

Backgrounder

Learning about human rights

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) is partnering with the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) on educational initiatives about human rights to:

- increase the student knowledge-base;
- provide opportunity for critical thinking; and
- enable social action and activism in support for human rights internationally, nationally, and locally.

Joint initiatives with the CTF are designed to create a comprehensive national toolkit on human rights, including sector and theme-specific lesson plans. They include:

- a curriculum review of provinces and territories,
- a national scan of teacher-tested educator and youth resources/programs currently used in Canada, and
- a classroom teacher survey.

CMHR learning programs will be as important as its galleries and exhibits, designed to help students and visitors make a personal connection to human rights.

- A national students' program, now in development, ultimately bringing thousands of students a year to Winnipeg from across Canada and around the world.
- A focus on establishing the Museum as a valuable French-language educational destination, including those in French immersion and francophone programs outside of Quebec.
- Inclusive and accessible public programming, using a diverse range of activities, events and tools inside and outside the Museum.
- An engaging presence on the Worldwide Web.
- External educational initiatives through vehicles such video conferencing and lecture series.
- Programs that encourage debate and dialogue on current human-rights issues.
- Educational partnerships such as today's announcement with the CTF and recent Museum consultations with public schools' social studies curriculum planners from across Canada.

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CMHR: The highlights

As a national museum, the CMHR is a federal Crown Corporation. It is unique among national museums in that it was established with contributions from Friends of the CMHR, Government of Canada, Province of Manitoba, City of Winnipeg, and Forks North Portage Partnership. It submits an annual report and quarterly financial plans, as well as five-year corporate plans, all of which are posted on its Web site for public accessibility. Its fiscal year runs from April 1 to March 31.

- **Mandate:** To explore the subject of human rights, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada, in order to enhance the public's understanding of human rights, to promote respect for others, and to encourage reflection and dialogue.
- **Mission:** As with all of Canada's National Museums, the CMHR will play an essential role in: preserving and promoting our heritage at home and abroad; contributing to the collective memory and sense of identity of all Canadians; inspiring research, learning, and entertainment that belong to all Canadians.
- **Vision:** To be an exceptional Canadian and international institution that provides Canadians and visitors with an understanding of the history of and continuing global struggle to defend human rights including Canada's important role in that journey; promotes respect for the dignity and rights of all citizens; encourages learning, debate, dialogue and scholarship on human rights issues; celebrates exemplars of the human spirit; and is a catalyst for positive individual action.
- **Values:** The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is an embodiment of Canada's commitment to democracy, freedom, human rights, and the rule of law. Organizational values such as objectivity, innovation, and inclusiveness underpin all Museum activities so that operations mirror and advance our mandate. The Museum's status as a national institution confer a set of principles including accountability and transparency, national accessibility and engagement, collaboration, corporate citizenship, and sound research and scholarship.

Board of Trustees

The federal *Museums Act* states that: "The Board is responsible for the fulfillment of the purposes and the management of the business, activities and affairs of the museum." The CMHR Governance Policy states that a strong Board of Trustees is essential if the CMHR is to fulfill the objectives established for it. The Museum's Board, comprising up to 11 members, has the primary responsibility for ensuring that the resources provided to the institution are administered so that the mandate the government has given it is carried out in the best way possible.

Duties and responsibilities:

- The Board of Trustees of the CMHR explicitly assumes responsibility for the stewardship of the institution. As part of this responsibility, the Board oversees the conduct of the business, supervises Management, and endeavors to ensure that all major issues affecting the business and affairs of the Museum are given proper consideration.

- While Trustees are removed from the day-to-day decision making of the corporation, their role is vitally important. The Museum's Management presents information, seeks advice, and requests the approval of proposals from the Board of Trustees.

