

# Annual Report

## 2024



**HERITAGE  
TORONTO**

# Heritage Toronto

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Heritage Toronto builds a better city by bringing people together to explore Toronto's shared past and peoples' lived experiences.

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## Land Acknowledgement

Heritage Toronto is located on the traditional territory of the Wendat, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Anishinaabeg, including the Chippewa and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, Toronto is host to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Toronto is within the territory of the Dish with One Spoon Treaty which requires responsibility of those who use the land to share it peaceably and care for it. Heritage Toronto acknowledges this responsibility and recognizes the efforts of these nations in maintaining the land.

Cover: Tour participants, *Indigenous Paths and Presence*, July 21, 2024. Image by Hammad Khalil.



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Heritage Toronto is a charity  
and arms-length agency of  
the City of Toronto.

# Defining Toronto and Ourselves

The rapid societal shifts we currently face emphasize to us the critical role that heritage plays in a democracy. As a counterattack to disinformation and polarization, our work in heritage strives to present a fact-based and inclusive vision of Toronto and its people.

In 2024, we brought people together on our largest public program offered in over five years; we delivered 83 public events and welcomed 4,227 people to our events. We rebuilt our website providing both richer online experiences, increasing our digital programs by 30%, and inclusive access for more than 130,000 online visitors.

Our ongoing Equity Heritage Initiative reflects our steady commitment to diverse perspectives and the importance of lived experiences in sharing the stories of our city. In 2024, 62% of all programming featured equity-narratives, many of which were created and delivered by 22 emerging historians and in partnership with over 30 community groups. An example of these efforts is our celebration of queer history at Hanlan's Point. We worked with community partners and emerging historians to produce a new plaque—one of the city's largest—and delivered a festive long weekend celebration featuring pop-up exhibits, a picnic, drag performance, and more.

All of our work, managed by a small permanent staff of eight, is made possible only with the contributions of our donors, sponsors, and Toronto City Council. We are especially grateful to TD Bank Group through the TD Ready



Commitment for renewing their support of the Tours program and the Equity Heritage Initiative.

While we are proud of these achievements, like many other not-for-profits, we are challenged to maintain ongoing financial stability within the current economic climate and changes in philanthropic giving. We will need to increasingly rely on our donors and sponsors to maintain our public program levels in the coming years.

Together, we can ensure that heritage remains a cornerstone of defining our city, ourselves, and our democracy. With your help next year, we will continue to gather people from different backgrounds and viewpoints for stimulating experiences and conversations that help us understand ourselves and each other better.

Liza Chalaidopoulos  
Chair, Board of Directors

Allison Bain  
Executive Director

# Supporters

Thank you to our 2024 supporters and heritage champions.



**TD READY  
COMMITMENT**



\$10,000



**ANDREW AND  
SHARON HIMEL  
AND FAMILY**



\$5,000+

2809027 Ontario Limited  
Downtown Yonge BIA  
DTAH  
Easton Gupta Group  
EMBLEM Development  
ERA Architects

Exhibition Place  
Heritage Restoration Inc.  
Jackman Foundation  
Patrick Martin  
David Mirvish and Mirvish  
Productions

North Toronto Historical Society  
Old Town Toronto BIA  
Ridley Windows & Doors Inc.  
Andrew M. Stewart

\$2,500+

Buttcon  
Concert Properties  
Diamond Schmitt Architects  
Distillery Historic District  
JD Strachan Construction  
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Hellenic Heritage Foundation  
H&R Reit  
KingSett Capital  
KPMB Architects  
Jogi Makhani  
Alexandria Pike

Stevens Burgess Architects  
St. Lawrence Neighbourhood  
Association  
Urbanspace Property Group  
Grace Westcott  
York Heritage Properties

\$1,000+

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Audrey Fox  
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Richard Isaac  
Suanne Kelman  
NORR Architects & Engineers  
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Aaron Sanderson and Kevin Keystone  
Lilia Topouzova  
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Lynn Walker



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Martin Duclos  
Leone Earls  
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Kevin Tuttle  
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Jennifer Vuillemon  
John Wilcox  
Lori Zucchiatti O'Neill

