

Pine Tree Potters leave legacy at Cultural Centre



By Brock Weir

A decade ago, the basement of the Church Street School was dominated by a barn fan, an open sewer grate travelling the length of the room, and a kiln or two here and there as the well-loved and well-used home of the Pine Tree Potters Guild's workshop.

10 years on, the Potters have had a homecoming of sorts, putting their name on the completely renovated space which now houses the 'messy art space' of the Aurora Cultural Centre. Now, with the sponsorship of the Guild, which now operates out of the lower level of the nearby Aurora Public Library, this 'messy art space' is known as the 'Pine Tree Potters' Activity Room'.

'It was a perfect fit because this used to be our space,' explains Guild member Cathy Harris. 'We had a kiln room separately and a big, huge barn fan we vented out the window, the floors were undulating and there was a big sewer grate down there. During our spring cleaning, everything was raised and we would just bring in buckets, mopped the floor down, used squeegees and let it all run down into the grate ' before the renovations!'

Before the renovations, the windows were caged ' likely against all fire codes ' and when it rained it poured, directly into the studio space. Its current incarnation is a far cry from those early days.

'This lively and creative studio space mirrors the creativity of the Guild, whose members truly know what it is to get their hands dirty!'

said Laura Schembri, Executive Director of the Cultural Centre. 'The guild has a long association with the Centre and the history of 22 Church Street. We look forward to welcoming the public to enjoy the many ways they too can be creative in this space.'

The sponsorship deal with the Pine Tree Potters is the second for the Cultural Centre after Meridian Credit Union purchased the naming rights to the former Red Gallery on the ground floor of the facility. A new agreement this fall will see the adjacent Reception Gallery renamed the 'Apple Suites Gallery' ' and the Centre has leads on further naming opportunities for the Blue Gallery and the Great Hall Gallery, although they welcome all offers!

'This is where the Potters had their strongest history, but it is also a place where art is made, not just shown,' added Ms. Schembri of the Activity Room. 'It is our messy art space and the people who are making art are seeing people who also make art and it is a wonderful partnership.'