



The main gathering hub.

The main gathering room has amphitheater-like seating, which can alternatively serve as a stage when workshop participants are seated on the floor.

Another space called the 'nest' is a fireside enclosure with small windows, designed on the theme of perspective.

"The idea is that every window in this building gives you a different perspective, because they're all different," says Duffield. "In the nest, there are small windows because that's meant to be for internal focus, a debriefing place. And also to remind us as we're sitting around the fire, that different people will have different perspectives – different glimpses into the world around them. They're not right or wrong, just different."

The spacious kitchen is a place of

building community. The studio's primary heat source, a masonry heater, is located here as well as a wood burning oven.

From room to room, the warm comfortable feel is consistent with an upscale cottage or an artist's studio. Five fireplaces welcome people to gather, surrounded by the aroma of baking bread or pizza, scents of flickering candles, and wisps of steaming hot beverages served in handmade mugs. It's a tactile learning environment enhanced with locally purchased furniture, stained glass crafted by Muskoka Woods studio staffer Harley Timmons, and pottery made by Rosseau and Star Lake potters. Much of the furniture was stained and finished by staff. From the workbench in the entry, to all of the photography used, impressions of Muskoka Woods

staffers are etched into the character of the new studio.

"As much as possible here, we wanted everything to be a labour of love, a thing that people could look at and say – That's the piece that I contributed to," explains Duffield.

While the new studio opened on June 23 last summer, with an official opening anticipated this spring, leadership development has always been a key piece of the work of Muskoka Woods. About 25,000 young people – primarily aged 13 to 25 – come through the camp each year and another 400 staff members are trained in-house, based on the Muskoka Woods mission statement "Inspiring youth to change their world".

"Our founder John Boddy, right from the beginning 31 years ago, had this dream that leaders would develop while they were here at camp," says Ellen. "So we actually think of all of Muskoka Woods – the whole facility – as a leadership development opportunity, a leadership centre, and this is just the

building that enables us to focus on that debriefment."

That debriefing concludes with a half hour walk on a trail, designed for quiet reflection. Benches made by St. Domenic's Catholic high school students in Bracebridge, bear a simple word like 'notice' or a question for those on the path to pause and ponder.

The trail overlooking the studio serves as the third piece in the leadership development journey. It loops through the building and begins with a decision – to take the first steps to cross the bridge.



Locally crafted pottery.



Worship



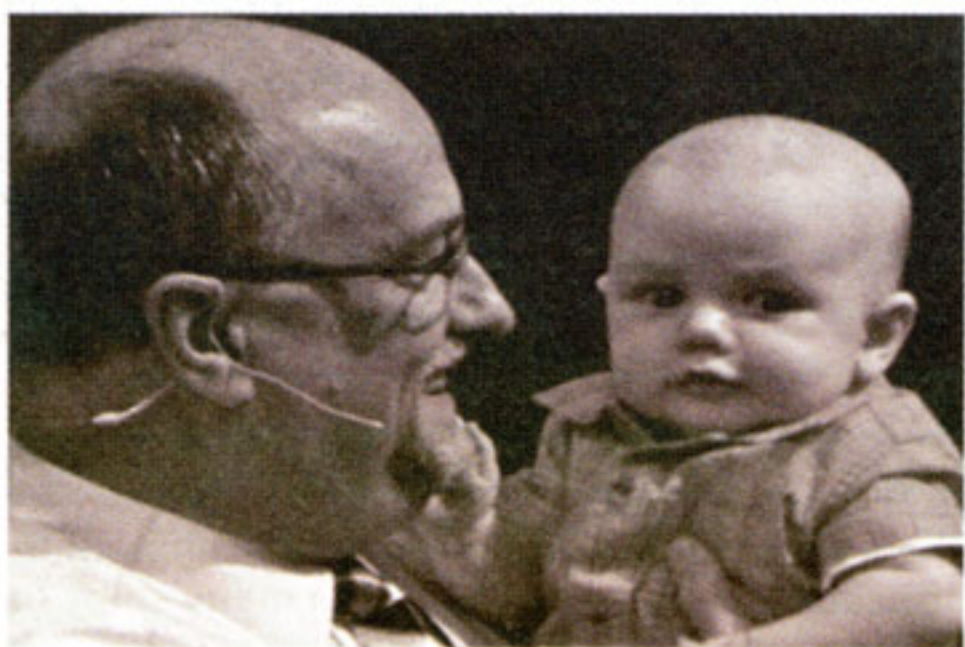
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