## Community Partners

A Different Booklist  
Archives of Manitoba  
ASI  
Blackhurst Cultural Centre  
Cabbagetown Farmers Market  
Cabbagetown Preservation  
Association  
Canadian Museum of History  
Chandan Fashion  
City of Toronto Archives  
Consulate General of Hungary  
Dream Office Real Estate  
Investment Trust  
Friends of Guild Park

Friends of Hanlan's  
Gerrard India Bazaar Business  
Improvement Area  
Library and Archives Canada  
Museum Windsor  
North York Historical Society  
Ontario Jewish Archives  
Power Plant Contemporary Art  
Gallery  
Royal Ontario Museum  
Scarborough Archives  
Soleful Runs  
Spacing  
St. Lawrence Market Precinct

Sunnyside Players  
The ArQuives: Canada's LGBTQ2+  
Archives  
The Black Cultural Centre for Nova  
Scotia  
The Legacy Voices Institute  
Toronto International Film Festival  
Archives  
Toronto Legacy Project  
Toronto Zoo  
York Pioneers



# Plaques

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Just wanted to congratulate you on a fantastic [Hanlan's Point] event—it really warmed my jaded heart! Looking forward to future opportunities to work with you to tell local 2SLGBTQ+ stories.

— **Curran Stikuts**  
(The 519)

In 2024, the Plaques program produced 38 plaques, installed 35 plaques, and earned over a quarter of a million dollars—the highest in the history of the program.

Among the new plaques were two in our extended format—fondly referred to as a mega plaque. Celebrating Hanlan's Point and the Billy Bishop Airport, these plaques, while both located along city shorelines, reflect diverse stories, commemorating the site of the first public event to celebrate gay pride in Canada, to 85 years of the city's aviation history and one of the most walkable, bikeable airports in North America.

We partnered with several groups and organizations to host six events unveiling new plaques. Our first 2024 plaque unveiling at the Boulevard Club commemorated the history of Sunnyside





Stadium which was home to several women's softball leagues in Toronto. Former women's softball players, including one who played at the stadium in the 1950s, threw the first pitch to the delight of the crowd.

Another highlight was working with the City of Toronto and the Legacy Voices Institute to feature the story of the No. 2 Construction Battalion—the largest Black military unit in Canadian history. When Black men were turned away from enlistment efforts for the First World War, this mostly segregated non-combat battalion was created to serve with the Canadian Expeditionary Force. During Remembrance Week, Mayor Olivia Chow unveiled the new plaque honoring their service and recognizing the racism and discrimination they faced.

More than half of all plaques produced this year were primarily about or discussed histories relevant to equity-deserving communities. For a program that is over 75 years old, and with over 900 plaques located across the city, we remain steadfast in acknowledging the previous bias in histories represented and

Recently we had the honor of capturing a truly historic moment with the unveiling of the Heritage Toronto plaque for the No. 2 Construction Battalion. It's moments like these that remind us of the strength, resilience, and sacrifices made by those who came before us.

— **Josh Clarke**  
(World Boss Media)









# Plaques

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rectifying any harm caused by overrepresenting our colonial past. Our commitment to this work is ongoing; it will take time to create a balance throughout our Plaques program that reflects the diversity of Toronto's stories.

To facilitate this work further, in 2024, we began a program review which included completing photography and cataloguing of all Heritage Toronto plaques. With the support of Toronto City Council, we plan to provide online public access to the collection through a digital plaque map for which work will begin in 2025.

**I think it's worth celebrating those frontier ladies who broke tradition and went out and played hard and worked hard. It's a very important part of the history of Toronto.**  
— Wendy Train



# Heritage Toronto Awards

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At KPMB, we believe in restoring and enhancing the many heritage buildings in Toronto and beyond so they can flourish into the future. We're proud to support the 49th annual Heritage Toronto Awards presented by Aird & Berlis LLP.

— **KPMB Architects**

On October 28, 2024, we celebrated the 49th Annual Heritage Toronto Awards, an important occasion to highlight the impact of the heritage sector in supporting sustainable and creative city building. This year, we featured the work of 53 nominees in the categories of Book, Built Heritage, and Public History. The largest slate of nominees in the event history, these projects, organizations, and individuals represent the recent achievements and continuing innovations in the heritage sector.

