

SINCE  1939
**CHESTER
PLAYHOUSE**

**2023
ANNUAL
REPORT**

Welcome Home



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FROM OUR PRESIDENT

It has been a successful year and it is hard to know where to start for my annual report to members. Last year I started with a thank you to our many partners and friends and cannot think of a better way to sum up how grateful I am for all who have helped make the 2023 year one to remember (in a good way).

As you all know we were still in 'Playhouse Without Walls' mode for the first eight months of the year. Despite the downsides (e.g. lack of comfy chairs!) and the significant load on the staff of this way of presenting the performing arts to you, we enjoyed a number of wonderful presentations from theatre to music to variety shows. We kept the spirit of the Playhouse alive and for that we have many to thank.

The Chester Legion was our main 'home away from home' with other locations filling in from time to time. To them all a heartfelt thank you for their support. Our staff bore the brunt of the increased workload – generally loading a show in, sound checking, staffing the performance itself and then striking, all in the same day making for long and often physical hours. And through thick and thin, our audiences came out to cheer on our artists and to collectively experience the joy of the performing arts.

During these first months of the year, we were also finishing up our major building project – what we had started almost four years ago had turned from a 'reno' into a rebuild. The new facility features significantly improved accessibility, reduced environmental impact, and increased comfort and function for our patrons and artists. We have thanked all those involved many times but frankly I don't feel that we can thank them enough. So once again, a huge vote of thanks to the rebuilding team of Kirk MacCulloch (Board Member), Wilson Fitt, and Syd Dumaresq who planned, oversaw, and delivered our new Playhouse; Susan Crocker, Vice-Chair of the Board, on finance who has done a superb job of securing the necessary funding to cover the increased budget; and Kelly Moore on design. The countless hours, stresses, and strains that each of them endured to bring this wonderful facility to completion went way beyond the call of duty! Thanks also go to the entire rebuilding team, including contractors, designers, suppliers, and the trades who have worked so hard to deliver our new building. Again, without their support we would not have been able to come back from the fire stronger than ever!



PRESIDENT'S REPORT continued

And then we reopened!

Despite uncooperative weather gods, we had a very successful opening weekend in which a range of stellar artists performed to full houses on the Saturday night and then again on the Sunday afternoon. As you know, the afternoon was our thank you to the community and there was no charge to attend. The evening event was also priced to make it accessible to the community and was extremely well received. Thanks to all of you who were able to come out and celebrate with us – and those who joined us on Playhouse tours over the following weeks. Your smiling faces made it all worthwhile.

Our year continued in the same vein – although now we were in what I would unabashedly (if a bit presumptuously) call the best performing arts venue in Canada! Audiences have been wonderful, routinely selling out performances. Movies have become a main stay for the community on both Friday nights and Sunday afternoons bringing award winning performances to our doorstep. And at Christmas time, the Chester Drama Society and the Playhouse collaborated on five sold out performances of 'The Best Ever Christmas Pageant' which brought the house down – particularly the guest appearance of the Chester Volunteer Fire Department!

None of this would have been possible without our Government Funding Partners, Federal, Provincial and Municipal, who stayed with us and the community throughout this elongated journey. We know that they have been dealing with innumerable challenges on many fronts and yet they have been nothing but encouraging and supporting. Our donors and sponsors likewise have continued to make our efforts both possible and worthwhile. You not only provide us with very necessary financial support, but your deep-felt appreciation of our work keeps us motivated.



Matt Andersen (photo Dan Gardiner)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT *continued*

Now that we have a renewed building, we at the Chester Playhouse aim to continue our work to be inclusive and reflective of our community, both locally and provincially, while promoting equity by platforming traditionally underserved communities. We have continued to build and nurture our relationships with other community stakeholders such as our neighbours at Acadia First Nation (Gold River), Shoreham Village and Bonny Lea Farm. We have also maintained programs such as '10for10' in which ten tickets at a cost of ten dollars each are reserved for each show as we seek to make the performing arts accessible to all residents of our community.

While I have already thanked Andrew and our staff for their work over the last year, I want to again recognize their dedication and hard work. Without them we would not be here. We owe them a lot. A moment that I will always remember from this year was their exhausted but delighted faces throughout the opening celebration.

