



# Annual Report 2023-2024



# Land Acknowledgement

PAL Ottawa acknowledges the immense privilege and gratitude we have as we build and foster a cultural arts community on the unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Omà̀m̀wininiwag (Algonquin) people. Located at 305 Rochester Street, PAL Place will be situated on the traditional land of the Algonquin people, providing support and care to seniors and elders within the local arts communities.

PAL Ottawa believes that the arts have the capacity to contribute to the healing and decolonizing journey we all share, by reflecting the dignity, beauty and strength of each human being. PAL Place, by design, will encourage this reflection in its residents, and inspire works of justice in support of our Indigenous friends within the community, lending voice and visibility to their fight for the restoration of their lands and cultures.



# CHAIR'S MESSAGE

A year after the groundbreaking of PAL Place, we are thrilled to see the project taking shape. The vision is now steadily becoming a reality. Thanks to the ongoing dedication of our board and staff, and to our partners at OCH, construction is progressing smoothly, bringing us closer to the day when this space welcomes the arts community.

Never has it been more needed. Throughout 2024, we've seen a significant increase in requests for support from senior artists in our community. Individuals and families who are experiencing financial hardship, at risk of losing their homes, and navigating isolation. This growing need highlights just how vital our housing, personal support, and community programs are. PAL Ottawa continues to be a lifeline for many. We are grateful to our dedicated volunteers who give generously of their time to meet the needs on the ground.

A key motivator for us as volunteers has been the unwavering political, philanthropic and public support we've received for PAL Place. Not only do we have multiple champions on Council advocating for practical solutions to address poverty within the arts community, we also have support from local businesses, donors, foundations and community groups, all standing behind us to ensure that the project is realized. This includes steadfast support from our local arts council, organizations and artists, all watching closely and lending their voices when needed. The village is assembling in an astonishing way to see this project through to opening.

And speaking of the village, to our artists and arts workers. It is not lost on us how much harder it has become to live comfortably as an artist and live out your important role. But we continue to be inspired by your ingenuity, resourcefulness, and indelible spirit. Thank you for what you do. For nursing our city back to health. For bringing colour, energy, wisdom and sound. We are blessed to support you in that journey.

Leah Cogan  
Chair, PAL Ottawa



# In Remembrance



**Bob Jones**  
(1959 - 2024)

Beloved member of Ottawa's music community. At the request of his family, donations were made to PAL Ottawa in Bob's memory.



**Monique Michaud**  
(1929 - 2024)

Painter, Director and Founder of Dance Section. A friend to many at PAL Ottawa.



# PAL Programs

## PAL PLACE

HOUSING ARTISTS AFFORDABLY IN THE HEART OF LITTLE ITALY.

### Building Strong Partnerships

A PAL team was formed in late 2023 to continue formalizing the agreement with OCH for the occupancy of 305 Rochester Street. The team also held meaningful engagements with City of Ottawa staff to ensure a strong collaborative spirit amongst all invested partners on the project. With construction advancing towards a June 2026 completion, energy within the community is growing!

### Designing a 'Beacon' of creativity

A project team was pulled together to support the development of exterior artistic panels for the building. Technical support has been provided by Hobin Architecture and a call for proposals is in the works, with the hopes of leading collaborative workshops in 2025 to identify a theme that will inspire the final design and fabrication of the panels. Artist members, stay tuned!

### Preparing a Home for Artists

As of 31 December 2024, PAL Ottawa has received 176 applications to live at PAL Place serving a total of 232 applicants (applicants and co-applicants). Word is spreading, and we are very grateful to our community partners for helping us reach artists in need. A new, more expansive definition of 'professional artist/arts worker' was approved by the Board this year, recognizing the diversity of artistic formation and expression represented within our vibrant community.



## **SUPPORTING CAST**

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### **HELPING ARTISTS AGE-IN-PLACE.**

#### **Bringing care to artists in need**

Approximately 170 volunteer hours were devoted this year to assisting PAL Ottawa clients with transportation to appointments, light household tasks, accompaniment, and shopping.

#### **Building a stronger village of volunteers**

Recognizing the increasing need for support within the community, PAL sent a call out to gather more volunteers and was met with an incredible show of support and interest. We look forward to providing a training in 2025 to equip this new roster of volunteers! We are also so grateful to all of our current long-term volunteers for the important work they do.

