

Aurora Cultural Centre seeks ?friends? in community

By Brock Weir

If you are a fan of culture, you have a friend in the Aurora Cultural Centre ? but now you have a chance to return the friendship by joining their Friends of the Centre program.

The new fundraising initiative was formally launched at a public meeting on Centre initiatives held Wednesday at their historic Church Street School location. Building on their regular fundraising activities, the new initiative will provide steady, ongoing support at various levels, according to Aurora Cultural Centre president Frank Pulumbarit.

?It's everything from individual support to family support, there is a president's level of support and all those kinds of things that allow you to have access to special events at the Centre, and allow you to have access to some ticketed events at a discounted rate.?.

Joining up, he said, has the additional benefit of allowing you access through a reciprocal program to museums and other cultural institutions across Canada and the United States, including the Royal Ontario Museum.

?By supporting the Centre, you automatically get access to all those places for free just by virtue of your support for your hometown.? said Mr. Pulumbarit.

?We wanted to round out our fundraising offering in two ways ? we are continuing to have our fundraising events and there are four this year. One, the Art of Tea, was just concluded in May. There is Oktoberfest on October 18, and then we're sending a team to the Scotiabank Waterfront Marathon on October 20, and then there is a wine tasting, one which we have become known for, on November 22.

?Those are appealing and memorable fundraising events that are varied, social, educational, and just ways that people can have fun at the Centre and support each other and be with their friends. We will continue to have those, but we also wanted to make sure there was a way for people to continue to support the Centre if they couldn't make it out.?.

The new initiative allows people to take advantage of membership and show their support of the programs at levels they are comfortable. Other fundraising initiatives they are currently exploring are foundational grants, legacy gifts, corporate giving programs and business appeal programs.

?We think it is important for us to explore all of these areas so that we have a variety of revenues coming into the Centre to support the growing programming offering that we have, plus it is also a great way for people to just get involved.?.

Wednesday's public meeting was the first planned by the Centre to fulfil the terms in their new Cultural Services Agreement with the Town of Aurora. Additional meetings will also take place, including their Annual General Meeting at the end of October, followed by two additional sessions.

Those in attendance last week were interested, he said, in how the Centre has been progressing since the new Cultural Services Agreement was signed earlier this year. It was also a chance to introduce the various members of the Cultural Centre board to the public and discuss their 2013 budget.

?It was an opportunity to engage the public in a dialogue they wanted to have, invite them into the building, show them the latest exhibitions, and show them ways they can continue to support the Centre,? he said. ?Next year we will have four public meetings and hopefully by that time we will just get good at it!?