Thank you to our volunteers who have been an incredible source of support, energy, enthusiasm and often, heavy lifting over the year. Whether they served on our Board, our various committees or as ushers and bartenders, we, again, would not be successful without them.

This year we say 'Goodbye' to board members Mary Jane Andrews, Susan Crocker, Liz Crocker, Caroline March, Alexis Milligan, and Catherine Read who have all been significant contributors to the Playhouse. Particular thanks go to Mary Jane Andrews who has served as treasurer during a time when she not only had to worry about the organization but also a huge rebuild project. Susan Crocker and Liz Crocker, both long term board members, served as Co-Chairs before me and continued for the past year as active members on the Board. Susan as Vice-Chair and a key member of the rebuild team and Liz as Chair of the Program Advisory and Nominating Committees. Many thanks to these wonderful volunteers who not only made it all possible, but also made our work together fun.

In closing, thanks to all for your support and for allowing me to have the privilege of serving the Chester Playhouse.

Sara Filbee
President and Chair of the Board



FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I started in my job as Executive Director in March 2021. At that time, we were getting ready to host our first events since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, in a brand new, freshly renovated theatre. With a planned re-opening in July 2021, we were quickly making plans for our new home.

Obviously, life had other plans for our Playhouse, and after the fire in June forced us to start fresh with a near-complete rebuild, we had one goal to drive us forward: to welcome our community back into the Chester Playhouse Theatre.

For the next two years, we'd lean on that community, relying on our supporters to continue to support the temporarily-hobbled Playhouse, as donors, sponsors, and as attendees at our "Playhouse Without Walls" events. We worked hard to continue to bring live art to Chester, presenting music, theatre, comedy, movies, variety entertainment, and more, to venues across our municipality. Local organizations and venues hosted our performances (special thank you to our most often used "home away from home", the Chester Legion Branch #44), and audiences continued to come out to sit in plastic chairs to see a stage we built that afternoon, lit by as many lights as we could carry in (and then lug back out at the end of the night).

And it worked! While there is no substitute for a built theatre, our community continued to show up time and again for its Playhouse, proving beyond any doubt that live art matters.



Behind the scenes, an incredible team worked with passion and dedication to rebuild the Playhouse, seizing every opportunity to build a theatre worthy of that community - one that was versatile, modern, green, accessible, and capable of hosting world class artists in an intimate, comfortable setting. I'm proud to have had a hand in shaping your new Chester Playhouse, as are so many who worked so hard to deliver it.

On August 26th, we celebrated, welcoming a full house to discover their new theatre, in a concert begun with a danced land acknowledgement choreographed by Sara Prosper, and featuring Chester's own Old Man Luedecke, rising R&B songstress Zamani, and closing off with Lennie Gallant. When I sat down in our comfy seats after introducing Lennie, and heard the audience singing along, I burst into tears. This is what we'd worked so hard for - to bring people together to raise their voices and celebrate the magic of live performance. When the weather prompted our planned street party to move indoors the next afternoon for a free concert with Jah'Mila, Cassie & Maggie, and local favourites Dark & Stormy, it didn't feel like a disappointment, but a victory lap.

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR cont'd

Since then, we've worked hard to make our new Playhouse a home, and audiences have responded with enthusiasm to programming that is varied, diverse, and consistently high-quality. Eight of ten major performances sold out in the fall, and that enthusiasm has continued into the new year. As we've warmed our new home, we've continued to present a wide variety of music, theatre, variety performances, movies, conversations, and more. I'm particularly proud that we could welcome the Chester Drama Society back to the stage for 5 sold out performances of "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever", where a cast of nearly 40 local performers (including about half that number of youth, as well as a special cameo from our friends at the Chester Volunteer Fire Department) took the stage, some for the very first time.

We've built on our success, working to make your theatre the most welcoming in the province. We've continued to find and present a broad range of art and artists, with the aim of offering something for everyone, including underrepresented communities. We've continued to review and build upon our accessibility measures, and frequently hosted residents from Shoreham Village and Bonny Lea Farm. We've continued the Scotiabank Newcomers program, offering tickets for free to Newcomers to our community. And we've continued to work to make sure that the Playhouse belongs to everyone, keeping ticket prices as affordable as possible, and offering 10 tickets to every performance for just \$10 each, no questions asked.

