

# TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE: HERITAGE ACTON

Continued from page 1

to reach its \$150,000 goal and replace the leaking cedar shake roof, rebuild the crumbling brick chimney and repair the bell tower as soon as possible.

All contributions will be matched dollar for dollar through a federal government heritage legacy grant the group has qualified for, ultimately bringing the total budget up to \$300,000.

"We're most anxious to get this underway before winter arrives," said Heritage Acton volunteer board member Anne McIntyre. "If we can manage the finances for this, at least the building will be secure for us moving forward, and available for the community in the future."

The pandemic has taken a toll on many, and Heritage Acton is no exception. While the group would normally fund the building's needs through facility rental fees and various fundraising initiatives, everything was put on hold when COVID-19 surfaced earlier this year. Some small groups are just now beginning to utilize the space again.

"We were all ready with a full slate of events to raise the money that we needed, and along came COVID," said fellow volunteer board member Liz Bailey. "We can't miss this opportunity for the grant."

So far, the group is two-thirds of the way to its goal, with about \$100,000 being raised. But winter is fast approaching, and time is running out.

"It's just so important to get that roof done," said McIntyre. "The reason we're trying to do all of this (repair work) at once is because it requires scaffolding, which is very pricey when you have a building this size. It's much more cost-effective for us to do all three things at the same time."

The building is commonly used for everything from major community events and theatre productions to fitness classes, weddings and birthday parties.

A portion of the large facility is home to the North Halton Mental Health Clinic and Downtown Acton BIA. The former firehall garage within the town hall is also currently being renovated by the Town of Halton Hills, which is transforming the space into a youth centre.

"These are important organizations for the health of the community, and it's lovely that we can house them in a historic building," said McIntyre.

The building has a long and storied history in Acton. The doors first opened with a grand ball in 1883, and it remained the hub of local social life for more than 80 years.

"There are so many memories here," said McIntyre. "People can recall being here in the '40s, the '50s, the '60s, and they have such warm feelings about the productions or events they attended."

When the Town of Halton Hills deemed the building as surplus and declared it unsafe in the late 1970s, local residents rallied to save the facility from being torn

**"There are so many memories here."**

- Anne McIntyre

down.

From there, Heritage Acton was born.

Today, the group's members say they're amazed by people's continued willingness to support the Acton Town Hall Centre, even during the challenging financial times of a pandemic.

"We understand that times are tough, so thank you for the generosity," said McIntyre. "It's wonderful. The building is so worth it."

Donations to the campaign can be made at [www.actontownhallcentre.ca](http://www.actontownhallcentre.ca), or by mailing a cheque made out to Heritage Acton to 19 Willow St. N., Acton, L7J 1Z6. All contributions will receive a tax receipt.

**STORY BEHIND THE STORY:** With the Acton Town Hall Centre being an important piece of the town's history, we took a closer look at Heritage Acton's urgent fundraising campaign for building repairs that will preserve the facility for the community.

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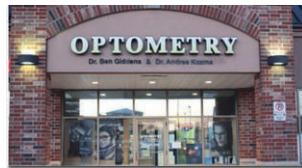
Heritage Acton has launched an urgent fundraiser campaign for repairs to the historic Acton Town Hall Centre.

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