Seven award winners were announced to a packed house, which included 30 emerging historians, and leaders from across the culture, development, and policy-making sectors, including





Mayor Olivia Chow. Held at The Carlu, the ceremony was hosted by comedy writer and radio host, Ify Chiwetelu.

A Peoples' Choice Award was announced. Selected by Heritage Toronto supporters and event attendees from among the Public History nominees, the award includes a \$1,000 prize. The Heritage Toronto Board also presented the Volunteer Service Award to Greg Heals for his enthusiastic work on the organization's public programs.

As we look to 2025, and the 50th anniversary of this event, we appreciate that it provides a rare opportunity to forge new relationships between people from different fields, whether a volunteer archivist, documentary filmmaker, or accomplished architect. From these relationships will emerge not only increased understanding and appreciation for our shared history but also new partnerships that taken together can better connect residents, communities, and neighbourhoods, and so, transform city life.

Great to see this project [the Hermant Building] recognized with such an important award. Thank you Heritage Toronto, this recognition showcases the contemporary opportunities our heritage buildings can provide, and their adaptation through creative design.

— **Joey Giaimo**





# 2024 Award Recipients

## Book Award

***Clara at the Door with a Revolver***

Author: Carolyn Whitzman

Publisher: On Point Press/UBC Press

## Public History Award

**Casey and Diana**

Director: Andrew Kushnir

Playwright: Nick Green

## Crafts and Trades Award

**Queen's Wharf Lighthouse**

Property Owner: City of Toronto

Architect: James Bailey Architect

Heritage Consultant: Clifford Restoration Ltd.



## Heritage Planning and Architecture

### Union Station

Property Owner: City of Toronto

Architects: EVOQ Architecture, NORR Architects & Engineers Limited

## Adaptive Reuse Award

### The Hermant Building

Property Owner: HNR Properties Limited

Architect: Giaimo

Heritage Consultant: Colonial Building Restoration

## People's Choice Award

### The Neighbours: Forms of Trauma (1945-1989)

Project Creators: Lilia Topouzova, Julian Chehrian, Krasimira Butseva

## Volunteer Service Award

Greg Heal





# Tours

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[The tour] was first class. Really impressed by the leader's extensive research. I have lived in the neighbourhood for 25 years and still learned new things.

— Joy Connelly

Last year, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Tours program, and continued to build on the experience. Offering more than sightseeing, instead, our tours uncover the stories that shaped Toronto's character, and embrace conversations featuring new voices on places sometimes little remarked, but significant to modern city life.

These tours resonated with Torontonians, evidenced by a 29% increase in 2024 attendance for the season running from April until October. We delivered a total of 73 events ranging from explorations of the laneways of Chinatown to the bustling shops of Little India, from treks across our changing





Heritage Toronto has a fabulous team. The tour leaders were engaging and well informed. The tour stops and prepared material were very interesting, but they were also well prepared to answer unexpected questions, so I felt confident that we were learning from experts! The tour volunteers were also very professional and organised. Overall, a great experience!

— **Michael Murphy**



# Tours

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We had an incredible guide. She was unafraid to have us confront what we thought we knew about the city and outdoor space, and was generous in sharing her expertise.

— Talia Pankewycz

waterfront to the discovery of architectural treasures in local neighbourhoods.

While our popular tours reflected a mix of offers, most were led by emerging historians, including the new Flying with Billy Bishop tour, produced with the support of PortsToronto and featuring the remarkable history of Toronto's unique island airport. Among the other highlighted tours by emerging historians are Rail Lands, which examines how railways have





shaped the city, and *It Takes a Village*, an exploration of the history of Church-Wellesley Village. Volunteer and partner-led tours also excelled, as we revisited the Baby Point area with archaeological and cultural heritage consulting firm ASI, and took a new look at the Roncesvalles neighbourhood with the Sunnyside Historical Society.

For the 2024 program, we increased our commitment to accessible programming, adding to our range of formats. In addition to a free Doors Open talk showcasing practical approaches and professional tips for individuals to undertake their own research of their neighbourhoods, families, and homes, we offered the first in-person event to commemorate the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation led by an Indigenous

Heritage Toronto's guided walks are more than a trip down memory lane, they invite us to be inspired by the good fights for our city's cultural heritage and the power of community advocacy. Understanding our past is essential to shaping a future where Toronto's growing neighbourhoods continue to thrive.

