



OCFootprints

Thank you for helping make Oxford better

AS WE SAVOUR THE HOLIDAY SEASON AND SOON A NEW YEAR, WE ARE DEEPLY INSPIRED BY OUR COMMUNITY'S KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY.

These last 20+ months have certainly been challenging! We continue to contend with uncertainty and an alarming number of people are struggling to make ends meet. Far too many of us are dealing with worsening wellbeing and economics conditions.

Community-based organizations of all kinds play a fundamental role in connecting and supporting us. The strain on them over this pandemic has been severe and will likely outlive this crisis. For many non-profits and charities, donations and volunteering dropped considerably and then rebounded to some extent with staff burnout high. On a positive note, we see an increased level of collaboration among organizations and the emergence of grassroots groups as essential components of the pandemic response. These changes and hope for a better future may be the most promising outcome of all.

At OCF, we support these vital community-based organizations, disbursing more than \$200,000 in grants this year alone. Almost \$120,000 of that total amount was from funds established by you, our caring residents. Thanks to your vision and generosity, OCF is keeping money in Oxford to help with the many needs in our community! You'll read about these grants in our next annual report. OCF also brought new money (\$84,063) to Oxford through partnerships in 2021. In this newsletter, you can read about one of these collaborations, the Healthy Communities Initiative Program.

It was unfortunate that this year again we couldn't come together in person for our annual meeting. We, however, were thrilled to see many of our sponsors and golfers at the Oxford County Warden's Annual Charity Golf Tournament. Golfing season may be over, but our appreciation for your support hasn't waned. Please check out the list of supporters in this newsletter and I urge you to share your appreciation with them directly. It really does take a village and we appreciate all of you. In our next newsletter, we'll provide information about our events for 2022.

Over the years, I've had the pleasure of getting to know many of you, our donors and fundholders. I feel so energized by your

stories and why you want to be part of helping through giving back. We are saddened by the recent loss of one of our cherished fundholders, Barry Smith. Barry's passions included his wonderful family, farming and supporting future leaders. Pat and Barry Smith were involved with OCF right from the beginning. They established their fund in 2007 and each year in their name OCF will continue to provide bursaries to rural students with leadership potential. Barry was quite the character, and I will miss him and our spirited conversations.



In this newsletter you can read about one of our new funds, The Thamesford Lawn Bowling Club Fund. I enjoyed meeting Club members and learning about the Club's history. Read about how they'll continue to support their much-loved community even though the Club has now closed.

We're also working on setting up a new Oxford rural fund – today's farmers helping tomorrow's farmers. If you're interested in helping establish the fund or have ideas on how we can support our next generation of farmers, please email me at lwardrop@oxfordcommunityfoundation.org.

And finally, now more than ever, I talk with people who are looking to offset the uncertainty and who are reflecting on their legacies. They're wanting to take care of their families and the communities who have brought them so much opportunity and joy. If, like them, you are interested in being part of something that lasts, in ways important and unique to you, let's talk. In a few easy steps, you can leave a lasting legacy that continues to make Oxford better – forever.

We thank you for your continued generosity and wish you and your loved ones a happy and healthy holiday season.

Keep well and be safe.

LOUISE WARDROP Executive Director

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Embro Community Garden



Harrington Community Garden

Granting with Impact: Supporting Our Community Places and Spaces

Community foundations like OCF have been an integral part of the COVID-19 response efforts across Canada. Communities large and small, urban, rural and remote continue to adapt to the impacts of the pandemic and rethink the use of our public spaces and local infrastructure in creative ways. Our public spaces are crucial; they're the glue that brings beauty, culture and nature together in many of our communities. They are essential gathering places where we experience a feeling of belonging and of social cohesion. They contribute substantially towards making our communities safe, vibrant and connected.

Local governments, charities and non-profits, among others, have been finding new ways to make use of these spaces, provide services and keep residents safe and healthy. They do this in tandem with and as part of supporting economic recovery efforts and building pandemic-resilient communities for our future.

OCF was pleased to partner with Community Foundations of Canada and the Government of Canada's Communities Initiative (HCI) Program. Community-led organizations were invited to apply for funding to create local, small-scale infrastructure projects responding to the needs arising from COVID-19, while building towards a more pandemic-resilient future. In Oxford, through this program, OCF provided local grants for a number of initiatives including a splash pad and community gardens.

HCI grants supported the creation of community gardens in Harrington and Embro, and more are coming in Thamesford in 2022. Thanks to the efforts of several community members and the Brooksdale 4H club, the Harrington Community Garden bed was built, filled with soil and planted by mid-July. The garden was a collection of pollinator, herb, vegetable and flower plants. The perennial flowers and pollinator plants should provide a welcome

start for the 2022 garden season! One local resident commented on how much she appreciated the beautiful basil, and other area residents enjoyed seeing the garden when driving by or when stopping in at the Harrington ball diamond.

