

Culture Days Ontario Newsletter / August 5, 2010

## Ontario communities leading in Culture Days activities

With more than 500 activities now registered in Ontario, the Culture Days movement is starting to take shape in our province. Community organizers in Chatham-Kent and Huron County are finding creative ways to inspire their rural communities to get involved in Culture Days. In mid-sized cities such as Peterborough and Stratford, Culture Days organizers have focused on their growing cultural sectors and the positive impacts on the local economy and quality of life. Meanwhile in Ottawa and Toronto numerous activities are spread throughout diverse neighbourhoods that reflect the variety of artists, cultural institutions and arts groups in our urban centres. See what is happening in your community by searching the [Celebration Schedule](#).



Glass work by Paul Oldham, featured in Kawartha Autumn Studio Tour.

## Five tips for success from community organizers:

### Hot Tip #1 from Stratford - Appeal to schools and families with kid-friendly activities

Eileen Smith of Herrione Presents is coordinating dozens of activities in Perth County and Stratford for all ages. In particular she suggests cultivating the audiences of the future by including fun and educational activities for children and teens. She has invited teachers to bring their classes to Culture Days events and is working with local high schools to recruit student as volunteers for the weekend.

*Example: Friday, September 24 is school day at [Factory 163](#), plus there will be a Stratford Shakespeare Festival [Peter Pan Picnic](#), a [kids art and poetry contest](#) and a [Savour Stratford Kids Tent](#).*

### Hot Tip #2 from Huron County - Create a project that anyone can participate in

Rick Sickinger of the Heritage and Culture Partnership is challenging the people of Huron County, a predominately rural area along Lake Huron, with a simple concept: create art with a tree. In rural areas where there isn't a lot of arts infrastructure, Rick recommends creating one Culture Days project in which everyone can participate and express their creativity. One of the side benefits of this approach is building unity between disparate artists and groups.

*Example: Over 60 [Communitrees](#) are planned to be designed and decorated by Huron County artists, clubs, schools, churches and businesses.*

### Hot Tip #3 from Peterborough – Bring attention to pre-existing events through Culture Days

After successfully applying for funding from the Peterborough Community Futures Development Corporation's Local Initiatives Program, the Peterborough Area Culture Days committee hired Bill James as a part-time coordinator. Bill is working to integrate many existing festivals and events in the city and surrounding area. He recommends seeing Culture Days as an umbrella campaign that unifies the arts infrastructure and brings attention to the local cultural sector's vitality.

*Example: The city of Peterborough's Arts Week, [Doors Open](#) and [Kawartha Autumn Studio Tour](#) are being integrated within the local Culture Days movement.*

### Hot Tip #4 from Ottawa – Keep promotion simple! Use the marketing templates

Peter Honeywell, Executive Director of the Council for the Arts in Ottawa recommends that communities use the Culture Days logos and templates for advertisements, posters and postcards, which are available on the [Promotional Tools & Resources page](#) on the Culture Days website. The Ottawa Culture Days group adapted these materials to create full-page ads in both the City of Ottawa's Culture Guide and the Parks and Rec Guide, which are widely distributed throughout the city.

*Example: With over 60 activities registered in the Ottawa area such as [Arts Court Doors Wide Open](#), the marketing goal is to collectively promote Ottawa Culture Days events.*

### Hot Tip #5 from Chatham-Kent – Connect a decentralized community

Cultural facilities and artists are sprinkled widely across the sprawling Chatham-Kent region. Martha Miller and The Erie Ridge Cultural Action Team recommends that if it is not possible to create central hub sites, try creating an incentive for the public to tour around to many venues during the Culture Days weekend. Invite the public to explore

their community and discover hidden treasures.

*Example: The [Passport to Culture](#) encourages the public to visit many Culture Days venues throughout their community. When fully stamped, the passport will be entered into a draw to win gift certificates from local businesses.*

## Visit the Culture Days blog for more tips and ideas

Read the previous [5 tips](#) plus suggestions for [developing media partnerships](#), [7 ways Festivals can take part in Culture Days](#) and much more. Share your thoughts or ideas with us!

As OAC's Culture Days Animator/Coordinator, I am available as a resource to artists, arts organizations, community groups and municipalities wishing to participate in Culture Days.

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