

IDEA | EXCHANGE[®]

2023 COMMUNITY REPORT

Image Credit: Amanda McCavour, **Accumulate**, 2016-ongoing, installation view, Idea Exchange, Hespeler, 2023. Photo by Toni Hatkenschield.

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND CEO



2023 was an exciting time for all of us at Idea Exchange, the public library and art gallery of Cambridge. The Board of Trustees confirmed Chrissy Hodgins as our new CEO, and we were able to convince her to return to Cambridge from Edmonton. Under her leadership, we were honoured with several municipal and provincial accolades, and her experience managing both new builds and rebuilds will undoubtedly be an outstanding asset to rely upon for our future new library in southeast Galt.

We invite everyone to learn about and celebrate our 2023 achievements.

-Thomas Sandor, Board Chair



2023 was the first year since 2019 where we were able to resume all public services, and the delight that comes from meaningful connections was clear as our team oversaw increasing attendance and success in all of our programs, services, and departments.

In our rich tradition of service innovation, we launched new projects and expanded several initiatives to further enable our management and staff to better support the residents of Cambridge. We also conducted our first community survey to learn about what matters to you as we look to launch our next strategic plan in 2024.

-Chrissy Hodgins, CEO

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and staff, we thank you for your patronage of our libraries and galleries and our collective interest to support a safe, inspiring, and open-to-all public institution for everyone who calls Cambridge home.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Thomas Sandor, Board Chair

Colleen Bulla

Jose de Lima

Cllr. Helen Shwery

Janice Woynarski

Robert Oswald, Acting Chair

Yasmine Kashefi

Kirk Oliver

Sarah Wilbur-Collins

In Memoriam: Cllr. Donna Reid

AWARDS AND HONOURS



MINISTER'S AWARD FOR INNOVATION

Idea Exchange was honoured to receive the Minister's Award for Innovation (Large Library Category) at the annual Ontario Library Association Super Conference. The award, which recognizes successful new approaches that demonstrate a positive impact in a community and are of continued value to public libraries, touted the 2023 Multi-Sensory Room at Clemens Mill.

CAMBRIDGE & NORTH DUMFRIES COMMUNITY AWARD FOR ARTS & CULTURE

Idea Exchange was honoured to receive the inaugural Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Award for Arts & Culture from the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce. The award recognized a significant contribution to the local cultural scene in the past year, creating access and inclusion to arts and culture.

OUR MISSION

Idea Exchange supports and inspires our community in the exploration of reading, arts, innovation, and learning.

OUR VISION

We will create an environment of curiosity and discovery through the exploration of the arts and new technologies. This will foster creativity, spark innovation, develop human capital, and support lifelong learning.

OUR VALUES

PERSONALIZED SERVICE: Serving people with care.

RESPECT: Our members' needs and rights matter.

ACCESSIBILITY: Open to everyone.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM: Opening the world to our members.

OUR SPACES

IN 2023, WE WELCOMED **735,882** VISITORS TO ALL FIVE OF OUR LOCATIONS, **38%** OVER 2022.

HESPELER 100

2023 marked 100 years since the Carnegie Library Building opened in Hespeler and we invited the community to celebrate with special events and programs throughout the year.

OLD POST OFFICE 5 YEARS

Our Old Post Office location celebrated 5 years of discovery and creativity in 2023, culminating in anniversary events during the summer and fall.

MULTI-SENSORY ROOM

Beginning as a pilot project at our Clemens Mill location for the Summer Reading Club program, the Multi-Sensory Room provided a relaxing space to help reduce agitation and anxiety, responding to members' sensory processing needs, and providing a safe and soothing atmosphere. Following the success of this award-winning project, we announced that a permanent Multi-Sensory Room was installed at Clemens Mill, and we will be seeking to determine how to incorporate best practices at our other four locations across the city in 2024.

AMANDA McCAVOUR: WANDERINGS AND TRACES

This exhibition spanned three of our locations. Inspired by memory, environment, colour, and line, McCavour manipulates thread and wire to create large-scale sculptural drawings unbound from a two-dimensional surface. The result is a dreamlike and immersive experience for visitors to walk through, around, and underneath.

Wanderings and Traces was supported by The Musagetes Fund held at Waterloo Region Community Foundation.



