

**Annual Report 2019**

**2018.08.01 - 2019.07.31**



Zara Gardner

# Message from the President of The London Potters Guild (LPG)

The London Potters Guild (LPG) is a charitable cultural organization whose purpose is to provide clay art education to the community. We achieve the majority of our mission through programs offered at London Clay Art Centre (LCAC) - a 7,000 square foot facility in a century-old heritage building on the commercial corridor of London's Old East Village. LCAC is the only guild-owned and operated facility in Canada solely dedicated to clay art education, production, and promotion.

Vision: to be the leader in the education and promotion of the clay arts in Southwestern Ontario.

Our four-fold mission is to:

- 1. provide high-quality educational programming;
- 2. nurture the development of professional clay artists;
- 3. collaborate with other community organizations; and,
- 4. encourage fellowship in an inclusive and accessible facility.

Charitable tax number: 88667 6790 RR 0001

2018-19 was an extraordinary year for the LPG. We grew our staff team to five positions, including hiring the first Executive Director and Financial Controller at London Clay Art Centre (LCAC). Establishing these positions was a big leap in organizational development and one that signaled a new era for the LPG. It not only changed the consistency of management at LCAC, it triggered the process of transitioning the LPG Board of Directors from an operational to a governance model.

For the first three decades of our existence we successfully operated the organization and our home using the skills and dedication of talented volunteers. In 2009, we integrated our first part-time staff person into the team to coincide with the opening of LCAC. The accomplishments of volunteers and staff over those years are impressive. Together, they steadily grew our offerings and strengthened the LCAC's physical infrastructure.

However, the demands of operating a 7,000 square foot public facility that provides diverse programming to 180+ members and thousands of students and visitors annually began to outpace our ability to efficiently maintain and continually improve using predominately-volunteer resources. Furthermore, it was important to alleviate the extraordinary strain of responsibility taken on by leadership volunteers and to transfer their knowledge into formal organizational documents to ensure it was not lost. Many of our volunteers were contributing close to full-time hours in lieu of developing their clay practice - the reason they were attracted to the LPG and LCAC in the first place.

With all of these issues in mind, and following the

hiring in June 2018 of our first full-time Program Coordinator using funds from our Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant, the LPG board went one-step farther and authorized the hiring of the ED and Financial Controller. These positions put more oversight in place to meet the increasingly complex requirements of running a community-focused organization and a large facility.

Despite hiring full-time staff there is significantly more work to accomplish than is possible for five people. The truth of the matter is that the LPG will always need volunteer support to fulfill its charitable purpose. We are now in a strong position to manage growth and find innovative ways to share our art form with as many people as possible using the skills and dedication of an amazing team of volunteers and staff.

In the coming year, we will further develop how our valuable team members can complement one another as we increase our recognition in the community and deliver on the LPG's mission at London Clay Art Centre!



Sincerely,  
Judy Sparkes  
President, LPG Board of Directors

## Board of Directors



Lawrence Durham  
Treasurer



Marilyn Barbe  
Secretary



Karen Bailey



Shelley Boa



Cathy Herbert



Dorothy Howell



Endri Poletti

## Message from the Executive Director of London Clay Art Centre (LCAC)

*The home of The London Potters Guild changes lives through the simple act of bringing people together to create in clay.*

Fifteen years ago, I suspended my growing clay practice and dedicated myself as an LPG volunteer to building London Clay Art Centre (LCAC). I made the choice to take on the responsibility of leading the project because I deeply believed in the transformative power our arts facility could have in people's lives.

In my role as LCAC's first Executive Director that belief is validated daily when I see students and member-artists enjoying the space while creating amazing work, and hear them say they love this place because of its welcoming and supportive community.

We live in a time when, despite being more "connected" than ever, people are experiencing profound feelings of isolation. An increasing number are living with anxiety, loneliness, and mental health challenges. In that context, LCAC's presence in the community is becoming more and more important because we offer the antidote to isolation. Through this place and our medium, we give ourselves and have the power to give others a purpose and a reason to get up in the morning.

I am motivated every day knowing that together we are building a vital part of the community where generations of Londoners can make meaningful social connections, express their creativity, and walk away feeling fulfilled. More happy and fulfilled people coming out of LCAC will spread more goodness and good feelings in the community, which contributes to the overall health and vibrancy of our city, region, and country.

Of course, LCAC is the focal point of London's clay community. We are making a positive contribution

to the development of professional clay artists by providing opportunities to learn, produce, teach, exhibit, and sell. We will continue to find new ways to attract talented artists from around the world who will help inspire people and strengthen our community through extraordinary creativity.