## **CREATIVE SPACES**

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### **FOSTERING A HEALTHY, CREATIVE COMMUNITY.**

#### **Planning for a vibrant community!**

We are excited to announce the development of a new stream of programming, to be launched in 2026 with the opening of PAL Place. Inspired by the engagement in our Covid-era virtual programming, the excitement around the use of the amenity spaces at PAL Place, and the many engagements we have had with the community in the last year, PAL is working on a programming plan to continue offering meaningful resources and opportunities for the arts community: to gather, create, and support one another. Stay tuned by checking our new web page!

# PAL Governance

Following the ground breaking and armed with its strategic priorities, the PAL Ottawa Board and staff spent 2024 reducing expenditures, stabilizing partnerships, and developing a long-term Business Plan that would give PAL Ottawa the flexibility and autonomy to accomplish its mission: To provide affordable housing, personal support and community programming to low-income artists and arts workers in the National Capital Region, thereby maintaining the diversity and health of our arts community.

## **Reducing expenditures:**

PAL started the 2024 year with the support of Management Consultant, Cate Proctor. Cate catalyzed PAL Ottawa's business planning process, mapped grant opportunities, and assessed programming viability for Creative Spaces at PAL Place. Cate provided invaluable guidance, coordination, and programming input during the many years of her involvement. In order to preserve PAL's sustaining fund, and in the face of a prolonged construction, PAL Ottawa's Board made the difficult decision to move back to an operational Board and release Cate to pursue new opportunities. We are so grateful to Cate for her contributions and wish her all the best!

## **Highlights from PAL's Business Plan**

In 2024, the PAL Ottawa Board of Directors produced its 2025-2028 Business Plan, which was delivered to OCH at the end of February 2025, as per the January 2021 MOU which states, in part, that "PAL will provide OCH, 18 months before expected occupancy, with a solid business plan, including a financial analysis that confirms to OCH that PAL will be a good business and community partner."

## **Our Business Plan shows the 2025-2028 Strategic Objectives / Priorities of the Board:**

- Maintain long-term financial stability,
- Fully raised Affordability/Sustainability Fund and strong public support,
- Continue to improve and maintain strong and effective long-term relationships with all stakeholders, mainly OCH and the City of Ottawa,
- Assist, when and where possible, in meeting PAL Place residents' needs from application to move-out,
- PAL Ottawa offers its services in both official languages,
- Solid and sustainable governance structure for PAL Ottawa.

The Business Plan shows that PAL Ottawa's Board of Directors, its Advisory Council, its Committees, and its Campaign Cabinet possess the necessary expertise to execute their mandate. The Business Plan also proposes a Concept of Operations that describes how Creative Spaces would be utilized and by whom. Finally, it includes a financial model, with anticipated revenues and planned expenditures for the next four years, that supports PAL Ottawa's Vision and Mission.

# PAL News & Events

## Theatreks

In 2024, Theatreks organized five successful trips, donating \$7,000 to PAL Ottawa. Curating day trips to live theatre events, Theatreks creates all-inclusive excursions—featuring transportation, meals, and theatre tickets. While Montreal remains a frequent destination, 2024 marked the addition of a multi-day trip to the renowned Stratford Festival, which sold out in its inaugural run. Proceeds from Theatreks benefit PAL Ottawa, supporting our mission to care for senior artists.

## 20th Century Boys

Ottawa-based band, The 20th Century Boys, organized two incredible fundraising shows, with proceeds supporting PAL Ottawa. For over 20 years, the band has supported local charities through their concerts, previously supporting charities such as the Ottawa Cancer Society, the Ottawa Food Bank, and Shine Community Music Program.

## CKCU Canadian Spaces

In January 2024, PAL Ottawa was featured as a guest on CKCU's Canadian Spaces program. PAL Ottawa's Chair, Leah Cogan, had great discussions with hosts Chris White and Carolyn Sutherland surrounding sustainability for artists' careers, affordable living, and PAL Ottawa. Leah was also joined by her husband Chris and local musician, Chas Guay, to perform.

## TD Wealth Management and the Ottawa Little Theatre

In October 2024, our partners TD Ottawa Wealth Management welcomed us to their annual theatre event. Board member, Sandy Mackay-Smith, spoke about PAL Ottawa to a full audience at the Ottawa Little Theatre, before attendees enjoyed the play, "Guilty Conscience". Proceeds from the event supported PAL Ottawa.