Image Credit: Amanda McCavour: **Wanderings and Traces**, installation view, Cambridge Art Galleries, Queen's Square, 2023. Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid.



The Musagetes Fund



OUR COMMUNITY

OUR VOLUNTEERS

216 volunteers contributed **6,061** hours this year. Our amazing volunteers shared their commitment, enthusiasm, and community spirit through our events, projects, and other services including the Visiting Library Service and the gallery docent program. We are grateful to our dedicated volunteers!



OUR COMMUNITY SURVEY

In 2023, Intent Consultants conducted our first community survey to collect feedback from residents and members. These are some of the highlights from those surveys:

64% VISIT THE LIBRARY MORE THAN ONCE A MONTH.

77% ARE EXCITED ABOUT OUR FUTURE AND COMMITMENT TO LITERACY AND OUR COMMUNITY.

80% REPORT IT'S AMAZING THAT WHAT WE OFFER IS FREE.

96% AGREE THAT PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE NEEDED NOW, MORE THAN EVER.

100% BELIEVE THAT PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE IMPORTANT FOR THE COMMUNITY AND BRING VALUE.

OUR COLLECTIONS

BORROWING AND MEMBERSHIP



40% OF CAMBRIDGE RESIDENTS HAVE AN IDEA EXCHANGE MEMBERSHIP CARD AND USED IT IN 2023.

7,907 SIGN-UPS FOR NEW MEMBERSHIPS (MEMBERSHIP CARDS AND ONLINE MEMBERSHIPS), AN INCREASE OF **25%**

834,500+ MATERIAL CHECKOUTS WITH **242,000** CHECKOUTS FROM THE VIRTUAL LIBRARY.

VIRTUAL LIBRARY

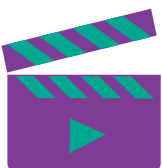


3,212,200+ VISITS TO OUR WEBSITE AND CATALOGUE, AN INCREASE OF **29%** OVER 2022.



1,212,495 ARTICLES READ IN PRESSREADER, AN INCREASE OF **15%** OVER 2022.

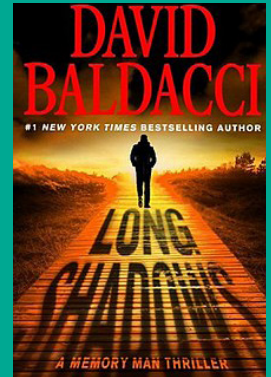
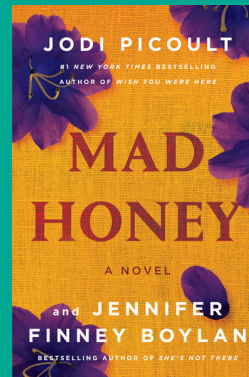
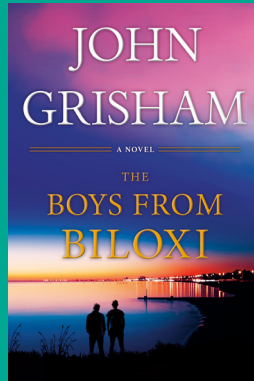
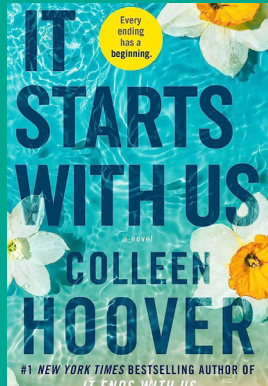
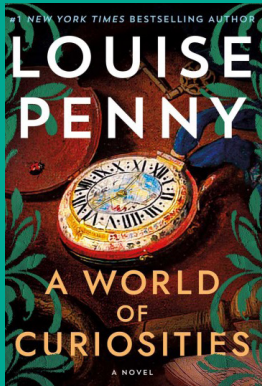
18,223 GALE COURSES TAKEN. **THE MOST POPULAR COURSES WERE:** ACCOUNTING FUNDAMENTALS, INTRODUCTION TO MICROSOFT EXCEL 2019, DISCOVER SIGN LANGUAGE, INTRODUCTION TO QUICKBOOKS ONLINE, AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT FUNDAMENTALS.



