

Shoppers? founding family continues support of Historical Society



Shoppers Drug Mart founders Murray and Marvelle Koffler were guests of honour when the Aurora Historical Society (AHS) held its first Hillary House Ball at the Royal Venetian Mansion.

A lot has happened over the ensuing decade, but one thing that hasn't changed is the Koffler family's support for the organization.

The ongoing support of the late couple's family was evident this month as the AHS held its first in-person Hillary House Ball since the start of the global pandemic.

The Black and White-themed event was a chance for community members to reconnect, enjoy dinner, and raise money to support the ongoing maintenance and restoration of Aurora's only National Historic Site; and the fundraising got off to a great start thanks to the Kofflers.

"The restoration and capital improvement costs to keep the facility up to standard are constantly a challenge," said AHS President Patricia Wallace. "Hillary House is also home to the Koffler Museum of Medicine, named for early major donors the late Murray and Marvelle Koffler and, in fact, the Koffler family joined us right here in this room for the inaugural Hillary House Ball in 2021.

"Recently, I have been in touch with the children of the Kofflers and the Koffler Family Foundation and I am pleased the Foundation has just donated \$25,000. They said specifically their father felt strongly about maintaining heritage buildings and they know that if Murray were still alive that would be something [he would support] and they were pleased to give us that very special gift."

This gift of \$25,000 actually translates to an infusion of \$50,000 into AHS coffers thanks to a grant matching program put in place by the outgoing term of Council that matches all fundraising dollars raised by the Historical Society up to \$150,000.

"We are thrilled that the Town of Aurora is matching our fundraised dollars up to \$150,000 and I want to thank Town Council for unanimously passing that motion in support of the community," said Wallace.

Thanks were returned on behalf of Council by Mayor Tom Mrakas for the work the AHS has and continues to do in the community.

"Now it is preserved as the site where visitors can learn about the history of 19th and early 20th century medicine as well as how families lived in previous generations, but Hillary House is also so much more," said Mayor Mrakas. "It is used as a space to run program and hosted events and exhibitions, making it a central hub for learning about the broader history of the Town of Aurora.

Since 1963, the Aurora Historical Society has worked diligently to preserve and collect an incredible repertoire of historic artefacts in Aurora. That is why we want to give a huge thanks to AHS staff, board and volunteers for their hard work not only preserving the historic features of Hillary House but also other significant buildings across Aurora.

?We are grateful for the volunteers who are passionate about the vision of what Hillary House means to our community and who work so hard to keep the site open to the public. The AHS independently owns and operates Hillary House National Historic Site, which is a huge undertaking for a small non-profit organization. We have recognized the value of this site and the financial support it needs to operate. That's why in December of last year Town Council committed to match donations up to \$150,000 for the Heritage Reserve fund for the restoration and repair projects for Hillary House.?

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