

## **Building a History of Community Involvement...**

- 1995 WEA was established to create a permanent funding base for community artists and arts organizations. WEA's four Founding members: Mary Rodger - Art Council Windsor & Region, Barb Bondy - Artcite, Gina Lori Riley Dance Enterprises and Nancy Nicholson, President.
- 1996 The City of Windsor granted seed monies for a cultural assessment by consultant John Fisher, who stated "WEA is not only an excellent idea but does not exist anywhere else in North America."
- 1998 WEA was incorporated and a strategic plan set forth.
- 1999 The City of Windsor approved – as a matching grant – the funding of \$250,000 to establish the endowment fund. Fundraising began.
- 2001 WEA was granted charitable status.
- 2001 WEA and the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario presented MORE THAN A WINE AUCTION at Casino Windsor. Fundraising returns were shared.
- 2005 CarTunes on Parade (CToP), initiated by WEA, was a cross-border partnership with the YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit. This first-ever international public art exhibit involved the design, creation, display and auction of almost two hundred car sculptures that celebrated the region's passion for cars and music. The CarTunes were exhibited around Windsor and Detroit during the summer of 2005. This public art project also provided an educational outreach program inviting students to design and create a 3D CarTune prototype.
- 2006 WEA's partnered with the UWindsor and St. Clair College to present "Really Great Mischief" honouring Alistair MacLeod. The evening's financial success endowed the Alistair and Anita MacLeod Scholarship for the UWindsor.
- 2010 WEA's first biennial Arts Leadership Awards and Arts Grants Celebration delivered financial support to 8 artists and arts organizations and honoured 4 community individuals.
- 2011 WEA presented *Home Grown Talent*, a showcase of fine art and craft, literary arts and entertainment at the Vollmer Culture and Recreation Complex in partnership with the Town of LaSalle. Weekend success indicated that arts and culture can be part of a sports and recreation complex.

- 2012 WEA's second Award/Grants ceremony was renamed *the WEAs*.
- 2014 WEA partnered with the City of Windsor to celebrate *the WEAs* and *the Windsor Mayor's Arts Awards* at WFCU Centre in east Windsor.
- 2014 WEA collaborated with The Art Gallery of Windsor and Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island to present the *Windsor-Essex Triennial of Contemporary Art*. WEA presented "The Art of Business and the Business of Art" at the Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator offering an evening of multidisciplinary voices speaking to working and living as an artist in the Windsor-Essex region.
- 2015 WEA honoured Dr. Eric Jackman for his dedication to cultural philanthropy in Windsor-Essex. *The Artistry of Windsor-Essex* presented at Caesars Windsor showcased local artists and celebrated the talents of students from the UWindsor's School of Dramatic Art and School of Creative Arts.
- 2016 WEA partnered with the City of Windsor to celebrate *the WEAs* and *Windsor Mayor's Arts Awards* at the new Chimczuk Museum. St. Clair College was the Presenting Sponsor.
- 2017 *The Morris and Beverly Baker Foundation Tribute Dinner - A Community Gathers to Celebrate* brought together twelve local organizations, institutions and agencies in recognition of the founder's generous philanthropic spirit and The Baker Foundation's vision in serving a range of related causes. This collaboration alone was a milestone as it was the first time that these organizations jointly embraced community enrichment by partnering to stage this auspicious occasion.
- 2018 WEA partnered with the City of Windsor to celebrate *the WEAs* and *Windsor Mayor's Arts Awards* at the WFCU Centre. The University of Windsor was the Presenting Sponsor. *The Eric Jackman Youth Grant in the Arts* and *The Morris and Beverly Baker Foundation Youth Grant in the Arts* were presented for the first time. WEAs Arts Grants were now valued at \$3,000, from \$2,000.
- 2018 WEA opened its first office at Sho Art Studios, an arts & culture hub in Walkerville.
- 2018 WEA purchased a Steinway grand piano (Model M, c. 1926) from Haden McKay & Nadine Deleury to be housed at Sho Art Studios for community use.
- 2013-2018 *Changing the Odds: Community Transformation Through the Arts (CTO)*: WEA funded a six-year community outreach, multi-disciplinary arts program designed to provide transformative experiences to youth living with challenges has been presented at the UW School of Dramatic Art.

- 2019 During the summer, WEA provided \$5,000 to Melissa Miner to deliver a 7-week *Changing the Odds* program that provided musical instruments and lessons to 20 youth from low-income households in downtown Windsor. The youth learned to play piano, guitar and violin.
- 2019 In October, WEA hosted the fundraising event *OH! 4 Art's Sake* at Sho Art Studios. There were 4 galleries set up where guests could purchase large paintings in a live art auction; previously owned artworks from "Art in the Attic", paintings from the students at the UW School of Creative Art, or paintings from 20 regional artists.
- 2019 On November 15th, WEA hosted its *AGM/20th Anniversary Celebration* at the Hellenic Cultural Centre. Carolynne Rourke stepped down from her role as President after 20 years of volunteer service. Stephanie Barnhard was appointed the new President of WEA.
- 2020 In March, the global COVID-19 pandemic forced the world into a lockdown. Indoor gatherings were banned so WEA conducted all Board meetings on the platform ZOOM until the spring of 2022. All fundraising events were cancelled until spring 2022.
- 2020 May 22nd, WEA partnered with the City of Windsor to host the first virtual WEAs and Windsor Mayor's Arts Awards via ZOOM and Facebook live stream. All Arts Leadership Award nominations were postponed until 2022.
- 2022 On May 20th, WEA partnered with the City of Windsor to host the first outdoor *WEAs and Windsor Mayor's Arts Awards* celebration in the Vision Corridor outside of Arts Windsor-Essex (the former Art Gallery of Windsor). Two representatives from 15 arts organizations presented 5 WEA awards and 11 grants to the recipients. The presenters introduced their organizations and promoted their upcoming events before bestowing the awards/grants.
- 2022 On September 8th, the first in a series of *Shō & Tell Sōcials* was presented at Shō Studios. 13 artists and arts leaders promoted their upcoming arts & cultural events to 60 attendees.