

**The Hamilton Music Collective receives a combined \$442,400
in Ontario Trillium Foundation grant funds**

Hamilton, ON - On Saturday, the Hamilton Music Collective (HMC) recognized the impact of two Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) grants, totalling \$442,400, which have supported the organization in creating a cultural hub in downtown Hamilton and providing increased access to arts-based learning opportunities and compelling artistic, cultural and heritage experiences.

HMC received a multi-year OTF Grow grant of \$393,300 in 2020 which supported the organization in becoming a cultural hub in Hamilton's downtown core where members of the BIPOC community, newcomer families and at risk-youth receive free music lessons and participate in expanded music programs. Additionally, in 2022, a \$49,100 grant received through the Resilient Communities Fund helped HMC to recover from impacts of COVID 19 by investing in an online registration system, hiring additional instructors, increasing administrative supports and launching new programming.

HMC's new programs offer opportunities for youth to express themselves creatively and create new and imaginative ways of engaging young people in meaningful, and sustainable music activities. Based on the concept of 'interest-driven arts learning' these new programs combine the power of digital technology with a young person's interest to explore his/her own creative passions through cutting edge music technology.

"The impact of these Ontario Trillium Foundation grants cannot be underestimated," said Astrid Hepner, CEO of the Hamilton Music Collective. "These grants have ensured that the HMC can continue to provide ALL youth with music based cultural opportunities. Without the support of organizations, individuals, and foundations like the OTF the HMC would not be able to continue 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.

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 HMC: 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. HMC is passionate about music and believes in its transformative power to enrich and empower lives.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations celebrates 40 years of grantmaking in Ontario and making a lasting impact in communities. 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. Visit otf.ca to learn more.

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