

# Museum to continue as venue for speaker series under new CanHist partnership

Written By PAULA BROWN

## LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Two local organizations focused on preserving history, both past and present, are joining forces to host some of Canada's leading innovative thinkers.

The Museum of Dufferin and the Canadian Historical Education Services, also known as CanHist, have announced that the local museum will continue as a future venue for the Small Town Big Ideas (STBI) speaker series.

"The Museum of Dufferin is such an ideal venue for the kinds of discussions we want to have with Small Town Big Ideas," said Neil Orford, co-creator of STBI and founder of CanHist. "When you get some of Canada's top public intellectuals, authors or journalists to come in, you want a place that showcases Dufferin."

"We are looking to create partnerships with local institutions that are seeking to bring culture, ideas and conversations together," said Jasmine Proteau, manager of the Museum of Dufferin. "We already have such engaged citizens and people interested in hearing more about different art, culture and ideas, so it's important to have a space to have these types of conversations."

Small Town Big Ideas is a speaker series hosted by CanHist and sponsored by multiple small-town groups and businesses in Dufferin County. The series looks to welcome some of Canada's most innovative thinkers to the Dufferin community to speak intimately with local residents on various topics such as history, politics, environment, gender equality, and journalism.

Speaking with the Free Press, Orford noted the importance the museum plays as a venue in discussing past and present events.

"The museum is a great place for getting context. One of the biggest challenges is getting people to understand the context in which events happen and the context in which history occurs and has occurred," said Orford. "Every story the museum tells has a past and very much a present. When you're concerned about the future, like I think most of our audiences are, it's really important to try and fix the context for every conversation."

The Museum of Dufferin, located at 936029 Airport Rd., Mulmur, collects and preserves the stories of the people, places, and culture of Dufferin County both past and present. The local museum features three galleries with permanent and rotating exhibitions and art shows, as well as four historic buildings. The Museum of Dufferin is also the location of the Dufferin County Archives, where visitors are welcome to research the history of the community.

"We are paying attention to what's happening today and making sure important stories are being preserved for future generations, while they're being told," said Proteau. "We're trying to connect the past, with the present and also showcase some of these continuities in history."

The Museum of Dufferin and CanHist welcomed their first guest speaker under their partnership back in October of 2024. The event featured author and journalist Elizabeth Renzetti, who discussed the launch of her latest book, "What She Said: Conversations About Equality."

Held in the main gallery space of the Museum of Dufferin, the event saw roughly 70 patrons attend the discussion with Renzetti.

"The museum audience and Small Town Big Ideas audience are very similar," said Orford.

As CanHist begins making plans for their 2025/2026 season, they'll be working closely with the MoD to determine guest speakers

and conversations that will appeal to both audiences while connecting to the museum's three-year exhibition plan.

?From my point of view, it's looking at what the museum has, and the themes they're striking in their upcoming seasons,? said Orford.

CanHist will be announcing the guest speakers for the 2025-2026 season of Small Town Big Ideas in August.

More information about STBI tickets, as well as upcoming and past events, can be found at [canhist.ca](http://canhist.ca).

Those interested in learning more about the Museum of Dufferin and its upcoming events can visit [www.dufferinmuseum.com](http://www.dufferinmuseum.com).