As we look to a bright future in your new Playhouse, we'll continue to give thanks to the community that has supported us. Thank you to all who've supported the Playhouse through this grand adventure, as audience members, donors, and supporters - I hope we've made you proud of your Playhouse. Thank you to our incredible, wonderful, superlatively generous volunteers - you are the face of the Playhouse, as well as the heart. Thank you to our staff who've given so much of themselves to the work: Anne Koloff, Shirley McCaw, Ray Moschuk, Krystle O'Brien, and Lynn Pettypiece, and temporary staff who joined us last year: Tatum Drake, Keegan Holley, and Johanna Shurko. I am blessed and honoured to lead this team.

You might have noticed that whenever possible, we refer to the theatre as YOUR Chester Playhouse. We choose that language purposefully, to demonstrate our sincere belief that this is, above all, Chester's Playhouse, belonging not to us, but to the entire community. We, and I, are but stewards of this cultural space, now 85 years old, and we will continue to work hard to ensure it will thrive for another 85. As we relax into our new home, I hope you're as proud as we are of what we've accomplished together.

See you soon at YOUR Chester Playhouse!

Andrew Chandler (he/him)
Executive Director





2023: THE FINISH LINE
In the spring/summer of 2023, the Playhouse suddenly started to take shape. Dozens of contractors worked feverishly to complete this massive project, on time for a grand re-opening in August. Thanks to all who worked so hard!







CHESTER PLAYHOUSE BUILDING/REBUILD COMMITTEE

The focus of the Building Committee in 2023 was to oversee the successful completion in August of the rebuild of the Chester Playhouse, just two years after the major fire in June 2021. We are pleased to report that the 'new' building is functioning very well with few startup issues and only a few deficiencies yet to be addressed.

The total project cost was approximately \$4,450,000 and was funded by insurance proceeds, government grants and donations. Approximately \$1,500,000 of the capital cost was attributable to the 'Alternative Compliance' Code solution required by the Building Inspector because the building, being 80 years old, is constructed of combustible materials (contrary to Code requirement for 'assembly occupancy') and there is not a municipal water supply in Chester for a sprinkler system. To ensure the safety of occupants in a wood structure theatre without a sprinkler system, we were required to incorporate many fire safety enhancements to the building. These included a steel and concrete roof assembly, 2-hour internal fire separations, a stage fire curtain, smoke vents and enhanced fire/smoke detection and alarm systems.

Since the Playhouse was almost completely gutted by the fire, this provided the unique opportunity to redesign the building to make significant improvements to functionality, air quality, accessibility and green building technology. We also made major upgrades to all theatrical systems, including audio, acoustics, lighting, video and projection systems.

The contractor for the rebuild was Plan-It Construction, a local firm led by Ivan Fitch and Logan Davis. They did excellent work supported by local suppliers and subcontractors wherever possible. Major trades included CC MacDonald (HVAC), Tymak Interiors (drywall), RKO Steel (roof assembly) and local firms Gates Electric and Armstrong Plumbing & Heating.



BUILDING/REBUILD COMMITTEE continued

The outstanding design team was led by Syd Dumaresq (pro bono) as architect. It included Dumac Energy (mechanical & electrical), BMR (structural), Kelly Moore (interior design) and RJ Bartlett (Fire Code).

Wilson Fitt (pro bono) was exceptional as project manager, and Kirk MacCulloch was the project lead. The Playhouse was fortunate to have a very strong Building Committee during the past year. Members included Kirk MacCulloch (Chair), Susan Crocker, Liz Crocker, Sara Filbee, Matt Ross, Kirby Putnam, Wilson Fitt (Project Manager), Andrew Chandler (Executive Director), Ray Moschuk (Technical Director), Syd Dumaresq (Architect) and Kelly Moore (Interior Designer).

**Respectfully submitted,
Kirk MacCulloch, Committee Chair**



THE CHESTER PLAYHOUSE REBUILDING PROJECT

On August 26, 2023 the new Chester Playhouse opened to the public, a remarkable feat accomplished with the incredible support of government partners, generous donors, committed volunteers, and talented experts and tradespeople.