Whether it be in the making of community-inspired public art, offering artist residencies, or by creating opportunities for artists to show and sell their work I'm proud to apply myself to growing our influence locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally. In addition to providing a central location for clay art enthusiasts to commune, at LCAC we continually strive to promote our art form and build an environment where public appreciation of clay art can support professionalism in our humble but complex medium.

Read on to learn how we fulfilled our mission in 2018-19. There are many more achievements than could be mentioned in this report, but the highlights will tell you how vibrant and forward thinking we continue to be.



Sincerely,  
Darlene Pratt  
Executive Director, London Clay Art Centre

## LPG Members

**Members are the heart of our organization.**

Despite growing the staff team to five in 2018-19, we couldn't possibly achieve everything without the dedication of many volunteers who give generously of their time and skills. In 2018-19, we had a membership of 189 - 142 of whom used the studio at LCAC to produce their work.

Each year we have a core group of leadership volunteers who head-up committees that run the:

- two annual Potters Market sales;
- LCAC Store;
- annual Empty Bowls project.

Additionally, members volunteer to help keep LCAC's studio and classrooms clean, mix glazes, load and unload kilns, organize events such as Doors Open and the pit firing at the annual Pow Wow and Harvest Festival, as well as an array of other tasks necessary to keep things running smoothly at London Clay Art Centre.

**To all of our volunteers, thank you!**



Clay camps, 2019.

London Potters Guild member and studio-user, Tim Wilkinson with tour group.



*This beautiful facility is home to passion and learning with a dedicated commitment to excellence. Loved my visit here. – Emily, 2018*

*Amazing, creative and welcoming space!! – Carolina, 2019*

## 2018-19 ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2018-19, the combined efforts of volunteers and staff proved the value of our new organizational structure through their many accomplishments both at LCAC and in the larger community.

### Organizational Achievements

One key improvement came in the form of establishing a robust studio-user intake and training process. Now, individuals interested in becoming LCAC studio-users must undergo a mandatory 3-phase process before they receive full access privileges. Formalizing the process ensures that the people using LCAC's studio are well-informed and ready to take on the responsibility of working independently. They also better understand the LPG's mission and can make a meaningful contribution that feels good to them and works for us in the most beneficial ways.

Additionally, we hit multiple organizational bests and new milestones, including:

- record sales at the fall 2018 Potters Market;
- international recognition in an article about LCAC's Canada 150 mosaic published in Ceramics Monthly, the most widely read ceramics magazine in the world;



- chosen by a community team to receive sponsorship from Tourism London and Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation for expert coaching in developing a premium experiential tourism package that will launch in the spring of 2020;
- submissions from all over Canada for juring into our biennial exhibition called "Put a Lid on it!"

### Best in Show



Judy Blake, *Saggur-fired Lidded Vessel* (16 x 16 x 16 in.)

### PSH Design Award & People's Choice



Evan Morris, *Stout Owl* (9 x 9 x 6 in.)

A juried exhibition of works by ceramic artists from across Canada. Two London artist educators, Mary Redekop and Jeremy Jeresky, juried the show.

### Physical space improvements

- A team of volunteers and staff analyzed and reconfigured both upstairs classrooms and the downstairs studio. Their efforts created additional and more user-friendly workspace for students and studio-users.



- To ensure a safer studio environment, the LPG board authorized a large capital expenditure to overhaul the ventilation system in the kiln room.
- After a five-year wait, we installed the retractable partition wall between the hand-building classroom and the meeting space on the second floor. Now, it is possible to have students, staff, and volunteers simultaneously using its five distinct spaces. Because of the partition, we can offer concurrent public programming, which was critical in 2018-19 in helping us increase participant numbers and the revenue generated through classes and workshops at LCAC.



- With support from London's Endowment for Heritage Fund we renewed our spectacular façade by stripping and repainting as well as installing a new stone "kickplate" at the bottom. We are proud of our heritage-designated façade and are committed to its ongoing maintenance.
- Local artist, Pamela Scharback, enlivened the space by painting an intricate mural on the chalkboard on the second floor at LCAC. The piece represents the historical importance of ceramics around the world, the many styles and uses of ceramics, and how science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) are all represented in the complexity of the making process and the breadth of knowledge areas acquired by skilled ceramic artists.



## Community Engagement in Mosaic Projects

After the huge success in 2017 of our Canada 150 mosaic, in rapid succession we conceived two more projects that engaged the public in tile making and mosaic installation in Old East Village (OEV).

### OEV Wayfinding Project

We won the most online votes from Londoners in the city's first Neighbourhood Decision-Making program for our OEV Wayfinding Project. As of the end of August 2018, the northwest corner of Dundas and Elizabeth Streets and the northeast corner of Adelaide and Marshall Streets sport eye-catching mosaics made by contract artists Beth Turnbull Morrish and Susan Day.

