

# **CHATHAM-KENT MUSEUM COMMUNITY & VOLUNTEER POLICY**

## ***Statement of Recognition***

*The Chatham-Kent Museum recognizes that:*

- i) In order to be an effective steward of the community's identifying material heritage, the museum must be pro-actively engaged in the community and responsive to its needs.*

## ***Statement of Commitment***

*The Chatham-Kent Museum is committed to:*

- i) Ensuring that the museum and its collection are accessible to the community.*
- ii) Ensuring that this accessibility is clearly promoted and communicated to the community.*
- iii) Ensuring community participation in the development of museum policies, goals, and objectives.*
- iv) Ensuring that community interests and priorities are reflected in the activities of the museum.*
- v) Ensuring that there are opportunities for members of the community to be involved in museum activities in a variety of capacities.*

## ***Demonstration of Commitment***

*The Chatham-Kent Museum will demonstrate its commitment to the community through the following:*

### ***1. Accessibility***

***1.1 Public Open Hours:*** *The museum exhibition space will maintain regular hours of operation on a year-round basis. This will generally be from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm daily with the exception of some statutory holidays (e.g. Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Good Friday, New Years Day). The museum will also be open, as staffing allows, during additional times when it is anticipated that there may be community demand for access (e.g. evening hours when there are performances or receptions in the adjacent Kiwanis Theatre or Thames Art Gallery).*

***1.2 Public Access:*** *In addition to regular public hours, the museum will do its utmost to cater to the specific needs of individual researchers, schools, and groups at other times subject to the availability of staff. Appointments are required for access to the museum at times other than public open hours. In order to ensure that qualified staff are available to assist the public, appointments are required at all times for access to the museum archival/research and collection holdings (see Chatham-Kent Museum Research Policy, Sec. 5).*

- 1.3 Outreach:** *The museum will make its collection and staff expertise accessible to the public through outreach activities where possible and/or upon request. This may include outreach education programming, off-site exhibits or displays at approved sites or special events, staff presentations, etc. (see Chatham-Kent Museum Education Policy, Sec. 3 and Exhibition Policy, Sec. 8).*
- 1.4 Physical Accessibility:** *The museum will make reasonable efforts to ensure that all its areas are physically accessible to differently abled individuals, both patrons and staff, and will support and comply with accessibility related legislation including the Ontarians With Disabilities Act. In the event that accessibility is not possible (e.g. second floor of Milner House), reasonable alternatives (photographs, videotape, etc.) will be made available (see Chatham-Kent Museum Education Policy, Sec. 3 and Exhibition Policy, Sec. 7).*
- 1.5 Intellectual Accessibility:** *The museum will ensure that its exhibits and programming are intellectually accessible to differently abled individuals (see Chatham-Kent Museum Education Policy, Sec. 4 and Exhibition Policy, Sec. 7).*

## **2. Promotion & Dissemination Of Museum Activities**

- 2.1 Dissemination Of Access Information:** *The museum will advertise its hours of operation, accessibility, programs, activities, and special events through a wide range of media in order to reach as much of the community as possible. This will include direct on-site signage, notification in local newspapers, information on the Municipality of Chatham-Kent web site, distribution of brochures, etc.*
- 2.2 Budget:** *Funds reasonable to the museum's operation will be allocated on an annual basis for advertising and promotion of museum hours of operation, programs, activities and special events. The budget will be developed by staff in conjunction with the Chatham-Kent Museum Advisory Committee. Ultimate budget approval rests with Chatham-Kent Council.*
- 2.3 Publicity:** *In addition to direct advertising, the museum will actively promote its operation, programming, and special events through the use of widely distributed media releases and direct media liaison (local and regional newspapers and publications, radio, TV, specialist publications, etc.).*

## **3. Community Involvement In Governance**

- 3.1 Chatham-Kent Museum Board:** *Chatham-Kent Council has legal and fiduciary responsibility for the Chatham-Kent Museum and, as such, constitutes the Chatham-Kent Museum Board. Council approves all museum policies and changes to levels of museum service through publicly accessible Reports To Council thereby facilitating and encouraging public input (see Chatham-Kent Museum Governance Policy, Sec. 4).*
- 3.2 Chatham-Kent Museum Advisory Committee:** *Chatham-Kent Council will appoint a Museum Advisory Committee. This committee's role will include developing museum policies and goals and objectives in conjunction with staff and to reflect community interest and priorities in these decisions. As such, it is recognized that to be effective, this committee must be structured to reflect the geographic, cultural, and demographic diversity of the community. Ultimate selection of advisory committee members rests with Chatham-Kent Council (see Chatham-Kent Museum Governance Policy, Sec. 5).*
- 3.3 Committee Selection:** *Chatham-Kent Museum Advisory Committee selection will be based on applications received as a result of public notification at the beginning of a new term of council as per municipal committee appointment policy.*