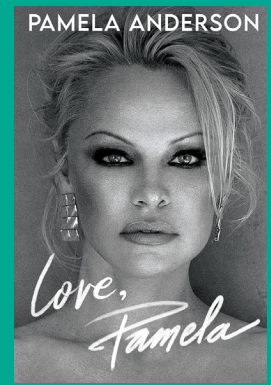
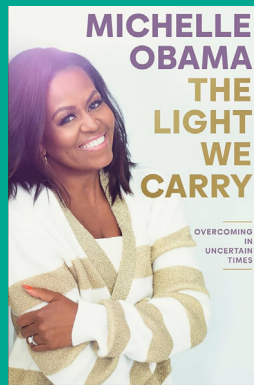
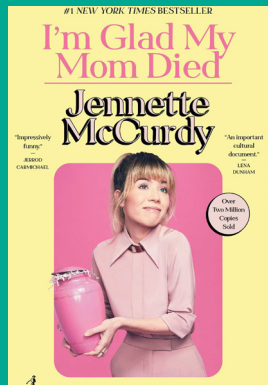
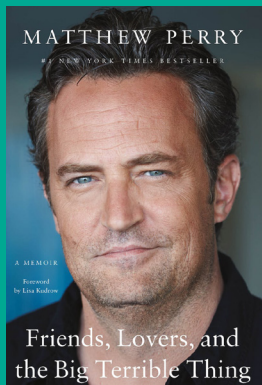
10,438 MOVIES AND DOCUMENTARIES STREAMED FROM KANOPY AND HOOPLA.

2023 TOP BORROWS

TOP FICTION BOOKS BORROWED IN 2023



TOP NON-FICTION BOOKS BORROWED IN 2023



TOP UNUSUAL THINGS BORROWED IN 2023

1. Passes
(Grand River Parks, THEMUSEUM, Ontario Provincial Parks, and Region of Waterloo Museums)
2. iPads
3. Nintendo Switches
4. Games and Puzzles
5. Musical Instruments



OUR SERVICES

We offer our members and community many services including Wi-Fi, public computers, study spaces, 3D printers, and much, much, more!

**71,171 WI-FI SESSIONS IN 2023,
AN INCREASE OF 42% OVER 2022.**

**22,036 SESSIONS ON OUR PUBLIC COMPUTERS
(LAPTOPS AND PCS).**



TECH HELP AND LEARNING

New technologies, or ones that are new to you, can be intimidating. Fortunately, you don't need to hide from them. We are here with a wide range of tech help services to assist you.

**1,750 TECH HELP APPOINTMENTS IN 2023 WITH 45,686
MINUTES OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED.**

**6,890 MAKERSPACE AND CREATIVE STUDIOS BOOKINGS IN
2023 FOR USE OF THE LASER CUTTER, 3D PRINTERS,
AND AV EQUIPMENT.**



LITTLE SEED LIBRARY

In 2023, our popular Seed Library grew. In spring 2023 access to seeds expanded to include a Little Seed Library at each location, providing even more convenience and support for our community gardeners. Each Little Seed Library included a selection of eight popular vegetables, four popular herbs, and four types of flowers, including native varieties that are crucial for bees, monarch butterflies, and other pollinators.

**IN 2023, MORE THAN 15,000 LITTLE SEED LIBRARY
PACKAGES WERE COLLECTED FROM LOCATIONS WITH
ANOTHER 7,100 SEED PACKETS COLLECTED FROM THE SEED
LIBRARY IN PRESTON, TOTTALING 22,000+ PACKAGES
TAKEN HOME TO FILL GARDENS ACROSS THE CITY.**





OUR PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

2023 was our most popular year for our award-winning Summer Reading Club program which ran from July 4 to August 20, with **2,735** readers registered, **60%** of whom were new to the program. For 2023, we wanted to focus on creating new access to kids that don't have the opportunity to visit the library regularly in the summer, and implemented SRC Mobile. Thanks to funding from Young Canada Works, we were able to visit seven Cambridge community centres each week including Langs, Kinbridge Community Association, Shamrock, Preston Heights Community Group, and Grow Community Centre. Through this initiative, we reached over **860** more kids in Cambridge, giving them a chance to participate in the Summer Reading Club and access reading materials in the summer.

83,104 CHILDREN AND CAREGIVERS ATTENDED PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN.

