



NORTH YORK ARTS

NORTH YORK ARTS STRATEGIC PLAN: 2021-2024

A roadmap for renewal through community arts



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that North York is the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, Haudenosaunee and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13.

This territory is the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas, and Haudenosaunee that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. Subsequent Indigenous Nations and peoples, settlers and all newcomers, have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship and respect.

North York Arts recognizes that truth and reconciliation is a continuous process and while this land acknowledgement is a crucial step, our organization has much more work to do. By adhering to our values and leading with authenticity, we are committed to building positive relationships with Indigenous peoples, the wider community, and the environment.

We aim to create shared spaces where we honour art as an expression of spirit and a platform for storytelling. We will continue to educate and be educated, and we will strive for balance in all of our relations. By creating these opportunities, it is our hope that we foster a more inclusive, engaged, and sustainable North York community for generations to come.

We are truly grateful to be able to work and create on this land.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North York Arts (NYA) was founded as an initiative of the Toronto Arts Foundation in 2011, as part of the vision for a Creative City: Block by Block. NYA is one of six Local Arts Service Organizations (LASOs) in the City of Toronto that celebrate and foster arts programming outside of the downtown core.

The LASOs support the City of Toronto's Strong Neighbourhood and Economic Development and Culture Divisional strategies through inclusion and equity in underserved geographic areas outside the downtown core. All LASOs provide inclusive and affordable opportunities for local residents, artists and

arts organizations, with a focus on underserved children, youth, and participants from a broad demographic spectrum.

During the incubation phase from August 2011 to June 2016, NYA operated under the governance of the Toronto Arts Foundation Board of Directors and the guidance of its senior staff. In July 2016, NYA transitioned into an incorporated non-profit corporation, operating under the governance of an arms-length Board of Directors. In 2017, NYA received its charitable status to produce charitable activities for the public.

CONTEXT

In 2021, NYA will celebrate its 10th anniversary with the new strategic plan, focusing on community building through arts programming.

The goals outlined in the strategic plan will support NYA's continued commitment to building arts services and programming in North York by providing opportunities for local artists to present their work, by fostering new and innovative arts partnerships and by increased engagement in the community. These goals will also build upon the initiatives launched during 2016 to 2020, a period of significant growth and success for NYA. However, the three-year timeframe for this new strategic plan will present

unprecedented challenges for the sector as a whole. 2020 has been a year of immense changes. The devastating effect of COVID-19 has left a lasting mark on our community. So it was an utmost priority for both the North York Arts Board and Staff to design our new strategic vision to help with the recovery and renewal efforts to support the North York community. As a community arts organization, it is also important for us to continue learning and taking long-term action to work towards inclusivity and equity – from our community outreach to our programming and marketing, board recruitment, and hiring practices. As a result, the strategic plan will continue to be audited by a consultant regarding language, terminology and best practices.

The plan highlights the strategic goals that reflect the organization's mission to serve two major stakeholder groups, North York artists and North York communities, for the next three years. The plan will be a "living document" reviewed annually by the Board and Staff, not only to respond to organizational development changes in light of COVID-19 and the changing needs of the community but as well ensure that our resources and budget can deliver on the plan's objectives. NYA will also maintain our best practices in our governance framework to ensure utmost accountability and transparency as a charitable organization, reporting to all stakeholders regularly including Canada Revenue Agency. As we execute the vision outlined in the new strategic plan, NYA will further collaborate with City Councillors, the City's Economic Development and Culture Division, artists, arts

organizations, community leaders, local businesses to provide community-engaged arts programming and services outside the downtown core of Toronto and develop inter-sectoral partnerships with the public, business, educational and social sectors.

Finally, NYA will broaden our advocacy efforts to strengthen the community arts sector during this time, continuing to work on the Community Arts Canopy with our sister LASOs and other partners. The NYA Board and Staff will also continue to participate in government roundtables and town hall discussions with our political leaders in all three levels of government, to reinforce the message that the arts are essential to the city's rebuilding strategy and support the health and well-being of our communities in Toronto.

RESEARCH & PROCESS

From May to June 2020, the NYA Board and Staff conducted over 50 interviews with multiple industry stakeholders, including City Councillors, residents, local artists, arts organizations, sponsors, donors, media, past staff and interns to provide feedback on NYA's programs, activities, outreach initiatives and brand. This feedback provided invaluable insight into the current community and artist needs.

As a presenting partner for the Community Arts Canopy Town Hall meeting on June 25, NYA received access to over 75 online participant surveys, detailing the current concerns, strains and needs in the community arts sector.

From July to August 2020, NYA Board and Staff collaborated with Charles Smith and Victoria Glizer from Cultural Pluralism in the Arts Movement Ontario (CPAMO), to facilitate a comprehensive SWOT review of our current practices. The goal of these sessions was to ensure an equity lens be applied to all organizational priorities.

During 2011 - 2020, NYA has tracked and documented key metrics of all produced arts programming in summary reports. These reports were sourced as a secondary research component.

WHO WE ARE

VISION

An inclusive, equitable, engaged and sustainable arts community in North York.