Produced By:

Project Team

Kirk MacCulloch (Lead) • Wilson Fitt (Project Manager) • SP Dumaresq Architect Ltd • Kelly Moore Design • Plan-It Construction Inc • Andrew Chandler (Executive Director) • Ray Moschuk (Technical Director) • Richard Fiander Dumac Energy Limited • BMR Structural Engineering • RJ Bartlett Engineering • Gates Electrical • Backman Vidcom

Presented By:

The Government of Canada
The Province of Nova Scotia
The Municipality of the District of Chester

Featuring An Incredible Cast of Donors:

Act I

Sir Christopher Ondaatje Foundation • Susan Crocker and John Hunkin • The Hansen-MacDonald Family • Steele Auto Group

Act II

Black Family Foundation • Richard Calder • Joan and Ted Cleather • The Donner Canadian Foundation • SP Dumaresq Architect Limited • Elizabeth and Fred Fountain • Robin and Diane Gilbert • GN Thermoforming • Andy and Nora Gross • Nancy Hatch • Kirk and Beth MacCulloch • Kohltech Windows and Entrance Systems • Lois Dyer Mann and David Mann • Sherry Porter and Doug Hall • Catherine Read • John Risley • Fred Smithers • Jim Spatz and Valerie MacDonald • David and Lisa Totman • Bruce Towler and Judy Steele • Rose Wilson • The Windsor Foundation

Act III

Robert Ayling and Philip John • Wes and Diane Campbell • David and Nancy Connolly • Janet and Larry Creaser • Liz Crocker • Paul and Deedee Dyer • Engel and Völkers • Peggie Findlay and Steve Bush • Sara Filbee • Gail and Rod Fraser • Gerry Giffin and Mary-Jane Saffrey • Scott McCain and Leslie McLean • Kelly Moore • Bill and Sally Morris • Mark Narsansky • Ross and Willa Norman • Office Interiors • Seaside Hearing • Kathryn Shaw • Wilsons Security

Act IV

Robert and Susan Belliveau • Julia Clubb and Tony Soares • Tom Boyne and Debi Conrad • Henry and Rena Demone • Sarah Dennis and Mark Lever • Carol and Colin Dodds • Chester Drama Society • Richard Foster • Wayne and Barb Grigsby • Richard Gummer • Robert Hanf • Bob and Anna Healy • Faye Jones • Pamela Keating • Michael Kennedy • Lezlie Oler and David Zitner • Sandra and Malcolm Matthews • Daniel and Marie McDougall • Cheryl Millar • Gift for Madge Mitchell • Tim and Bernadine Moore • David and Mechelle Mosher • Tom and Glenda Murphy • Toby and Carol Ann Norwood • Robert and Katherine Richardson • Nancy Spencer • Grant and Pamela Stonehouse • Mila and Dave Surette • John and Dolce Tatlow • Derek Wells and Allison Kelland

THE CHESTER PLAYHOUSE REBUILDING PROJECT cont'd

Finale

Access Storage • Anne Baker • Jim Barkhouse • Alison Barry • Peter and Sandi Bergen • Debbie and Jim Breeze • Jeff Burrige and Donald Poppke • David and Susan Borrowman • Anna and Bill Camp • John and Gail Carroll • Susan and John Chandler • Patricia and Eric Christiansen • Lynn Cochrane and Barry Taylor • Judy Connolly • Simone Cottreau • Stewart Creaser and Lorraine Vassalo • Julia Creighton and Michael Frevola • Alistair and Georgia Cribb • Debbie and Duncan Cross • Gay Dennis • Henry and Rena Demone • Maureen Donovan and Andrew Hamson • Robert Elliot • Winston Fiander • Colin and Elaine Findlay • Wilson Fitt and Thelma Costello • Gary Foshay and Mary Steckle • Robert and Elizabeth Frank • Joseph Gallagher • Francine Gingras and Tim Sullivan • Reg and Christine Goodday • Jim and Dudley Grove • Chris Gwynne-Timothy • All Outdoors Landscaping • Anne and Andy Hare • Barbie Nunn-Porter and Tim Harris • David and Carol Hilchey • Joe and Libby Hill • Ward and Sharron Isnor • Faye Jones • Michael Kaczorowski • Sherry and Bob Kane • Anne and Kevin Koloff • Betty and Foggy Lacas • Terri and Trevor Langille • Kathryn Lean • Linda Lugar Boyle • Mona Lynch • Diane MacDonald • Rosemary MacInnes • Tom and Kathie Marrie • Lili McCurdy • Kevin McNamara • William Middleton • Janet and Richard Miles • Janet Miller • Robert Mitchell • Hon. Wilfred Moore and Jane Ritcey • Ned and Jeanne Nash • Richard and Barb Oland • Phil Otto • Susan and Jim Pattillo • Daniel Payne • Kevork Peltekian • Eileen Petrie • Pat and Larry Pringle • Eleanor Publicover • Ali Joy Richardson • Leigh Robertson • Doug and Lynne Ross • Michael Rowan-Legg • Arif Samad • Elaine Solway • Deborah Toogood • Robert Tupper • Village of Chester • Virginia Verge • David and Sandy Wall • Lori Williams • Jane Wilkins • Linda Young

