

Town should increase Cultural Centre funding: volunteer

(Re: Council tightens budget reins on community partners, March 14)

As someone who volunteers part-time every week at the Aurora Cultural Centre, I am writing to respond to the article in this past Thursday's Auroran regarding the denial of a request for an increase in funding for the Centre by the Town of Aurora Council.

The Cultural Centre serves an extremely valuable function for the community of Aurora. Anyone who has attended a concert at the Centre, taken one of its classes, or has viewed the many changing exhibitions in its galleries, will attest to this fact.

What local resident would prefer to hike into downtown Toronto on a cold winter's night to take in a concert when the same can be had within a few minutes of home?

The Centre also sponsors day camps for children both during the summer months as well as during March break and the professional development days which occur throughout the year.

In my experience working as a volunteer at the Centre, I am struck by the dedication shown by its staff, some of whom have been with the Centre since its founding almost a decade ago. By not funding the salaries of staff at levels comparable to other local cultural venues, the Centre is in danger of losing highly qualified and loyal staff members (quote by Councillor Wendy Gaertner that "they are underpaid, she said, arguing that it was becoming an issue?").

I would suggest that the Town of Aurora can ill afford the possibility of doing without the Aurora Cultural Centre.

I, for one, would encourage the Council to reconsider its position and grant the Centre its requested increase in its core operating grant.

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