# PAL Community

Through all of the planning, pivoting, and advocating, one thing has remained central to the work, and that is engagement with the arts community. Better understanding the needs of the people we seek to serve continues to be the highest priority, including understanding the services, programming, and built environments that will generate the most meaningful outcomes and quality of life for our residents. We are excited to share the learnings from that!



## Making PAL Place Home

PAL Ottawa and the School of Social Work at Carleton University were awarded a Partnership Engagement Grant (PEG) by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) in August 2023. We worked with Dr. Pamela Grassau, assistant professor in the School of Social Work at Carleton University and post-doctoral fellow Lindy Van Vliet, to conduct a one-year study that explores and assesses the needs and preferences of potential residents at PAL Place. A Community Facilitator, Lo Sirois, was hired to conduct community consultation sessions, lead focus groups and small group interviews, and assist in the drafting of this comprehensive report, which we encourage you to read.

**The five recommendations** for PAL Place outlined in the report focus on the central themes of placemaking and accessibility, ensuring residents are not only housed but are meaningfully connected to their environment and community:

- **Affordability** – Develop flexible rent schemes and financial supports that address the economic realities of artists, seniors, and equity-seeking groups.
- **Living, Creating, Inspiring, and Aging in PAL Place** – Tailor policies and supports to meet the evolving needs of aging artists, enabling them to live, create, thrive, and age with dignity and purpose.
- **Relationships, Community, and Resident-Centered Programs** – Support and prioritize opportunities for residents to build strong relationships with one another, ensuring that resident-centered programs are actively integrated. Welcome and foster strong links and collaborations with other artist networks, local social and health care-based programs and services, and the broader neighbourhood.
- **Inclusion and Structural Barriers** – Work proactively with community partners to dismantle barriers to residency and ensure that PAL Place is a welcoming and accessible space for all.
- **Conflict, Governance, and Decision-making** - Foster open communication through accessible and inclusive feedback strategies and transparent measures and methods to address conflict. Design and build collaborative governance, decision-making, and leadership models.

# PAL Fundraising

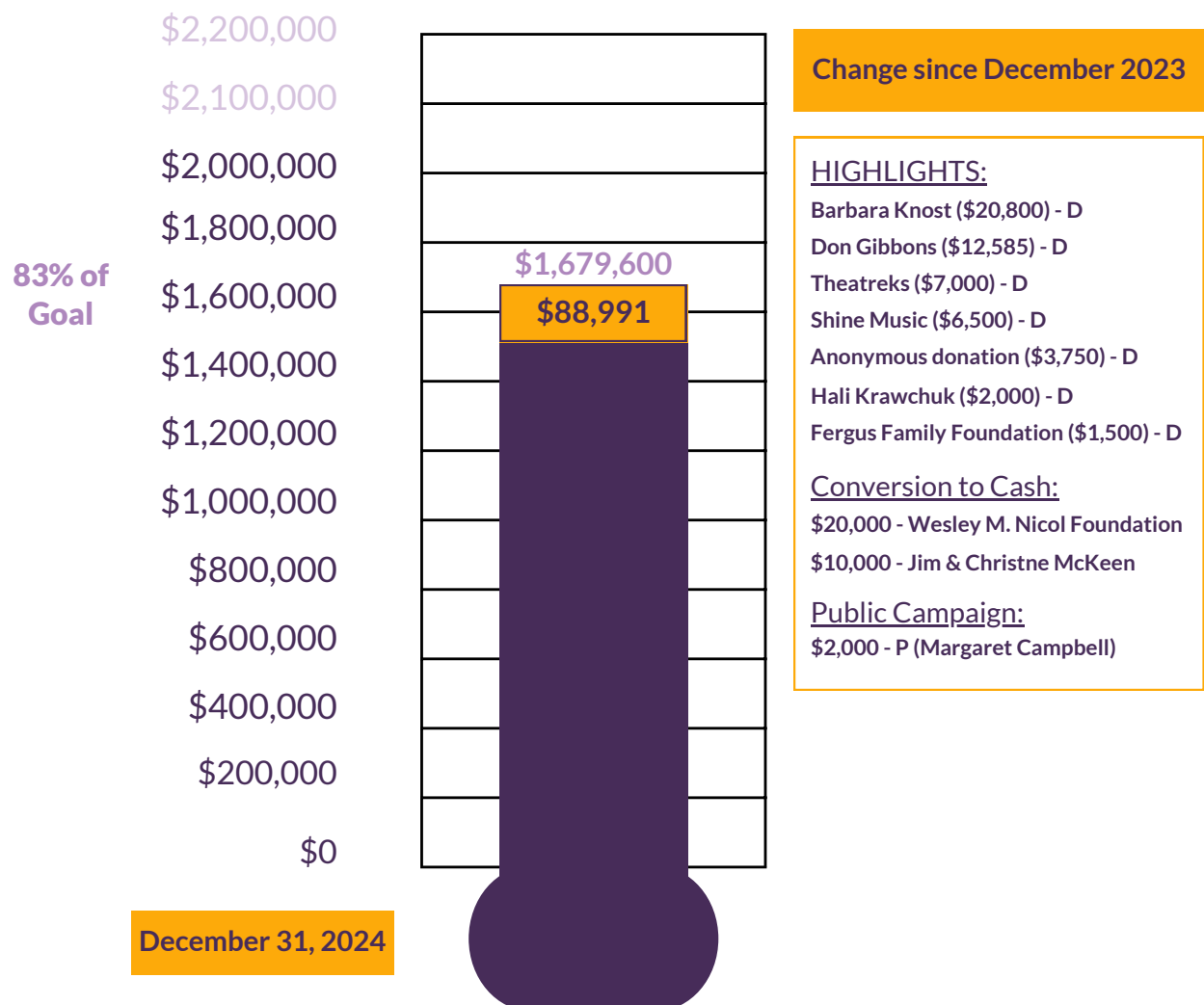
Our fundraisers continue to inspire private donors to prioritize addressing Ottawa's housing crisis by contributing to PAL Ottawa's \$2M fundraising campaign. This enables the establishment of a \$1M dollar 'Sustainability Fund' that will provide financial assistance to artists and arts workers residing at PAL Place. It also enables the technical upgrades of the main floor and 4th floor amenity spaces within the building so that PAL Place can be used for artistic activities and presentations that benefit the entire community.