Fundraising

Susan Crocker (Lead) • Erick Bickerdike • Liz Crocker • Roma Dingwell • Deedee Dyer • Lois Dyer Mann • Susan Pattillo • Sherry Porter

Leadership:

Patron

Sir Christopher Ondaatje

Board of Directors Members Serving 2020-2023

Liz Crocker (Co-Chair) • Susan Crocker (Co-Chair) • Sara Filbee (Chair) • Tom Boyne • John Campbell • Debi Conrad • Deedee Dyer • Carol Dodds • Robert Healy • Kirk MacCulloch • Caroline March • Kathy McNab • Frank Metzger • Alexis Milligan • Emily Mosher • Mark Narsansky • Kirby Putnam • Catherine Read • Matt Ross • Judi Vincent • Mary Jane Walsh • Pat Wardell • Christina Wentzell • Katherine Williams





Owen O'Sound Lee

Many joined us for our Grand Re-Opening celebrations on August 25th-26th, 2023, and what a celebration it was!



Zamani (photo Valerie LeDuc)



Old Man Luedecke (photo Valerie LeDuc)



Lennie Gallant (photo Valerie LeDuc)



13 Sara Filbee (photo Valerie LeDuc)



Jah'Mila (photo Valerie LeDuc)



14 Keely Basque (photo Valerie LeDuc)



Cassie & Maggie (photo Valerie LeDuc)



Dark & Stormy (photo Valerie LeDuc)

PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT



Committee Members:

Matt Ross, Tom Boyne, Susan Crocker, Catherine Read, Liz Crocker and Andrew Chandler (ex-officio)

Purpose: The Program Advisory Committee supports the Executive Director and reviews programming suggestions, budgets and impacts.

A Hybrid Year: 2023 was a hybrid year with programming for the first 8 months of the year taking place under the “Playhouse Without Walls” banner. Using spaces in the village and beyond, the Chester Playhouse provided a variety of theatre, music, youth programming, movies, and conversations.


The Playhouse Re-opens: In August, we were able to move into our newly rebuilt playhouse building. Having a safe, comfortable, and technologically-enhanced theatre building has been appreciated by both our staff and patrons.

Our fall offerings included numerous sold-out shows – musical, comedy, theatre, and circus performances, along with the community production (partnering with the Chester Drama Society) of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. In addition, we started offering movies and in-person In Conversation events.

Performance Statistics: Looking at the numbers of attendees from 2021, 2022 and 2023, we have a lot to be proud of, even with having to operate for six months without a building. Compared to 2022, we more than doubled our attendance, offered 5 more events and employed 49 more artists.

Location breakdown: With our increased attendance, 2/3 of those admissions came in the fall once the Playhouse was open.

Playhouse Without Walls	1592 tickets
Re-opened Playhouse	3416 tickets

 CPH	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
# of events	23	33	39
# of attendees	1507	2375	5008
# of artists	92	94	153

What we presented:

In Conversation	5
Film	7
Theatre	5
Music	14
Variety	8

PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT continued

Youth Programming: While continuing to operate without a venue, we held three weeks of youth summer theatre camps for various age groups, delivering fun and engaging theatre training to 46 local youth.

Reflections: As we reflect on 2023, we want to say thank you to all the Playhouse staff who worked tirelessly to plan, promote, and make everything happen irrespective of location and to all our patrons who both supported us during our “Playhouse Without Walls” offerings and continue to support us now that we are back “home”.

Looking Forward: The response of the community to the diversity of programming offerings in 2023 has been encouraging and motivates us to continue to offer a wide variety of artistic experiences. 2024 will see everything from an extensive youth summer program and opera, choral and classical music to dazzling magic, talented musicians and inspiring theatre grace our stage.

