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Monthly Message: Nine years of planting ? and a future worth watering

Nine years ago ? on Oct. 6, 2016 ? we took a leap. Streams Community Hub was officially incorporated, and what had lived in our hearts as a vision began to take shape in the material world.

There was no building. No staff. Just a few rented classrooms, a handful of supplies, and a deep conviction: that every child, regardless of circumstance, should have access to meaningful, high-quality, creative opportunity.

From that seed, we started building. Slowly. Faithfully. One summer camp at a time. One child at a time.

Today, Streams is a vibrant, year-round arts education hub in Shelburne, offering programs in baking, sewing, theatre, music, visual arts, and more. We've welcomed hundreds of families and awarded over $140,000 in scholarships and subsidies to remove barriers. Streams has become more than a place to make art. It's become a place of belonging ? a refuge for the creative child.

And now, nine years later, we're looking ahead with the same courage it took to begin. This month, we're thrilled to announce the launch of the Streams Creative Futures Fund, an endowment established in partnership with the Dufferin Community Foundation.

This fund is more than a milestone. It's a turning point. A statement of intent. A commitment to the future. It says we're not going anywhere. It says that creativity matters. It says that youth in this community are worth investing in ? for the long haul.

The Streams Creative Futures Fund will grow over time and generate income annually to help sustain our programs. It will support children we haven't met yet, in facilities we may not have built yet, doing things we can't even imagine yet. It will ensure that our impact continues ? long after today's paintings have dried and today's stage lights go out. Because that's what legacy is: planting seeds you may never see bloom.

We're especially grateful to the MakeWay Foundation ? Harbinger Fund, whose generous support provided the seed funding to launch this endowment. Their gift reflects a shared belief in the power of grassroots leadership and creative spaces where all children can thrive.

Our co-founder Andrew, who also serves as Board Chair, called the fund ?an anchor for the dream.? He added, ?We've always had big vision. This fund is how we make sure that vision outlives us. It's how we preserve this space for the ones coming next.?

So yes?this October feels extra special. Not just because it marks nine years since we became a registered charity, but because it marks a new beginning. A moment to pause and honour the hands that helped us plant. And then to rise, water in hand, ready to keep growing.

If you've been part of this story in any way ? thank you. Whether you volunteered at a program, wrote a cheque, dropped off a child, or cheered us on from afar, your support has mattered more than you know.

And if you'd like to help secure the future of Streams, there are a few ways to do so:

? Give to the Streams Creative Futures Fund through the Dufferin Community Foundation to help grow our endowment: dufferincommunityfoundation.ca/our-funds

? Support our daily work by becoming One of 1000 ? our campaign to find 1,000 monthly donors giving $10/month: streamshub.org/oneof1000

Or simply share our work with someone who needs to hear it. We're still planting?and there's room in the garden.

This Community Voice submission was written by Juli-Anne James, executive director of Streams Community Hub.