



## **Executive Director Report by Janna Smith Annual General Meeting June 4, 2026**

I would like to begin by thanking all of you for being in attendance today, and for the many ways you engage with us throughout the year.

Before I walk you through the key highlights of the 2025 Impact Report, which you received in advance, I wish to express our deepest gratitude to the Ontario Arts Council, Municipality of Prince Edward, The County Foundation, McLean Smits Foundation, Parrott Foundation, Lewitt Family Foundation, Elderberry Fund (Sarah & David), and the many individuals and businesses who supported our work in 2025 - it was a year defined by growth, deepened community engagement, and meaningful financial support for artists and cultural workers.

As you can see in the report, County Arts delivered a wide range of initiatives in 2025, including:

- Artist grants and awards
- Youth programs like *Youth Craft Academy*
- Professional development meet-ups for artists
- Exhibitions and major annual events like *The Maker's Hand*
- Participatory arts experiences at the County Arts Lab
- Community arts and wellness programs like *Art Flow* and *Art Together*
- Arts promotion through various media channels, including *Artscene*

This diversity of activities ensures that artists at all career stages—and audiences of all ages—benefit from our work.

### **1. Demonstrated Strong Support for Artists**

Across all programs, County Arts created an astounding **534 opportunities** for artists, and arts and culture workers to generate income, develop skills, and engage with audiences.

A few examples from the report:

- **10 artists** received **\$16,500** in grants

- *County Arts Lab* programming engaged **59 artist facilitators**, paying **\$46,230** in facilitator fees.
- *Activate Arts Rental Program* gave **19 artists and arts organizations** **free or subsidized access to the Arts Lab for a total of 79 days to carry out their own activities.**

Needless to say, our commitment to the career development of artists is at the heart of our work.

## 2. Deepening Community Engagement

Equally important, community participation increased in 2025 with **over 21,000 people engaged** across exhibitions, events, workshops, courses, and media programming (including our monthly newsletter and weekly radio).

Some standout engagement numbers include:

- *Studio Tour* welcomed a record **8,000 visitors**
- *Art Together* brought **252 community members** together to create art in a welcoming, low-stress environment
- *Youth Craft Academy* helped **42 youth ages 12-17** learn new craft-related skills

Even volunteer-run programs made an impact, such as *Artscene on 99.3FM*, which reached thousands of **listeners** thanks to thoughtful **artist interviews**.

## 3. Increased Financial Impact

Our financial impact also deepened in 2025, with programs and activities helping artists and cultural workers earn **\$581,815** (combining artist fees, grants, awards, art sales, and salaries).

A few notable figures:

- Administrative and program salaries totaled **\$218,385**, funded by OAC, the municipality, memberships, and other sources.
- *Studio Tour* generated **\$110,000** in art sales over one weekend

Once we input all of these figures into a multiplier calculator like Ontario's Tourism Regional Economic Index Model (TREIM), we quickly see that County Arts is a vital economic catalyst for Prince Edward County.

In 2025, our organizational operations and 6,000 event tourists together generated \$1.29M in local GDP, sustaining 16 community jobs with \$902,235 in wages, while generating \$611,163 in multi-level government tax revenues.

This impact would not be possible without the collective efforts of a community that values the arts. This includes our members, volunteers, donors, sponsors, and a team of extremely hardworking, passionate, and tenacious women who show up every day to work on behalf of artists and the community.

Please join me in offering Heather McCorquodale, Katrina Tompkins, Sarah Burtscher, Andrea Dawes, and Stacey Sproule a heartfelt round of applause!

As some of you may know, **Andrea Dawes** is the new Executive Director of County Kids Read - a position I feel she is perfectly suited to. But we could not let her leave without a formal acknowledgement of the incredible work she has done on behalf of our arts community over the past 5 years. I invite Board Chair Catelyn Thornton to say a few words about the incomparable Andrea Dawes, former Special Initiatives Manager.

[Catelyn]

There will be a couple of more changes to our team this year. **Katrina Tompkins** who has been acting as the Youth Craft Academy Program Lead for the last 18 months is stepping away to create more space for her own artistic practice. Under Katrina's leadership, YCA attendance has grown by **40%**, with many of the participants enrolling in multiple courses throughout the year. We are grateful to Katrina for helping local youth build new skills and confidence.

Lastly we are sad (but really proud and excited) that **Stacey Sproule** has been accepted into an MFA program at Emily Carr University. She will be leaving her position as Programs Director this summer. But thank goodness she is keen to keep her position as Public Art Coordinator, because she is killing it - helping to raise over \$100,000 in public and private funds to support the commissioning of new work! Yesterday, County Arts and Municipal staff got a sneak peak at the first mural created under the program located at the Crystal Palace Fairgrounds. Two calls for public art also just closed with 59 artists applying from all over the world, including from Melbourne, Australia! Needless to say that the program has a bright future in Stacey's hands. Stacey leaves a strong legacy of impactful program delivery that Former Board Chair Julia Howell will help to highlight.

[Julia]

### **Closing Remarks & Thanks**

I can't close my report without mentioning that this year marks our 40th anniversary. County Arts was incorporated on July 17, 1986 by a group of community members with the aim of fostering more art experiences in Prince

Edward County. I hope that they would be proud of where we are today - a thriving organization serving more than 375 members through unique programming that is redefining what a rural arts council can be.

A big thank you to our volunteer Board of Directors for their current stewardship of County Arts - Julia, Catelyn, Paul, Erin, Talitha, Andrea, Peter, and Flora.

And a heartfelt thank you to our membership, especially those who have joined us today. Your presence means a lot.

Thank you.