### Gateway Project

When the City of London was in the planning phase of renovating the parking lots behind LCAC and the Palace Theatre, we proposed covering the four concrete gateway features leading into the lots with mosaics.

The city accepted our proposal and we contracted Susan Day to fulfill the "Gateway Project" on behalf

of the LPG, the City of London, and the Old East Village Business Improvement Area.

Additional funds from a Government of Ontario grant enabled her and a team of volunteers to use LCAC to engage several community groups in tile-making workshops prior to their installation in June 2019.

We are proud to say that our mosaic installations have started a trend in the city. They have also become a destination for new visitors to the OEV.



Adelaide Street Gateway Mosaic



## Edith Pierce Memorial Award

Each year, the LPG provides the Edith Pierce Memorial Award to a BealArt student in ceramics who displays outstanding talent and discipline in working with clay and who wants to continue their ceramic studies at a post-secondary institution.

We provide a monetary prize and studio-use privileges at LCAC for the summer of the award year. It is a fitting memorial for Edith because so much of her life was devoted to encouraging other people's creative endeavours.

2019 Recipient, Bade Finn



*"I am very honoured to be this year's recipient of the Edith Pierce Award. This award presents me with such an amazing opportunity to further hone the skills that I have learned from my time within the BealArt program. This award will also grant me the resources and space to make work within the medium I will be studying before I head to Sheridan College in September to pursue further knowledge of the ceramic arts. Last year my time with the guild had given me the means to explore, create and connect with the ceramic community between the school years. I am beyond excited to connect with the community again and to use London Clay Art Centre's resources to the best of my abilities.*

*Thank you for this wonderful opportunity." Bade Finn*

## Funding Support

In 2018-19, we once again received generous operational funding support from:

- London Arts Council
- Ontario Arts Council

Operational support helps us pay a portion of staff salaries and apply funds to the daily costs associated with running a large public facility.

### Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant

The goal of this grant was to increase access to arts-based learning opportunities by at least 480 participants over two years by tackling space, equipment, and staffing challenges.

OTF funding allowed us to establish the full-time Program Coordinator position, help partially cover the costs of the Studio Technician and instructors as well as establish teaching assistant positions.

The funds also allowed us to install the aforementioned partition wall and purchase studio equipment that benefits LCAC studio-users and students including:

- a large front-loading kiln;
- an top-loading oval kiln;
- 4 potter's wheels and accompanying stools;
- 12 banding wheels;
- an extruder;
- a slab roller;
- a pug mill.

In the first year of the grant, because of the added capacity and resources we exceeded our 2-year target by 205 per cent!

*Thank you so much for facilitating an incredible pottery program for all of our March Break campers!*

*Everyone had so much fun, and I can't wait to see how the pieces turned out.*

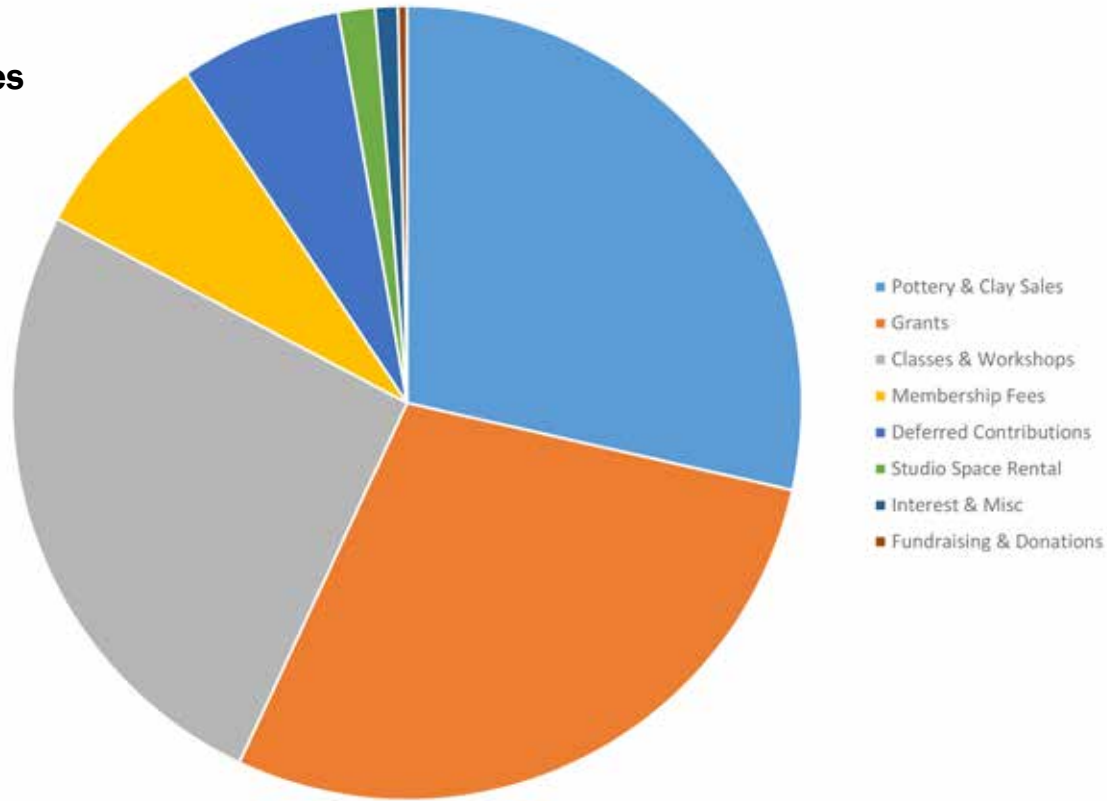
*We are so grateful for your passion and support, and cannot wait to collaborate again soon!*