**3.4 Terms of Appointment:** *Chatham-Kent Museum Advisory Committee members are appointed for the term of council (three years). To ensure efficient succession planning and opportunity for public involvement, individual appointments are limited to three consecutive terms as per municipal committee appointment policy (see Chatham-Kent Museum Governance Policy, Sec. 5).*

#### **4. Museum Activities As A Reflection Of Community Interest**

**4.1 Museum Advisory Committee:** *The Museum Advisory Committee, representing a range of geographic, cultural and demographic groups within Chatham-Kent, has a primary role to advise the museum staff on research and exhibit themes, activities, and collecting priorities that will reflect community interests.*

**4.2 Awareness:** *The museum staff and the Museum Advisory Committee will make all reasonable efforts to be aware of organizations, institutions, and community events that constitute stakeholders with respect to museum activities. Stakeholders may include historical societies, performing and visual arts venues, other museums, ethnic and cultural associations, chambers of commerce, re-enactment groups, tourism associations, etc.*

**4.3 Liaison:** *The museum staff and Museum Advisory Committee members will make all reasonable efforts to develop liaisons with stakeholder groups in order to facilitate their input into museum directions and activities.*

**4.4 Community Input:** *Other forms of community input will be through frequent visitor surveys, guest book comments, direct staff interaction with visitors and individuals (including collectors) in the community, as well as use of professional museum, regional tourism, and demographic publications/analysis. The museum, through its staff and Museum Advisory Board Members will present an open, friendly, and receptive environment to encourage community input.*

**4.5 Community Feedback:** *Community feedback will be collected, recorded, and integrated into future museum activities. This feedback will be acquired through frequent visitor surveys, guest book comments, media coverage, and direct discussions with patrons.*

**4.6 Performance Indicators:** *The museum will collect a wide range of statistical information including attendance numbers, media exposure, acquisitions, etc. that can be utilized to develop performance indicators that can be used to gauge the effectiveness of museum activities.*

#### **5. Community Involvement In Museum Activities**

##### **5.1 Volunteers**

**5.1.1 Definition:** *A volunteer is an individual serving the museum without remuneration working under the guidance and supervision of a professional staff in order to support the institution in any area of its activities. Volunteers work for the betterment of the museum with no expectation other than the personal satisfaction and enrichment inherent in their museum participation. Volunteers include Museum Advisory Committee members and individuals that assist the museum on a regular basis as well as intermittently (i.e. for special events). For the purpose of this policy, volunteers do not include co-op students and interns who work at the museum specifically in the expectation of full-filling*

*educational requirements nor does it include individuals that receive financial remuneration from outside the museum budget (i.e. through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada or other funding agencies).*

**5.1.2 Expectations:**

- i. *Museum Commitment To Volunteers:*** *The museum will receive volunteers as fellow workers and will make the best possible use of volunteers' talents, skills, and initiatives. The museum will seek to create an atmosphere of mutual regard and respect, and provide volunteers with working conditions that will enable and encourage them to serve the museum to the best of their abilities.*
- ii. *Volunteer Commitment To The Museum:*** *Volunteers will seek and accept professional opinions and supervision from museum staff and will keep in mind, when asking for assistance, the many other responsibilities and obligations that staff may have. They will fulfill all of their commitments with integrity and to the best of their abilities and will accept periodic evaluation of their performance by their supervisor.*

**5.1.3 *Job Description:*** *Museum staff will develop job descriptions for all volunteer positions. The museum will seek to offer a variety/diversity of volunteer opportunities. These will be need-based and will be developed as a result of the goals and priorities of the museum as defined by the staff and the Museum Advisory Committee.*

**5.1.4 *Recruitment:*** *The museum will make volunteer opportunities known through a variety of means including advertising in the local media, postings on the municipal web site, notices in the Chatham Cultural Centre Newsletter, distributed pamphlets, and direct mailings to interested individuals and organisations.*

**5.1.5 *Hiring:*** *Individuals interested in volunteering will fill out a volunteer information form that will include a section in which the individual can indicate the type of work that they are most interested in carrying out. The information form will be reviewed by staff and the individual will subsequently be interviewed by the staff person most qualified to supervise the tasks that interest has been expressed in. Prior to commencing work, the volunteer must provide a Criminal Reference Check.*

