



MEDIA RELEASE

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OTF Grant to Drayton Entertainment Provides Vital Support for Youth Programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Waterloo, ON – Drayton Entertainment’s plans to create a home for community building and arts-based learning for youth is one step closer to reality, thanks to a \$100,000 Capital grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, (OTF). The award-winning not-for-profit arts organization will renovate a former industrial space to create an accessible multi-use and multi-flex cultural incubator that will host a range of programs for young people throughout the Region of Waterloo.

“As the Member of Provincial Parliament for the riding of Waterloo, I keep hearing from constituents that the arts and creative outlets are keeping them hopeful and connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am thrilled that Drayton Entertainment is continuing to expand its reach in our community, with specific investment in youth. This Ontario Trillium Foundation Capital investment will further this critical work,” says **Catherine Fife**, MPP for Waterloo.

Budgeted at \$3 million, the renovations will result in multiple rehearsal halls, classrooms, music rooms, and acting studios, all located adjacent to Drayton Entertainment’s Production Centre for the Technical Arts. The resulting synergies will generate thousands of hours of new arts activity every year.

“With 800 performances on our various stages, current facilities are at capacity,” says **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director of Drayton Entertainment. *“Our new Youth Academy will provide the necessary physical footprint to deliver many exciting new programs for young people that will foster a lifelong appreciation for the arts.”*

The project will set Drayton Entertainment up for many more years of continued success as it adapts and evolves its acclaimed theatre model beyond theatre experiences to include other related activities – all of which will help it serve established, current, and future audiences.

The new Youth Academy underpins Drayton Entertainment’s commitment to supporting a broader generational shift in society and advancing inclusion for marginalized and

underrepresented groups in the community, including youth identifying as Black, Indigenous, and/or Persons of Colour (BIPOC), LGBTQ+, new Canadians, and Persons with Disabilities.

*“We have seen firsthand the impact we have on the lives of young people through arts education, engagement, and outreach,” says **David Connolly**, Director of Education for the Youth Academy. “We are focused on inspiring and empowering the next generation of artists onstage and behind-the-scenes, as well as providing positive experiences which transcend the arts to shape future leaders and community-minded citizens.”*

[Drayton Entertainment](#) is a registered, not-for-profit charitable organization, and one of Canada's most successful professional theatre companies. From Broadway musicals to laugh-a-minute comedies and riveting dramas, Drayton Entertainment presents the finest in live theatre for all ages. More details about Drayton Entertainment's Youth Academy will be announced soon, including a public fundraising campaign to support the project.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations. Last year, nearly \$112M was invested into 1,384 community projects and partnerships to build healthy and vibrant communities and strengthen the impact of Ontario's non-profit sector. In 2020/21, OTF supported Ontario's economic recovery by helping non-profit organizations rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Visit otf.ca to learn more.

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