

## ACTION AREA: INSPIRED PEOPLE

### Background:



The **Inspired People** Action Area is built on the recognition that culture, heritage and the arts have intrinsic value. We are hard-wired as human beings to experience creative acts, become authors of our own self-expression and combine such experiences into lived engagement as we find our place within society.

Even though Ontarians enjoy an abundance of culture, heritage and arts offerings, the time spent on such activities declined by 12% between 1994 and 2010 according to the **Canadian Index of Wellbeing** (CIW). Communities benefit from a strong cultural infrastructure, however 72% of arts organizations report insufficient access to facilities and specialized equipment. There is an urgent need to develop young audiences for the future. However, only 62% of elementary schools in the Greater Toronto Area have music teachers, and the numbers drop steeply for eastern Ontario (32%) and northern Ontario (26%). In 33% of Ontario elementary schools, students do not have opportunities to work with artists, perform in a musical group, or play an instrument. Community arts programs are limited.

Evidence from the field shows that arts-based learning models, such as “Learning Through the Arts” and “ArtSmarts,” have many positive impacts on the intellectual and social development of young people. Students engaged through arts creation methodologies develop critical thinking, higher self-esteem and leadership. Research also shows significant benefits to the health and well-being of seniors participating in arts and heritage activities. As well, community-based arts and heritage initiatives engender inter-cultural understanding, belonging and civic pride.

Therefore, OTF is focusing its investments in this Action Area on two priority outcomes: better quality programming and infrastructure to experience culture, heritage and the arts; and more people connect with culture, heritage and the arts.

### Alignment with Government Priorities:

The Inspired People Action Area is aligned with the Ontario Government's recently launched Culture Strategy and Arts Policy Framework because it enables people to benefit by experiencing, participating and engaging with culture, heritage and the arts. Evidence-based investments in this Action Area will support Ontario's Culture Strategy through improved and expanded cultural infrastructure, building the skills and talents of next generation artists, fostering creativity in our schools and telling our stories that value our diversity.

### First Cycle Granting Highlights:

In this first granting cycle, the Foundation will invest in 51 initiatives totalling \$5.6 million to achieve the priority outcomes for this Action Area. Investments in cultural infrastructure will create over 170,000 square feet of space for presenting performances, exhibitions and screenings. Complementing this investment in physical space, 1,300 artists and educators will increase their skills and knowledge through training, mentorships and apprenticeships that will enable them to deliver quality programs. As well, approximately 330,000 people, including 9,000 young people, will connect with the arts through arts creation, presentation and learning activities.

An initiative of note is the collaborative between Inner City Angels and Mariposa in the Schools in Toronto. Twenty emerging artists, 54 pre-med interns and 210 teachers will be trained to deliver programming using an integrated arts approach to show the interconnectedness of the physical and natural environment, social justice issues and wellbeing. In addition, 8,000 students from inner-city schools are expected to benefit, through an increase in their social intelligence, resiliency and creative thinking skills.