

**The Hamilton Music Collective launches new programming thanks to \$49,700 grant from OTF**

**Hamilton, ON** – On Thursday, the Hamilton Music Collective (HMC) held an event to celebrate their \$49,700 Operating stream grant from the Ontario Government’s Community Building Fund. This grant, administered by the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), provided the organization with close to \$50,000 to support the growth of inclusive, barrier free programs for under-resourced, at-risk youth in our inner-city.

“Congratulations to the Hamilton Music Collective on receiving the Operating Stream Grant from the Community Building Fund,” said Sandy Shaw, MPP for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas. “Music is an essential part of our community and culture, and I applaud the efforts made by the Hamilton Music Collective to make music accessible for all young people in Hamilton---nurturing and enriching the lives of the students who participate in their programs. I wish them continued success in ensuring music remains a significant part of the City of Hamilton.”

The funding is helping the HMC to recover from impacts of COVID 19 by investing in an online registration system, hire additional instructors to ensure responsive online instruction, increase administrative supports and launch new programming including Songwriting for Wellness in support of youth mental wellness and the establishment of a Music Production program that embraces new technologies to engage at-risk youth interested in the arts.

"The impact of this Ontario Trillium Foundation grants cannot be underestimated," said Astrid Hepner, CEO of the Hamilton Music Collective. "This grant ensures that the HMC can continue to launch innovative programs to meet the needs of a growing population of under-resourced, inner-city youth in Hamilton. Without the support of organizations, individuals, and foundations like the OTF the HMC would not be to have the impact it does." Since inception the HMC has provided over \$1.9 million dollars in free music lessons and \$210,000 of free instruments to under-resourced youth in Hamilton.

**About Hamilton Music Collective:**

Since its inception in 2008 the award-winning Hamilton Music Collective (HMC) has provided musical training and performance opportunities to over 7,000 children and youth within some of Hamilton’s most under-served communities. All of HMC’s programs, including its highly successful An Instrument for Every Child (AIFEC) program, focus on building the confidence, self-esteem, and well-being of its students. Recognizing the far-reaching benefits of music, especially for inner city children living in poorer neighbourhoods, Hamilton School Boards, Boys and Girls Clubs, the City of Hamilton Recreation Centres and others have partnered with HMC to bring these life-affirming programs to young people.

HMC removes barriers for students who live in poverty; by encouraging children to participate in music lessons, awarding grants to cover all program expenses and by providing each participant with his/her instrument free of charge for the duration of the program. With the growing incidence of mental wellness issues amongst youth in our community, (which has been

exacerbated by the challenges associated with the pandemic) and the proven benefits of music to support emotional and physical wellbeing the HMC is committed to growing capacity/expertise and ultimately programming to support this vulnerable group.

**About the Ontario Trillium Foundation:**

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) mission is to build healthy and vibrant communities across Ontario. As an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations, last year, OTF invested nearly \$209M into 2,042 community projects and partnerships, which included funding for the Government of Ontario's Community Building Fund. Since 2020, OTF has supported Ontario's economic recovery by helping non-profit organizations rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Visit [otf.ca](https://otf.ca) to learn more.

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