According to one local Embro resident, the HCI grant was a huge boost for them especially when COVID-19 restrictions limited gatherings. The Embro project produced three large beds at the Community Centre. One was filled to bursting with wonderful transplants by the Brooksdale 4-H Club as an activity in their Pollinator Project. The plant material has been left in place to provide habitat for over-wintering "guests" and should be off to another busy and colourful season early next year. The other two beds were continuously in use and provided herbs, peppers, tomatoes, lettuce, beans, broccoli, zucchini and more. Also, two small herb boxes were placed near the Village Centre Park in Embro. These were convenient for foot traffic and for providing a foundation of perennial plants which can be supplemented with compatible annuals for years to come.

We also extend congratulations to the Zorra Splash Committee who with strong community support and OCF grants met their fundraising goal. The Embro community can anticipate enjoying their very own splash pad beginning in 2022. OCF supported this community-led project with two grants, one from the HCI Fund and a second from the OCF Heroes Among Us Fund. The Heroes Among Us Fund provides Oxford County residents the ability to recognize their local heroes - forever. One such Embro area hero honoured was the late Jean Matheson who was a volunteer for many community organizations and always a familiar face supporting community events. Jean would have been pleased to see a grant made in her honour supporting this Embro project.

FUNDHOLDER SPOTLIGHT

THAMESFORD LAWN BOWLING CLUB LEAVES A LEGACY



This summer, Lorne Matheson and Tony Webb of the Thamesford Lawn Bowling Club presented a cheque to Bill Mackesy and Louise Wardrop of the Oxford Community Foundation to set up a legacy fund in the Club's name.

The Club has a long and remarkable history and it's worth sharing. In 1920 Reverend W.D. Davis brought together sixteen residents to form the Men's Bowling Club in Thamesford. The St. John's Anglican Church rectory lawn on Dundas Street was divided into three greens and they bowled there for three years. The club began bowling at the 225 Dundas Street location in 1923 and they bowled there for 97 years until 2020. A Ladies Club was organized in 1926. In 1956, the Mens' and Ladies' Lawn Bowling Clubs were brought together into one Thamesford Lawn Bowling Club.

Thamesford was one of the oldest Clubs in the district with early club members hailing from families several of which still reside in the area today: Bobier, Brock, Cockwell, Cooper, Davis, Hogg, Loughlin, McLeod, McMillan, Morrison, Oliver, Robins, Sampson, Sims, Weir.

Many regular and special tournaments were held to raise funds for club improvements and in support of community initiatives. In 1951, the chicken house turned clubhouse was enlarged and improved, and in 1963-1964 a new clubhouse was built at a cost of \$2,700. In 1975 for \$8,239 several improvements were added including electric heat, storm windows, a kitchen, greens lighting, a mower and roller.

Two life memberships were awarded, one to George Robbins, after winning the American Lawn Bowling Men's Singles and a second to Josh Bobier for his work and support throughout the years.

The Club produced numerous champions. Bob Forbes and Dick Grass won the District Pairs in 1988 and 1993, Dorothy Forbes, Mary Grass, and Marion Payne won the District Trebles in 1988 and Dorothy Forbes and Marion Payne won District Pairs in 1993.

Also in 1993, Dick Grass, Dorothy Forbes, and Donna McCall won the District Seniors Tournament and advanced to London where they won the Bronze Medal.

In 2000, two Thamesford teams won Provincial Tournaments and advanced to the Canadian Games. Marion Anderson, Laurel Martin, and Deanna Palmer won the Provincial Senior Games and went on to win the Silver Medal at Canadians. Dorothy Forbes and Marion Payne won the Provincial Pairs and placed fourth in the Canadian Games.

Sadly, Club membership declined to the point that, in 2020, a decision was made to close the Club and sell the property on Dundas Street. Part of the proceeds of the sale were used to set up a permanent fund at Oxford Community Foundation. For years to come, grants from the fund will support the Thamesford Lion's Club and weekly free ice skating at the Thamesford Arena. Also, each fall additional grants will be made in support of initiatives benefiting Thamesford and its residents.

The Club may have closed, however it's support for the Thamesford community will live on – forever, through the Thamesford Lawn Bowling Club Fund at Oxford Community Foundation.



GOLFING SEASON MAY BE OVER, BUT OUR APPRECIATION FOR OUR SPONSORS, DONORS AND GOLFERS HASN'T WANED. THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE OXFORD COUNTY WARDEN'S CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT AND OXFORD COMMUNITY FOUNDATION.

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