— **Deputy Mayor**  
**Ausma Malik**







# Tours

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Happy to be back for another summer of volunteering with @heritagetoronto. Tonight's walk was the Hidden Histories of U of T. I'm rarely in that part of town but tonight I was reminded of how beautiful the campus is! — @flaneusetoronto

community worker, performer, and student. We also grew our free community event experience, staffing our tent in local spots throughout the city, with 1,402 people engaging directly with us as they went about their daily activities.

Our largest audience remains the online visitors to our digital programs, which grew by 63% in 2024. A new record number of over 64,616 visits explored our impressive collection of articles, self-guided tours, maps, and exhibits, and enjoyed the 13 new online experiences such as Facades and Facelifts at Exhibition Place and The Toronto Caravan.



# Emerging Historians

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Since its launch in 2018, the Emerging Historians program has engaged over 200 new professionals, offering them hands-on experience, essential skills development, and the opportunity to share their unique perspectives on Toronto's rich heritage. In 2024, we paid 22 emerging historians from across the city to explore our shared history, develop new tours, create engaging experiences, launch exciting digital programs, and photograph events.

I was able to build on my skills in research, interpretation, analysis, and presentations. I felt pushed to succeed within the program, and was given the best support to do so. Heritage Toronto has helped me to feel more motivated and excited about my future as an emerging historian, no matter where my path takes me.

— Alanna Brown





# Emerging Historians

I would love to produce additional articles in the future for Heritage Toronto or otherwise. Although I struggled some of the time, it felt great to have a research and writing project to work on, and has encouraged me to seek similar opportunities in the future.

— **Robyn Sturtevant**

In 2025, we are planning new opportunities for networking and mentorship within the program, and broad contracts providing pan-organizational and representative work reflecting the realities, challenges, and rewards of careers in the not-for-profit and the heritage sector.





# Equity Heritage Initiative

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The Equity Heritage Initiative, funded by TD Bank Group through the TD Ready Commitment, aims to challenge systemic barriers in the heritage sector by providing mentorship and paid work opportunities to emerging historians from equity-deserving communities.

In 2024, we worked with three EHI Coordinators. Jingshu Yao's contract concluded in January, but led to her subsequent creation of a new tour and a community event. Claire Jansen-Faught's work wrapped up in March, and included delivering a compelling final draft of the State of Heritage Report.

Skye Sommerhalder, who joined our team in the spring as our Operations Coordinator, led a review of our Land Acknowledgement working with an Indigenous consultant. He helped host a Blanket Exercise to build greater understanding of the history of colonization in Canada, and organized a Land Acknowledgement Workshop to provide context for territory acknowledgments, review best practices, and the agency's current statement.

I collaborated with staff and consultants to develop a plan to increase the recruitment and retention of diversity amongst our volunteers. As I expect to continue working in equity-related positions, the skills to establish frameworks and metrics are transferable and will allow me to continue this work and ensure that all are given the same respect, access to resources, and opportunities to develop that I have.

— **Skye Sommerhalder**



# Equity Heritage Initiative

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Working closely with community members made me realize that attempts to capture the diversity within a group is even more difficult than telling their story as a whole. The project at Heritage Toronto gave me the opportunity to highlight many individual voices so I could better tell the stories among the East Asian community in Toronto, as well as grow my skill as a historian and storyteller.

— Jingshu Yao

As part of the Equity Heritage Initiative, we also delivered two special projects. On the Civic Holiday, we gathered at Hanlan's Point—a meeting and gathering place for Toronto's 2SLGBTQIA+ community for more than a century. With research and programming work undertaken by Avi Margolis, and offered in partnership with the Friends of Hanlan's, Big Gay Out At Hanlan's Point commemorated the first public event to celebrate gay pride in Canada.

We also developed an Equity Programming Framework. For this project, we identified sustainable practices and tools to advance equity and inclusion across Heritage Toronto's programming. Among the achievements are comprehensive guidelines for content creation to be used by emerging historians, a new and accessible file storage infrastructure, best practices to record oral histories, and programming templates.

Looking forward to 2025, we will deliver the State of Heritage Report to Toronto City Council and complete a Community Partnership pilot project to enhance inclusivity in our programs across the city.





