Part Time Volunteer Coordinator \$25,000 p.a.
- 1 Part Time Office Assistant \$25,000 p.a.

After March 31, 2020, we will need \$75,000 support for our operating budget p.a.

- That's about 1/3 of our pre-COVID annual budget
- We are willing to help in any way we can – participate in large fundraisers, expand our current fundraisers, pay down loans etc.
- This additional funding requirement could diminish once everything gets back on track

The value to the Town

Add to long-term, sustainable employment opportunities

- Unemployment is at an all-time high in Ontario – 13.6% overall, 18-30 year olds > 30%
- CERB will end September 1.
- We need to keep younger people and families here for continuity, sustainability and for the future of this Town.
- Adding 1 full-time, 2 part-time long-term skilled jobs to the roster would help make a positive difference.

Help play our part in the Town of Blue Mountains tourist strategy

- We have big plans for improving the look of the Marsh Street Centre through the ICIP grant.
- Our art galleries, local musicians, performers and artisans depend on tourists.
- So do our restaurants and retailers.
- With the improved look of our building, the Marsh Street Centre has the potential to play an even bigger role in attracting attention to our Town. We are a heritage building and we have a central location within Clarksburg – and we have a unique, fun offering for the public.

Help support our local artists and artisans again

- Musicians are desperate for performance space and audiences
- Comedians and theatre troupes need venues that can support them again
- Artists and artisans need their work to be physically seen again – and not all galleries can do this under COVID restrictions
- We are a unique space in this area – there is only one other centre like ours in Ontario
- People NEED our space to be seen and to continue to perform and create

Help bring back the sense of community again

- People are tired, stressed and worried because of COVID - we ALL need to have some FUN!
- We bring old and new residents together around music, theatre and fun
- Attendees at Marsh Street Centre events and programs always know they will see friends and neighbours – and meet new ones – in our hall. The warmth and friendliness of our atmosphere is unmistakable
- With your help, we will be able to start holding small, 50 person events (Pub nights, community meetings, classes, programs) again right away
- AND we will be able to help support our vulnerable populations again.

The Town needs to help this community get back on its feet again.

Let's get cracking!

2020 is already more than half over and we feel like it has barely begun.

Let's get the show on the road and work together to get this community going again!

Thank you