MISSION

To collaborate with artists, arts organizations and partners to produce and strengthen local arts programming for North York communities.

VALUES

Collaboration – We believe in the power of working with artists and partners to build a stronger community.

Sharing – We stand for the free and open exchange of knowledge, experiences, and ideas.

Learning – We are committed to investing in learning opportunities to best support our communities.

Innovation – We support novel and creative approaches that bring about growth in the arts and culture sector.

Equity – We strive to ensure fair opportunities and outcomes for partners, artists, and community members.

Integrity – We consistently uphold our core values and our organizational responsibilities with the highest level of honesty, openness, and respect.

NORTH YORK COMMUNITY PROFILE

KEY COMMUNITY METRICS

Wards: 6, 8, 15, 16, 17, 18

Population: 691, 595

6 Neighbourhood Improvement Areas

58% of residents not born in Canada

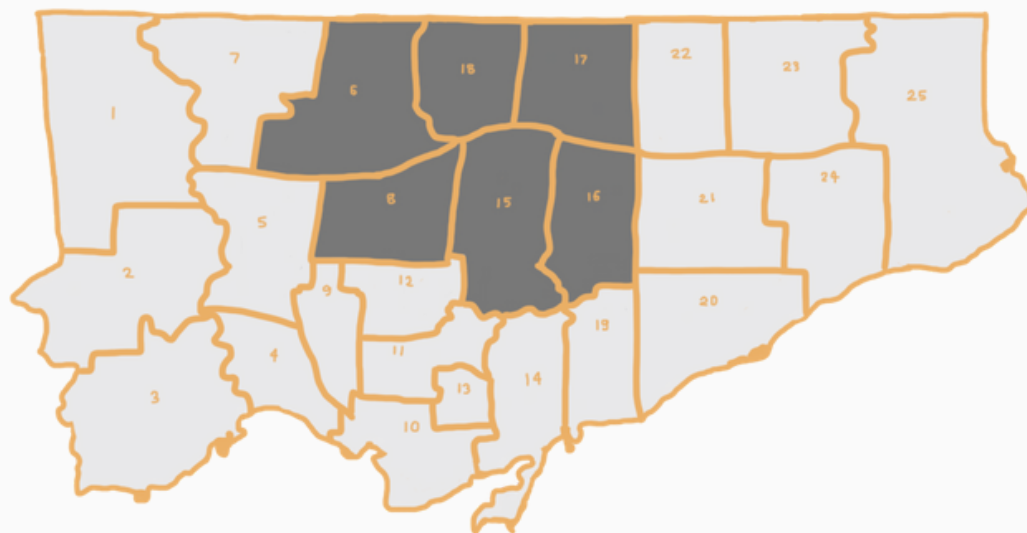
BIPOC community:

9.8% Black

0.8% Indigenous

43.4% Persons of Colour

*(City of Toronto and 2016 Canadian Census)



WHO WE SERVE

NYA produces inclusive arts programming and events for children, youth, family, and seniors with a focus on programs to serve the Newcomer and Neighbourhood Improvement Area communities within North York. In addition, we provide services and programs to support underrepresented local, emerging, and established artists.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2021-2024

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #1

Enhance local arts programming & community connections in North York

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #2

Build organizational resiliency & capacity

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #3:

Create systemic change for the organization



STRATEGIC DIRECTION #1

Enhance local arts programming & community connections in North York

Goal 1.1

Provide innovative programs for local artists and arts groups

Objectives

Cultivate professional development opportunities for North York artists and arts groups

Optimize virtual programming and platforms to support artist growth and opportunities

Anticipated Outcomes

- Artists are paid standard industry fees
- Collaborative partnerships with BIPOC, Newcomer, LGBTQ2S+ artists & arts groups in North York
- Enhanced professional development and mentoring programs for local artists
- Greater representation and increase in paid opportunities for underrepresented artists
- Artlinks online platform is launched to network local artists and respond to gaps in services for artists
- Increased opportunities for underrepresented artists to showcase their work at local cultural tourism events or online programs



Goal 1.2

Maintain responsive programming for underserved community members

Objective

Address the needs of the community through responsive & community programming

Anticipated Outcomes

- Build learning and training experiences for program facilitators and volunteers
- Continued community arts programs for seniors or youth online or in-person for specific underserved communities

Goal 1.3

Strengthen connections in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIA)

Objectives

Build long-term strategies to deepen community engagement in NIA's

Strengthen localized outreach plans for specific NIAs in North York

Anticipated Outcomes

- Work plan implemented for one NIA
- New & deeper relationships in NIA communities
- Community needs are monitored & analyzed annually
- Collaborative partnerships with BIAs and community agencies on arts-based recovery efforts to support economic development

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #2

Build organizational resiliency & capacity

Goal 2.1

Establish a new permanent hub space for local arts programming and community use

Objective

Secure permanent new centralized hub in North York

Anticipated Outcomes

- A revised partnership established with TO Live to access additional programming spaces, i.e. theatre
- New accessible hub space is established by 2024 for local artists, arts groups and community members