# Donors & Partners

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Our donors, sponsors, and partners are the backbone of our charity's work. Last year, sponsorship support for our Tours program, and our largest fundraiser, the Heritage Toronto Awards, exceeded goals. Thank you.

We're also happy to report that we worked to strengthen donor engagement, offering two exciting and exclusive events in the fall. We welcomed donors to a special tour of Baby Point, exploring the city's Indigenous history and archaeology, offered with our partners at ASI. We also worked with the National Film Board of Canada and Innis Town Hall on a film screening of "Any Other Way: The Jackie Shane Story", a powerful documentary on the local music icon and 2SLGBTQ+ trailblazer.

In 2024, your contributions helped us achieve the largest program in our charity's history. And yet, we are under significant pressure, magnified by the uncertain economic climate and inflation to maintain our work.

With your ongoing and increased support, we can maximize our efforts to build experiences and programs that realize heritage's vital role in community-building and placemaking.

I am an annual supporter who deeply appreciates the advocacy and action in protecting and sharing the wonderful heritage of Toronto. Thank you for all that you do.

— **Nancy Graham**



# Volunteers

## Going the extra mile (20+ hrs):

Maryam Choudhri  
Caitlin Coleman  
Morgen Jael  
Nicole Leung  
Danielle Picard  
Madeline Snowden  
Jennifer Vuillemot

**I'm a temporary resident and am continuously learning about the country: its people, history, heritage, and culture. Volunteering is a way to develop my knowledge further, and at the same time, give back.**

— **Rhoda Samson**

Heritage Toronto is committed to integrating equity, accessibility, and diversity into every facet of our operations. Between September and December 2024, we embarked on a process with Evenings & Weekends Consulting to understand the landscape of our volunteers and develop a series of recommendations to better recruit and engage with equity-deserving groups on the volunteer team.

Our volunteers come from diverse backgrounds, including students, professionals, and retirees, united by their passion for Toronto's history and public programming. Their invaluable support ensures that our public programs remain not only possible, but also relevant and engaging to local communities.

Next year, we will begin to implement some of the findings from this project, aligning this work to our ongoing efforts to create an inclusive environment that reflects the diversity of Toronto's communities.





# Our People

## Board of Directors

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 Aaron Sanderson  
 Harmeet Singh Sandhu  
 Colin Smillie  
 Hana Syed  
 Sarah Watson

## Committee and Award Jury Members

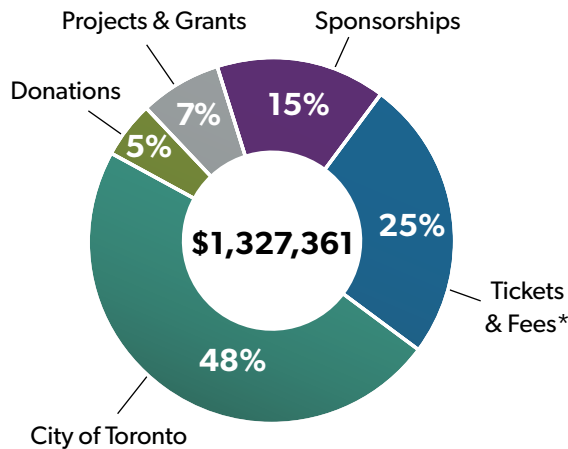
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 Heather Corner  
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 Aynsley Wright

## Staff

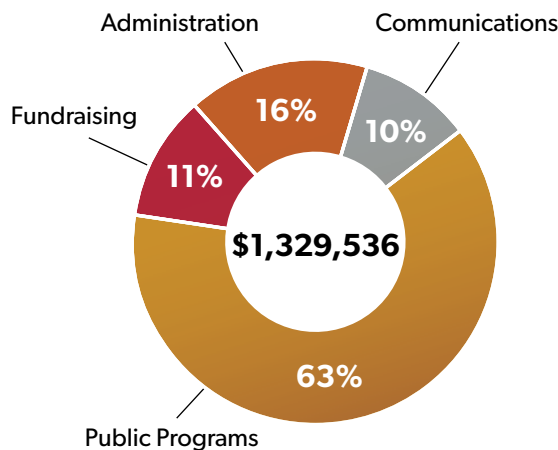
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 Lucy Di Pietro, *Manager, Marketing and Communications*  
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 Katie Matthews, *Programs Assistant*  
 Roshni Nayar, *Operations Coordinator*  
 Skye Sommerhalder, *Operations Assistant*  
 Meg Sutton, *Plaques Coordinator*  
 Andrea Switzer, *Manager, Development*  
 Jingshu Yao, *Programs Coordinator*

# 2024 Financials

## Revenue



## Expenses



\* Final 2024 Financial Statements, audited by Doane Grant Thornton, will be available at [heritagetoronto.org](https://heritagetoronto.org) on May 1, 2025.