9,589 CHILDREN ATTENDED SCHOOL TOURS, 109% INCREASE OVER 2022.

In 2023, we engaged, inspired, and connected our community with new programming and partnerships. Highlights include: visits from popular authors Linwood Barclay, Gilly Macmillan, Tim Cook, Margaret DeRosia, and Amy Stuart; Rhythm & Blues Cambridge: Black History Month Celebration; Islamic Heritage Month Celebration; our inaugural Fan Week; Grand River Play Project; Culture Days; Doors Open; historical lectures; and DIY workshops.

500+ ADULT PROGRAMS (SPECIAL EVENTS, BOOK CLUBS, LECTURES, CONCERTS, AND MORE) PRESENTED IN 2023.

14,400 ATTENDEES PARTICIPATED IN ADULT PROGRAMS IN 2023.

Cambridge Art Galleries

In 2023, the gallery's primary focus was cultivating genuine relationships within our community. Our emphasis centred on actively listening to and connecting with community members. We prioritized fostering a sense of belonging, reflected not only in our exhibition themes and featured artists but also integrated into all aspects of our community educational programs.

90 ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

TOTAL ATTENDANCE: 2,994



14 EXHIBITION-RELATED PROGRAMS

TOTAL ATTENDANCE: 1,418



NUMBER OF EXHIBITIONS: 8

NUMBER OF ARTISTS EXHIBITED: 12

EXHIBITION ATTENDANCE: 103,453



NINE OF THE TWELVE 2023 EXHIBITING ARTISTS WERE LOCAL OR REGIONAL PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS.

OUR PROFESSIONAL ARTIST EDUCATORS WERE ALL LOCAL.

Cambridge Art Galleries remains committed to fostering an inclusive and equity-driven perspective throughout all its activities, intending to bring about positive transformative change and fundamental belongingness. In 2023, our exhibiting artists embodied significant professional talent from regional and international perspectives.

Thank you to
our funders:



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO
an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Ontario 

2023 EXHIBITION SPOTLIGHT

JOURNEY WITH OUR KIN (QS) featured artwork from four regional artists of Indigenous and settler ancestry who explored relationships to the land within and surrounding the O:se Kenhionhata:tie*. This exhibition was presented in collaboration with the University of Waterloo School of Architecture.

*O:se Kenhionhata:tie, translated to Willow River, is the Mohawk name for the Grand River.

TO BUILD WHAT WE BECOME WHEN WE DREAM (QS) brings together Black women artists working across and amongst geo-cultural multitudes. Their fibre-based works and techniques explore both abstracted and figurative forms, offering a model of Black women's aesthetic practices as diasporic devices of communion, repair, and intervention. Presented in collaboration with the McMaster Museum of Art BIPOC mentorship program.

MARK CROFTON BELL: THE MOM PROJECT (PR) presented a series of small oil on board portraits the artist painted of his mother during the final years of her life. The exhibition gently explored themes related to aging and the systems of care. The gallery was privileged to partner with Bereaved Families of Ontario – Midwestern Region to host several workshops related to the facets of grief.

AMANDA McCAVOUR: WANDERINGS AND TRACES (HE, PR, QS) brought artwork beyond the walls of the gallery and into community spaces creating a visual thread across the communities of Cambridge: Galt, Preston and Hespeler. Wanderings and Traces was supported by The Musagetes Fund held at Waterloo Region Community Foundation.

MEERA SETHI: OUTERWHERE AND COTTON EXCHANGE (PR, QS) showcased new works by Sethi to both gallery spaces, with themes exploring the multi-layered and complex relationships among racialized and gendered bodies, clothing and textiles.

JOSÉ LUIS TORRES: DÉRIVES (PR) continuing the gallery's vision of 'art is for everyone' we welcomed Quebec-based artist, José Luis Torres to the Preston gallery to create a bright, welcoming, and immersive environment focused on belonging and movement.



Image Credit: Meera Sethi: **Outerwhere**, installation view, Cambridge Art Galleries, Queen's Square, 2023. Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid.



IDEA | EXCHANGE®

Queen's Square	1 North Square
Clemens Mill	50 Saginaw Parkway
Hespeler	5 Tannery Street East
Old Post Office	12 Water Street South
Preston	435 King Street East

ideaexchange.org
Phone: 519-621-0460