Goal 2.2

Build revenue for long-term growth and sustainability

Objective

Enhance and diversify revenue sources for increased investment

Anticipated Outcomes

- Average annual revenue increase by 5% with new sponsorships and donors
- Increased operational reserve by \$100K
- 100% annual board donor presence



Goal 2.3

Enhance brand recognition with quality research and data

Objectives

Enhance database platforms for internal reporting

Implement market research strategy
Build brand recognition and profile in North York

Anticipated Outcomes

- Increased audience reach
- Increased media coverage
- Better tracking, evaluation, budgeting and forecasting
- More comprehensive insights and data to inform marketing and programming decisions and minimize risk
- Measurement improvements in public opinion
- Loyal audience and repeat attendees to programs and events are tracked

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #3

Creating systemic change for the organization

Goal 3.1

Build the organization's best practices to foster diversity, inclusion and equity

Objectives

Deepen understanding of terminology to guide priorities and policies

Increase accessibility support for artists and community members with disabilities

Anticipated Outcomes

- Increased representation of cultural, ethnic, racial composition and Indigenous representation reflective of the community with Board, Committee and Staff members
- Completion of Board, staff and facilitator AODA training where needed
- All marketing and communications materials will be AODA compliant

Goal 3.2

Strengthen reconciliation practices to support Indigenous relations and initiatives

Objective

Continuation of the Art Connects Indigenous Program

Anticipated Outcomes

- Present Indigenous mapping project as part of the Year of Public Art
- Creation of a video Land Acknowledgement for online programming
- Development of an organizational environmental policy

Goal 3.3

Ensure continued anti-Black racism and anti-oppression education and training

Objective

Provide training on diversity, equity and inclusion for Board, Staff, Facilitators and Volunteers

Anticipated Outcomes

- Defined training program in 2021
- Volunteer policy and handbook is updated annually for orientation training



TERMS & DEFINITIONS

- **Anti-Black Racism:** Policies and practices rooted in Canadian institutions such as, education, health care, and justice that mirror and reinforce beliefs, attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping and/or discrimination towards people of African descent. (source: Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2019)
- **Anti-Oppression:** Strategies, theories, and actions that challenge social and historical inequalities/injustices that have become part of our systems and institutions and allow certain groups to dominate over others. (source: Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2019)
- **Diversity:** A term used to encompass the acceptance and respect of various dimensions including race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religious beliefs, age, physical abilities, political beliefs, or other ideologies. (source: Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2019)
- **Equity:** is the process of being fair to everyone, which often needs designing particular measures to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that keep different groups at different levels. Equity acknowledges the fact that equal treatment for everyone does not always yield equal results for everyone. (Zine 2004) Equity refers to the rights of individuals and groups to an equitable share of the resources and influence in society. Equity means equitable access and outcomes. Equity work challenges unfair systems and practices and works towards the creation of equitable outcomes. (source: Dancing on Live Embers, Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas, 2006)
- **Inclusion:** The extent to which diverse members of a group (society/organization) feel valued and respected. (source: Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2019)

- **Inclusive Practice:** entails the inclusion of diverse communities, values, beliefs, assumptions, and practices in delivering health care services, hiring staff, forming partnerships, and leadership. An example of inclusive practice is to make health care information and services available in a variety of languages. (source: Williams, 2001)
- **BIPOC:** is an acronym that stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour.
- **LGBTQ2S+:** is an acronym, which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and Two-Spirit (2S). + after the acronym represents the many diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. (source: MyHealthAlberta.ca, 2020)
- **Underrepresented:** Not having as many representatives as would be expected or needed (source: Oxford Dictionary, 2020)
- **Newcomer:** A person who has only recently arrived in a place or started an activity (source: Oxford Dictionary, 2020)
- **Neighbourhood Improvement Area:** City of Toronto identified 31 Toronto neighbourhoods to be designated as Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) under the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020. (source: City of Toronto, 2014)
- **Business Improvement Area:** A Business Improvement Area (BIA) is an association of commercial property owners and tenants within a defined area who work in partnership with the City to create thriving, competitive, and safe business areas that attract shoppers, diners, tourists, and new businesses. (source: City of Toronto, 2020)
- **Community-Engaged Art Practice:** While there is no one model of community-engaged art, its practices can be broadly defined as collaborative creative processes that involve both professional artists and social institutions, grassroots groups or individuals. (source: Ontario Arts Council, 2016)



NORTH YORK ARTS

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NYA is a Canadian registered charity: **#78092 3892 RR0001**

Photos/Credits:

Page 1: Crowd at Cultura Festival. *Photo by: Shoeb Kadri*

Page 8: Veronica Johnny leading "Art as Medicine" workshop. *Photo by: Ricky Yu*

Page 10: "They Are Around" by Azadeh Pirazimian (pictured middle). *Photo by: Felipe Noriega*

Page 12: Second Act Seniors: ESL Theatre Program participants. *Photo by: Ebony Viani-Singer*

Page 14: Participants at Beyond Access, Beyond the Creative workshop. *Photo by: Shoeb Kadri*

Thank you to all those who helped NYA develop this strategic plan including partners, donors, artists, and community members. A special thanks to Charles Smith and Victoria Glizer from CPAMO, and to the City of Toronto for your support.

