

Message to Members from Paul Robertson, President, Ontario Museum Association

13 May 2020

Dear Friends,

On behalf of my fellow members on OMA Council, I bring you greetings for International Museum Day 2020 on May 18th. While the pandemic has forced profound hardship and change on our sector over the past couple of months, we have much to applaud.

Across the province museums are responding to the challenge: a renaissance of digital creativity has boosted our online presence in accessible, authentic, and fun ways. High quality content and community engagement through websites, webinars and social media are helping museums to stay in the public eye and reconfirming that they are safe and trusted places, central to our communities.

Over the past weeks OMA has seen new connections increasing among museum workers, member museums, regional museum networks and external partners. We all share one goal: working together to find new ways forward while developing solutions to our current situation.

The wonder of this fantastic work is that it is happening in the face of ongoing budget shortfalls, staff layoffs and redeployments, threatened permanent museum closures, and no firm plan for the eventual reopening of our sites. For my part, I have been temporarily redeployed from my regular curatorial job to one of our municipal long-term care homes – my “COVID-shave” is my personal contribution to the larger cause.

The OMA team continues to be active behind the scenes in regular discussion with the Ontario and Federal governments and museum colleagues across Canada. The number of resources supporting museums on the OMA website grows daily and I am excited to note now includes information about regular member check-in sessions and webinars. Please do continue to send us your questions and suggestions for new ways to meet your needs.

May is Museum Month 2020 provides an opportunity to emphasise how museums connect Ontario, especially during these times of physical distancing. Let us celebrate our achievements, working together to stabilize our sector and to serve our communities across this province.

Overall, stay well.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Robertson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul Robertson

President, Ontario Museum Association

City Curator, Cultural Services, City of Kingston

