

NEWS RELEASE

June 18, 2009 – For Immediate Release

AOE Arts Council Celebrates a Dream Come True Shenkman Arts Centre: Over 20 Years in the Making

Ottawa, Ontario – AOE Arts Council is elated about the official opening of the Shenkman Arts Centre and the creative potential it will offer the community. For 22 years, AOE worked tirelessly with the arts community, supporters, City of Ottawa and resident partners who include the Gloucester Pottery School, Mouvement d'implication francophone d'Orléans (MIFO), Ottawa School of Art, and OYP Theatre School to make this unprecedented collaboration a reality.

From the onset of this project AOE Arts Council (formerly the Gloucester Arts Council) developed a vision and fought for the establishment of a purpose built multi-disciplinary arts centre for the east end of Ottawa. The steady push for this facility came as a result of many needs assessments, feasibility studies, consultations and in-depth considerations for the future growth of the arts in the East end. Today, a creative hub exists where both emerging and professional artists will be able to create, teach, display and perform their respective disciplines in English and French.

"Looking back over 20 years, it seems like yesterday that many of us (artists and art organizations) were in the early stages of our development," says Christine Tremblay, Executive Director of AOE Arts Council. "All the hard-won battles, the endless meetings and presentations to City Council, the rallying of the community for support, the fundraising to keep our doors open...all were worthwhile when we see the fruits of our collective labour!"

The Centre truly represents a win-win situation, where the arts community will thrive and where individuals of all ages will experience visual arts, performances, pottery, photography, theatre, music and the literary arts. The community is fortunate to have the support of the AOE Arts Council to continue efforts to sustain this new reality. While this state-of-the art building is home to resident art organizations and can host a myriad of activities, AOE will be watching closely to see how the needs of the community are being met.

"The opening of the Shenkman Arts Centre is the end of a chapter in the history of the arts community and the beginning of a new and exciting one," says Heather Jamieson, President of AOE Arts Council. "The entire community will benefit from the increased profile and accessibility of the arts, as well as from the economic benefit that will flow from the creativity within the Centre."

AOE understood from the beginning that a self-sustained plan to encourage the arts and artists was required to keep the dream alive for years to come. In September 2007, AOE launched the ARTicipate Endowment Fund campaign to ensure the rich, bilingual and accessible programming can continue within the Centre. The ARTicipate campaign has raised 85% of its \$5 million goal to date.

Now located in the Shenkman Arts Centre, close to resident partners and in the gathering place of the creative community, AOE will be able to be more effective in working with the community to develop partnerships and enhance the visibility and support for local artists and arts organizations. The AOE office offers a location for local artists to display their work, working space and access to resources for members and a large boardroom for meetings.

"AOE has lots of plans for the future and there's still much to accomplish, including reaching our goal for the ARTicipate Endowment Fund," adds Christine Tremblay.

AOE Arts Council (AOE) is a vibrant, pro-active not-for-profit community-based organization dedicated to promoting, supporting and developing the arts in Ottawa. AOE supports Ottawa artists and arts organizations through programs, resources and services in both English and French.

Visit **www.artsoe.ca** to learn more about AOE Arts Council and how to become a member.

Visit **www.articipate.ca** to learn more about the ARTicipate Endowment Fund and how to make a donation.

Contact:

AOE Arts Council

Cristiane Doherty
Director of Communications

C 613.799.9277

T 613.580.2767

cristiane@artsoe.ca