*Your friends at Camp Ooch, 2019*

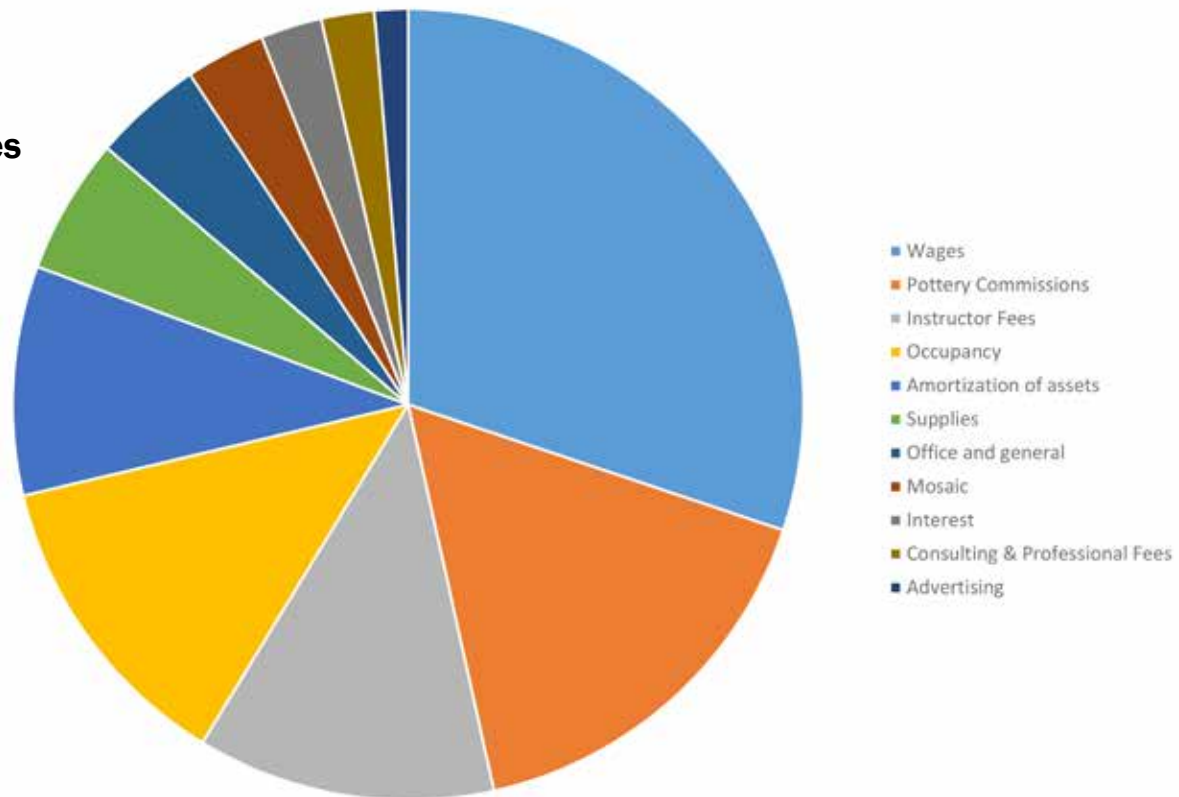
## Financial

The information below is for the year ending July 31, 2019 and is derived from the financial statements audited by Davis Martindale. Our complete audited financial statements are available in the Annual Report section on our website.

### Revenues



### Expenses





664 Dundas Street, London ON N5W 2Y8  
[www.londonclayartcentre.org](http://www.londonclayartcentre.org)

The London Potters Guild  
gratefully acknowledges the support of



**London Arts Council**



**ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL**  
**CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO**

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