**Respectfully submitted,
Liz Crocker, Chair**



Nominating Report

The 2023 Nominating Committee members have been Susan Crocker, Sara Filbee, Carol Dodds, Liz Crocker and Andrew Chandler (ex-officio).

Outgoing Board Members

We extend our thanks to the following Board members who served on the Board in 2023 and either left mid-year or are not re-offering for 2024:

Liz Crocker
Susan Crocker
Caroline March
Alexis Milligan
Catherine Read
Mary Jane Walsh

Nominations

The following people are being nominated to serve on the Board of the Chester Playhouse for 2024:

Gavin Brimer
Tom Boyne
Carol Dodds
Sara Filbee
Alan Jeffers
Alison MacEachern
Kathy McNab
Kirk McCulloch
Frank Metzger
Emily Mosher
Issie Patterson
Kirby Putnam
Matt Ross
Guy Skipworth



**Respectfully submitted,
Liz Crocker, Chair**





Quote the Raven (photo Valerie LeDuc)



In Conversation: Andre Fenton



Bill Wood is Magic!



The Knitting Pilgrim

YOUR CHESTER PLAYHOUSE 2023 SNAPSHOT

- 

38 EVENTS



153 ARTISTS & ARTS PROFESSIONALS
- 

5008 AUDIENCE MEMBERS (MORE THAN DOUBLE 2022!)



5 DIFFERENT VENUES WITHIN CHESTER MUNICIPALITY
- 

46 PARTICIPANTS IN OUR SUMMER YOUTH THEATRE PROGRAMS



Dinostories



Nikki Payne (photo Valerie LeDuc)



New Waterford Boy



In Conversation: Donna Morrissey (photo Valerie LeDuc)



Joce Reyome & Terra Spencer (photo Valerie LeDuc)



James Mullinger (photo Tyler Warren Ellis)



Sean McCann (photo Valerie LeDuc)



The Best Christmas Pageant Ever - CDS



The Gilberts (photo Valerie LeDuc)



Los Primos feat Ali & Augusto Enriquez and Jeff Goodseed

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Finance Committee Report for 2023

Committee Members: Mary Jane Walsh (Andrews), Liz Crocker, Susan Crocker, Sara Filbee, Tom Boyne, Andrew Chandler (ex-officio)

Overview of the 2023 Year

The unprecedented challenges for the Playhouse in terms of financial management started with the declaration of the global pandemic in March of 2020 and continued well into 2023. In 2023, the Playhouse continued operating as the “Playhouse without Walls” for eight months of the year, working from a rented office and storage lockers, while also focusing on the construction of the rebuilding and the grand opening of the new facility.

Operating without a building compounded the financial pressures already being felt by the Playhouse as it continued to evolve and reconnect with audiences, while coping with the lingering impacts of the pandemic, all without the benefit of COVID-19 grants and subsidies that had been received in prior years. We knew that the 2023 year would be a year of transition as we completed construction of the building, while continuing to operate at full capacity. We budgeted for an operating loss in 2023, recognizing the risks inherent in completion of the building on time for our fall productions and presentations, the extra costs associated with the grand opening, and the uncertainties in costs associated with operating the new facility. With the support from various levels of government and our generous donors, sponsors and foundations, we concluded 2023 basically on budget, with an operating loss of \$48,000 for the year. Given the buildup of operating surpluses in prior years during the pandemic, we ended the year with an operating fund balance of \$76,000, after absorbing the planned loss for 2023.

Although there is still some cost uncertainty as we settle into the new facility and complete some finishing touches on the building, the Playhouse operations will start to normalize in 2024, giving way for more firmness in setting budgets for sustainable operations for many years to come. Throughout 2023, the Playhouse carefully monitored its cash flows, not only from operations but also in the funding required to complete construction of the building. We spent \$3,090,000 on building expenditures in 2023, bringing the total spend for the rebuild to \$4,341,000. Insurance proceeds on the building and its contents received over the last three years amounted to \$1,904,340.

