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.

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND CEO
Connected to the community. In 2019 we offered more programs and services than ever before. More Wi-Fi connections, new programs, engaging community art projects, and expanded school visits made Idea Exchange the destination for inspiration, and innovation. We invite you to review our Community Report, visit our locations, and join us on an ongoing journey of lifelong learning and discovery.
2019 OLD POST OFFICE HONOURS

2019 National Trust for Canada Award Recipient, Transformative Projects

2019 CAHP Award of Merit Conservation – Architecture

2019 Azure AZ Award for Design Excellence

2019 Azure AZ People’s Choice Award

2019 Architizer A+ Awards Finalist

2019 Silver APEX Award - Public Spaces (Digital Projection)

2019 The Plan Awards Finalist
Emmanuel Jal: From War Child to Activist was the first in a series of special after-hours events to take place at the Old Post Office throughout the year. Hundreds of attendees had a chance to hear from best-selling authors such as Ted Barris and Emma Donoghue in the beautiful setting of the Riverview Room.

Photo by Brian Duggan
If I could choose a dream room to live in... this attic would be it! This is the 3rd floor Makerspace ... What a gem – go visit!”

– Travel Writer
WELCOMING SPACES

CONNECTING AT CLEMENS MILL

Clemens Mill has become a place to be for access to community services and connecting with friends and family in a safe, inclusive, and welcoming space.

This year the location became a quick access point for Front Door’s children and youth mental health services. Front Door is a starting point for accessing single, free and confidential counselling sessions through the combined services of Carizon Family and Community Services and Lutherwood.

“Love this place post renovation!! It’s very inviting for families and children. Will definitely return!”
– Google Review, Clemens Mill
A reimagining of space at Hespeler has not only created adaptable areas to relax quietly or work in small groups, it has made an opportunity for small scale performances. During the intermission between performances of the Acting Out teen group’s play for Music and Lights in the Village, the Jacob Hespeler Ensemble was able to share a musical interlude in a different area of the building.
COMMUNITY CONNECT

PRESTON ECO ALLIES

It has become a hive of eco activity at Preston. Beyond the Seed Library, Garden Tool Collection, and Community Garden, the location hosted Eco Day events in February and October. Community partners held workshops and discussions, sharing their sustainability skills and tips. The events highlighted green initiatives and resources available to the community.

“We love these events because there are always hands-on ways to try new things and to learn about things that are important.”
– Eco Day attendee
GEEKING OUT AT QUEEN’S SQUARE

Cambridge Comic Art Festival leveled-up this year with hands-on workshops offered to attendees thanks to a partnership with Conestoga College’s School of Media & Design. The community connected with local comic artists, makers, and cosplayers at this inclusive family focused day that utilised all floors at Queen’s Square. The event was nominated for Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Award, Best Event of the Year.

WELCOME TO IDEA EXCHANGE

829,000+ IN-PERSON VISITS

102,000+ PROGRAM ATTENDANCE
ENGAGING YOUTH

CODE MASTERS

Coding has been called the ‘new literacy’. Debuting this year, Code Masters is a new program that provides school aged children with the foundation for these skills. Staff set out mazes and challenges that kids complete using playful robots, iPads, and other play-based technologies to sharpen their math skills.

“I am blown away! This is amazing. Something for every child, all abilities, all learning styles. Staff are full of energy and the activities are incredible. Thank you! Great start to March Break!”
– March Break Parent
TEEN SUMMER MEET-UPS

A transformation of the summer teen program this year led to 17 events in Idea Exchange locations and other community spots. With pop culture themed escape rooms and trivia nights, rock climbing, foam archery, and virtual reality tournaments, teens had a chance to try a variety of interests throughout the summer with chances to win experience based prizes donated by local businesses.

94 MORE PROGRAMS OFFERED DURING SUMMER READING CLUB

8,743 SCHOOL KIDS VISITED WITH THEIR CLASS

142% INCREASE IN TEEN SUMMER ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION
CONNECTING PEOPLE

HOW TO BY YOU

Sharing our passions, know-how, and skills with others helps strengthen our community. This year members were invited to share with others the passion projects or skills that inspire them, with the help of Idea Exchange. Inspired by the 2016 Taco Stand Project, How To By You is the presentation of community led programs and workshops in Idea Exchange spaces.

“When I moved to Canada in 2018, it was as a volunteer that I started to get the feeling of belongingness to Cambridge and its community. Idea Exchange has awesome programs and being able to be part of them as a volunteer is a unique experience!”
– Idea Exchange Volunteer

| ACTIVE VOLUNTERS | 436 |
| VOLUNTEER HOURS  | 10,379 |
DEMENTIA FRIENDLY BOOKS

In recognition of volunteer Carol Cooper's commitment to Idea Exchange, RBC Royal Bank has honoured her service through a financial contribution. The recent donation was used for a new collection of books aimed to help those living with dementia. These books utilize techniques like special fonts and spacing, navigation cues, and additional pictures to encourage memory retention and make stories easier to follow.

Thank you, Carol, for your volunteer work, and to RBC Royal Bank for your support of this collection.

236,188 WIFI CONNECTIONS

61,990 PUBLIC COMPUTER SESSIONS

793,943 ONLINE VISITS
OUR ART GALLERIES

COLLECTION AND CONSERVATION

In the summer of 2019, Lisa Neighbour’s Eye on The Square, was temporarily removed for restoration and repair. Through consultation with the artist, the much beloved Eye received updated electrical wiring, new LED lights, and vinyl.

ART ACCESS

In 2019 we launched Art Access, a new community-arts program with the goal of making art accessible to all by offering free, drop-in, art making workshops led by local, professional artists. From simple printmaking to visual journaling, each workshop offered participants a way to express their creativity in a safe and supportive environment. The workshops took place at Idea Exchange locations as well as at community partner organizations such as the Cambridge Self-Help Foodbank.
COMMON WATERS

Common Waters was an ambitious collaborative community project undertaken with BRIDGE Centre for Architecture + Design. The three-month long project examined our relationship with water and provided a platform for us to discuss some of the most pressing issues of our time. Expanding beyond our walls, Common Waters engaged the community through workshops, performances, activations, experiments, exhibitions, and knowledge sharing. The project featured remarkable collaborations with artists, Indigenous leaders and knowledge keepers, students from the School of Architecture, regional organizations, and local community ambassadors.

The keynote presentation and closing ceremony were generously supported by The Cambridge North Dumfries Community Foundation.