Below you will see the updated thermometer, showing how far we've come since the start of the Campaign.

**A special thank you to all the PAL Place Campaign Cabinet volunteers for your continued dedication, hard work, and support. It is instrumental.**

## PAL Place Campaign Goal

\$2,000,000 Pledged by December 2025



# Thanks and Acknowledgements

## **Board of Directors:**

Leah Cogan (Chair), Shormila Chatterjee (Secretary), Don Gibbons (Treasurer), David Caulfeild (Director), Gaston Cloutier (Director), Sandy Mackay-Smith (Director), Anne Maheux (Director), Danielle Tremblay (Director), Marisa Victor (Director), David Whiteley (Director)

## **Staff:**

Maddy O'Regan (Communications Lead)

## **Volunteers:**

George Anderson, Stephen Arbuckle, Meriel Beament-Bradford, Patty Begin, John Bouza, James Bradford (Founding Chair), Karen Colby-Stothart, Susannah Dalfen, Harvey Glatt, David Globerman, Peter Haworth, Vicki Henry, Greg Hill, Julie Hodgson, Gwen Mackay-Smith, Lynne Markell, Jim McNabb, Christopher Minnes, Jane Needles, Cate Proctor, L.A. (Sandy) Smallwood, Natalie Stern, Brian Toller, Victoria Steele, Natalie Stern, Karen Watson

## **PAL Ottawa's Members and Community Partners:**

Great Canadian Theatre Company, Ottawa Art Society, Ottawa Little Theatre, Theatreks, Shine Music, Carleton University, Digital Arts Resource Centre, Wesley M Nicol Foundation, Hobin Architecture, Ottawa Community Housing, Ottawa Community Foundation, Community Services Recovery Fund, Arts Network, MASC, Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa, 100 Women Who Care Ottawa, Ottawa Grassroots Festival, The Gladstone, PAL Canada, The Borealis Foundation, Danbe Foundation Inc., Ottawa Wealth Advisory Group, Luxury Heritage Rentals, Vincent Dagenais Gibson

**Thank you to PAL Ottawa's many individual members, for their steadfast support, guidance, and encouragement.**



Together we can make it so that artists and arts workers in need living in the National Capital Region can live comfortably, with dignity, and can continue to contribute creatively.