Certain timing differences were identified mid 2023 between the receipt of insurance proceeds and certain grants, and the payment of construction invoices, which prompted a loan from the Sir Christopher Ondaatje Theatre Foundation (SCOTF) to manage the liquidity as we collected cash receipts and paid our trade invoices on time. Cash flow projections are updated regularly to ensure the Playhouse is on target to repay the loan by the due date. We are grateful to SCOTF for their assistance and support throughout the entire rebuilding process, especially in the final months of project completion.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT continued

Throughout the year, the Finance Committee reviewed the monthly operating statements and balance sheets with Management and the Board of Directors, reviewed the project detail of receipts and expenditures relating to the rebuilding, prepared cash flow projections, reviewed the budget for 2024, reviewed the operating forecasts at the end of the second and third quarters, liaised with the insurer on the loss of income claim due to the 2021 fire which resulted in a successful outcome to be recognized as operating income in 2024, and met with Belliveau Venoitte Inc. to review the Playhouse's 2023 financial statements and the audit of the receipts and expenditures relating to the entire building project, starting with the restoration in late 2019.

Statement of Financial Position

The Playhouse net assets decreased from \$488,835 at December 31, 2022 to \$429,072 at December 31, 2023.

	Dec 31, 2023	Dec 31 2022
Cash	\$323,024	\$774,863
Receivables	\$87,112	\$110,914
Prepays and deposits	\$24,146	\$13,688
Capital assests	\$2,747,724	\$708,632
Total assets	\$3,182,006	\$1,608,097
Accounts payable	\$58,677.00	\$34,814
Deferred revenue	\$2,522,757.00	\$1,044,448
Loan	\$171,500.00	\$40,000
Total liabilities and deferrals	\$2,752,934.00	\$1,119,262.00
Net assets	\$429,072.00	\$488,835

While the attractions revenues more than doubled in 2023, the costs associated with operating the attractions continued to be challenged by operating without a permanent home for most of the year and adjusting to the lingering impacts of the pandemic. The support of government agencies, donors, sponsors and foundations was very evident in 2023, contributing \$345,480 to total revenue in 2023. Fundraising events yielded revenues of \$58,220 in 2023.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT continued

The Playhouse resumed the allocation of \$2 from each ticket sale with the opening of the new facility, which contributed \$6,995 to the Building Reserve Fund for future building renovations. The Capital Fund includes depreciation of the capital assets which, when offset by the amortization of the deferred contributions to revenue, resulted in a net expense of \$18,490. The aggregate of transactions in all three funds results in total excess of expenses over revenue of \$59,763 for the 2023 year.

With the support from our communities and diligent financial management, the Playhouse looks forward to returning to a positive cash flow in 2024 and beyond.

Respectively submitted,
Mary Jane Walsh
Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee

Use your smartphone
camera to scan this code
to view the full
Financial Statements



Laila Biali (photo Valerie LeDuc)

FUND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Members of Committee for 2023:

Kathy McNab, Carol Dodds, Catherine Read, Emily Mosher, Kirby Putnam, Frank Metzger, Susan Crocker and Andrew Chandler (ex officio)

The role of the **Fund Development Committee** is to both directly support and to oversee the fundraising programs of the Chester Playhouse.

2023 Annual Fund Development Revenues:

- We continued with a Spring and Fall campaign mailed out to donors and new ticket holders.
- Our General Operating Donations for the year from 205 Donors (including 66 new donors) for 2023 brought in \$120,341.39.

Thank you to our Endowment Partner - The Sir Christopher Ondaatje Theatre Foundation and support from Nova Scotia and Canada Governments

The Playhouse Party

Saturday, July 8th was a gorgeous evening for a party as Chester and friends joined us at the beautiful McNeil home with hosts, Ross McNeil and Stephanie Ray McNeil and their family.

Net revenue of \$46,835 for the evening with 186 tickets sold. Once again, we exceeded budget with amazing auction items and bidding.

We thank the party and auction sponsors; Bishop's Cellar, Sunroom Restaurant, Oxner's Party & Event Rentals, Merrithew, Stanhope Simpson Insurance, Sensea Nordic Spa, Jan Malone Realtor and LaHave River Boat Charters.

2023 Sponsorship

Sponsorship totaling \$35,750 was received. Thank You to these generous local sponsors for your support: Big Red's Pizza, Cabot Shipping Supplies, Chester Pharmasave, CIBC Wood Gundy, Gold River Marina, Personal Care Physio & Osteopath, Ross Farm Museum, Seawinds Carpentry Services Inc., Spidle's Independent Grocer, Sunnybrook Yachts, Virtira Academy, Access Storage and our presenting sponsor Scotiabank.