# Image Credits

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Images by: Herman Custodio, Hammad Khalil, and Rachna Shah.

## Defining Toronto and Ourselves

**Page 2:** Liza Chalaidopoulos and Allison Bain, Heritage Toronto Board meeting, December 11, 2024.

## Plaques

**Page 5:** Mayor Olivia Chow, Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik, and Friends of Hanlan's, Queer History at Hanlan's Point plaque presentation, August 5, 2024.

**Page 6:** No. 2 Construction Battalion commemorative plaque unveiling, November 7, 2024.

**Page 7:** Jack White plaque unveiling, June 14, 2024; St. Elizabeth Hungarian Community plaque unveiling, September 29, 2024.

**Page 8:** Billy Bishop City Airport plaque unveiling, November 12, 2024.

## Heritage Toronto Awards

**Page 9:** Eileen Costello (Partner at Aird & Berlis), Allison Bain (Executive Director of Heritage Toronto) and Mayor Olivia Chow, Heritage Toronto Awards, October 28, 2024.

**Page 10:** Mayor Olivia Chow and emerging historians; Awards Ceremony audience; all four images from October 28, 2024.

**Page 11:** (clockwise) Sam Triglia (Clifford Restoration), Ela Gach, Phil Puype (Clifford Restoration), Eileen Costello (Aird & Berlis), and Ryan Costello (Clifford Restoration), Crafts & Trades Award; Steven Whitzman, Book Award; Julia Ann Cole, Nick Green, and Leona Savoie (Woodcliffe Landmark Properties), Public History Award; all from October 28, 2024.

**Page 12:** (clockwise) Project team and guests for The Neighbours: Forms of Trauma, People's Choice Award; Mitchell May, Associate at Giaimo, Adaptive Reuse Award; Maryam Pashali, Greg Heal (Volunteer Service Award winner), and board member Aaron Sanderson; Hassan Saffarini (NORR Architects & Engineers), Dima Cook (EVOQ Architecture), and Silvio Baldassara

(NORR Architects & Engineers), Heritage Planning and Architecture Award; all from October 28, 2024.

## Tours

**Page 13:** Tour participants, Making Change at Honest Ed's, July 20, 2024.

**Page 14:** Black History Unburied community event, Riverdale Park, July 23, 2024; Tour participants, Changing Chinatown, June 2, 2024.

**Page 15:** Tour participants, Flying with Billy Bishop, September 8, 2024.

**Page 16:** Tour participants, Big Stories in Little India and St. James Town walks, May 19, 2024 and July 7, 2024.

**Page 17:** Garbageland cycling tour, Evergreen Brick Works, June 8, 2024.

## Emerging Historians

**Page 18:** Emerging historians, Heritage Toronto Awards, October 28, 2024.

**Page 19:** (clockwise) Emerging historians Sarah Takhar, May 19, 2024; Shannon Buskermolen, September 14, 2024; Jonsaba Jabbi, July 23, 2024; and Avi Margolis, June 20, 2024.

## Equity Heritage Initiative

**Page 20:** Drag artist Pam, Big Gay Out at Hanlan's Point, August 5, 2024.

**Page 21:** Participants at the Blanket Exercise, St. Lawrence Hall, November 6, 2024.

## Donors & Partners

**Page 22:** Appreciation event, Jackie Shane film screening, December 5, 2024.

## Volunteers

**Page 23:** Tour volunteers and participants at Monumental Interventions and Big Stories in Little India walks, August 10 and May 19, 2024.

## Our People

**Page 24:** Heritage Toronto Board meeting, December 11, 2024.

**PEOPLE.PLACES.EVENTS.**