**5.1.6 *Orientation:*** *All new volunteers will receive a thorough orientation of the entire Chatham Cultural Centre including a tour/explanation of the components of the site (including exhibits), introduction to staff, and review of emergency procedures/exits, health & safety training, etc. Orientation will also include a verbal review of the museum mandate, policies, code of conduct, expectations of volunteers (as outlined in Sec. 5.1.1 of this policy), and familiarisation with the museum resource library (including access to policies for future reference). New Museum Advisory Committee members, as volunteers, will receive this training and will be given an orientation manual that will include a set of museum policies for regular and ongoing reference.*

**5.1.7 *Training:*** *All volunteers will receive a thorough training by the most relevant qualified staff prior to undertaking any project. Staff will closely supervise volunteer work and will make themselves accessible for questions and clarification until such point that both parties feel comfortable with the task being undertaken. In-house and external training opportunities available to staff will also be made available to volunteers as the budget permits. Funds reasonable to the museum operation will be allocated on an annual basis for volunteer development. The budget will be developed by staff in conjunction with the Chatham-Kent Museum Advisory Committee. Ultimate budget approval rests with Chatham-Kent Council.*

**5.1.8 Evaluation:** *In order to facilitate the development of the volunteer's skill and personal gratification of their work, staff will monitor activities undertaken on a regular basis and will offer ongoing evaluation.*

**5.1.9 End Of Volunteer Activities:** *The volunteer may choose, at any time, to stop or leave their volunteer activities with the museum. The museum may also request any volunteer to leave their activities. Reasons for asking a volunteer to leave may include breach of integrity, unsatisfactory performance, or a relationship that is not mutually beneficial. The museum will try to provide reasonable alternatives and opportunities for the volunteer to correct any deficiencies, or to provide work in a different capacity.*

**5.1.10 Ethics/Conflict of Interest:** *Volunteers will be informed of and expected to abide by the Canadian Museum Association Ethical Guidelines as well as the Municipality of Chatham-Kent Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policies . Specifically, volunteers will be expected to avoid any situation that involves or would appear to involve a conflict of interest with the museum such as:*

- i.) Do not use the affiliation with the museum to promote, in an undue or exploitive manner, any of their own personal interests or those of a spouse or close family member.*
- ii.) Do not promote, for personal gain, any business dealings with objects, goods, or services that may be required by the museum.*
- iii.) Do not accept favours, gifts, discounts or other dispensations that accrue or might accrue to them in connection with their duties.*
- iv.) Do not seek or expect staff assistance for personal needs other than those that would normally be available to a member of the general public under similar circumstances.*
- v.) Do not provide gifts, gratuities, or favours to a staff member unless they are of a passing nature and represent a courtesy only and, thereby, avoid the appearance of creating an obligation.*
- vi.) Disclose any collecting interests that may relate to an area in which the museum also collects.*

**5.1.11 Safety:** *Volunteers will be provided the same duty of care and will have the same expectation of compliance to all provincial and municipal health and safety legislation and policies as paid staff. Volunteers, however, are not covered under the Ontario Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB).*

**5.1.12 Recognition:** *The museum will regularly recognize the effort and participation of their volunteers in a suitable and appropriate way including holding an annual volunteer appreciation event. Funds reasonable to the museum's operation will be allocated on an annual basis for recognition of volunteer activities. The budget will be developed by staff in conjunction with the Chatham-Kent Museum Advisory Committee. Ultimate budget approval rests with Chatham-Kent Council. Museum staff will also participate in volunteer recognition programs by municipal, provincial, and federal governments to further emphasize to volunteers the importance of their contributions.*

**5.2 Lenders:** *As another method of community involvement, the Chatham-Kent Museum will frequently, as circumstances permit, incorporate artifacts from private collections within the community into exhibits (see Chatham-Kent Museum Exhibition Policy, Sec. 7 and Collections Policy, Sec. 7).*

**5.3 Sponsors:** *The museum may, from time to time, solicit corporations and organizations to sponsor museum activities. Sponsor candidates will be approved by the Chatham-Kent Museum Advisory Committee prior to solicitation to ensure that they are appropriate*

*partners. The Chatham-Kent Museum will always retain full control of the content and nature of the activity, be it an exhibit or a special event. Appropriate sponsor benefits and recognition will be determined by the museum staff and Museum Advisory Committee prior to any solicitation (see Chatham-Kent Museum Exhibitions Policy, Sec. 14).*

**6. Implementation:** *The museum relies on the expertise of its staff and Museum Advisory Committee for the effective implementation of this policy.*