Thank you to our incredible planning committee members, volunteers, and guests for our success.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy McNab

Chair, Fund Development Committee



The Playhouse Party



OUR SPONSORS MAKE IT ALL POSSIBLE

The support the Chester Playhouse received through corporate sponsorships in 2023 allowed us to continue to welcome incredible live performances to our community with our Playhouse Without Walls program and helped usher us into our brand new theatre!

THANK YOU!

Scotiabank



ENDOWMENT PARTNERS

The Sir Christopher Ondaatje Theatre Foundation

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



Throughout the season, it was our honour to recognize our corporate sponsors with our audience members in pre-show announcements as well as through our website, newsletter, and social media channels.

- 4550+ FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS
- 1800+ INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS
- 2200+ NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS
- 2700+ MONTHLY WEBSITE VISITORS

Special thank you to Scotiabank, who support the Scotiabank Newcomers Program!



COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR CHESTER PLAYHOUSE

Thank you to our generous donors for their continued support of the playhouse through our General Operating Campaign in 2023.



Champions

Wes & Diane Campbell
Lois & David Dyer-Mann
Jay Forbes
Black Family Foundation

Mary Fowke
Richard Gummer
Nancy Hatch
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Gordon Stewart
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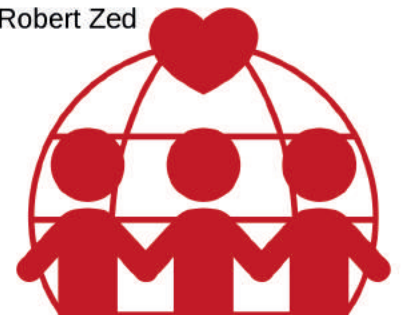
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Jane Allen
Terri Lynn Almeda
Margaret G Anderson
Anne Baker
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Margaret Bayer
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Diane Binmore
Paula Booher
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Cynthia Lamson
Terri & Trevor Langille
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Leslie Macdonald
Rosemary K. MacInnes
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Nancy MacVicar
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Alison McEachern
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Grainne Neilson

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Amy Oickle
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Lori Steeves
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Lorraine Vassalo & Stewart Creaser
Mary Jane Walsh
Sue Warren
Lindsay Wasserman
David & Patricia Watson
Christine Wysmyk
David & Kelly Young
Robert Zed

In Memoriam

Judy Wells, Dirty Dougie & the Divine Dandies



THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

2023 saw the successful conclusion of our Playhouse Without Walls programming and the beginning of our Welcome Home season in the new theatre. Our Board and Staff members navigated through working in multiple venues and construction challenges with a smile on their faces. The positive attitudes of our members garnered rave reviews from our patrons, reaffirming what we do here at the Chester Playhouse and why we do it.

CHESTER PLAYHOUSE BOARD

EXECUTIVE

- Sara Filbee - Chair
- Susan Crocker - Vice Chair
- Tom Boyne - Secretary
- Mary Jane Walsh - Treasurer

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- Carol Dodds
- Catherine Read
- Liz Crocker
- Kirk MacCulloch
- Caroline March
- Kathy McNab
- Alexis Milligan
- Frank V. Metzger
- Matt Ross
- Emily Mosher
- Kirby Putnam



CHESTER PLAYHOUSE STAFF

- Andrew Chandler - Executive Director
- Anne Koloff - Front of House / Box Office Manager
- Shirley McCaw - Front of House Manager
- Ray Moschuk - Technical Director
- Krystle O'Brien - Controller
- Lynn Pettypiece - Marketing Lead
- Johanna Shurko - Administrative Assistant
- Keegan Holley - Box Office (Summer '23)
- Tatum Drake - Marketing Assistant (Summer '23)



VOLUNTEERS

At the heart of the Chester Playhouse are the many wonderful volunteers. The Playhouse is a volunteer-directed charitable organization, with a volunteer front of house team. We are tremendously grateful to the generous individuals who give so much of their time to help bring live arts and culture to our community.



*See you soon at your
Chester Playhouse!*

SINCE  1939
**CHESTER
PLAYHOUSE**

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