Mandate and powers:

- The Board holds Management accountable for the Museum's performance, its long-term viability and the achievement of its objectives. The Board is responsible for ensuring the Museum is managing its intellectual and capital assets, its installations and exhibitions, its collections, and its human and financial resources in accordance with best management practices and professional museum standards.
- Trustees establish the CMHR's strategic direction, safeguard its resources, monitor its performance and report to the Crown. They are also involved in stakeholder strategies and communications and succession planning for the Board and Senior Management of the Museum.

Museum operations and presence

- A transition strategy is underway to ready the organization for the shift from project development to operations in 2014.
- In September 2012, Ottawa-based GBAssociates became the independent project director, driving adherence to an integrated project schedule for the base building and its exhibits. A master project management plan governs all aspects of museum development beyond completion of the base building. The plan sets out a critical path focused on maximizing museum resources, identifying operational efficiencies and implementing needed processes to ensure operational readiness for the 2014 inauguration.
- Strategic hiring will support project timelines and objectives. The museum's staffing complement is evolving from a primarily planning function to an operations function. Strategic hiring in the areas of facilities management, education and public programming, volunteer services, security planning, rentals/events management and other areas will continue through the current fiscal year and through 2013-14.
- The Museum is working to finalize and implement policies related to ticketing and admissions, visitor services, retail, rentals and food service; expand earned-revenue channels, establish profit targets and deploy revenue generation strategies in international markets to capitalize on opportunities in the travel trade, meetings and conventions, travel media and leisure sectors.
- A detailed inauguration strategy is in development, including volunteer recruitment, host/ambassador opportunities, and partnership plans to maximize local investment and economic activity.

Inaugural exhibits and programs

- Inaugural content is based on sound research and scholarship. Gallery approaches are peer reviewed by expert panels.
- A master workflow schedule, tracked and monitored by Stantec Consulting, sets out major project milestones with clearly established timelines and benchmarks. A companion exhibit project workflow, reviewed by senior exhibit team members each week, ensures all aspects of exhibit planning and development follow a regimented schedule and work plan.
- **Exhibits:** Woven together by master exhibit designers Ralph Appelbaum Associates, the Museum galleries will take visitors on a fascinating and meaningful journey to explore the

topic of human rights through stories, first-person accounts and narratives. While the exhibits will use a variety of mediums to tell stories, the focus will always be on personal interactions with the subject material. The Museum will embrace technology and use it to enhance the storytelling and interactive experiences.

- **Programs:** in January 2012, a Director of Learning & Programming was hired to form a team that is developing accessible and engaging public and student programming (activities, events, outreach, courses, tours etc.) that reflects the Museum's mandate and promotes reflection and dialogue.
- **Interactivity:** The Museum will not only be one of the most interactive museums in the world, but its systems and methodologies will allow for constant growth of gallery exhibits, online content and efficient adaptation to new technologies.
- **Collections:** Collections will include archives, art, artefacts, and published materials. A reference centre will provide visitors the opportunity to further explore the ideas they encounter, providing access to a world-class collection of primary and secondary human-rights source material. It will serve as hub for human-rights study, scholarly research, dialogue, and engagement. Oral histories are an important part of the Museum's collections.
- **Accessibility:** An Inclusive Design Advisory Committee, comprised of eight members from across Canada representing communities with different abilities and inclusive design interests, ensures design principles will set a new standard for inclusion and accessibility among cultural institutions.
- **New technologies:** A large challenge involves design and implementation of infrastructure that will govern and manage information. The development phase of an Enterprise Content Management System project has begun, with a goal to create a system which will house all Museum-related information, including digital collections, and form the basis for exhibit interactivity, its Website and mobile offerings. It will become a new model for museums to efficiently manage information, content, and collections across their entire enterprise.

Construction and the building

- The last piece of glass was installed in September 2012.
- Base building construction is 100-per-cent tendered and will be substantially complete by the end of 2012 as scheduled.
- The Museum is now tendering and awarding exhibit fit-up contracts, and moving to complete interior construction to an occupancy-ready (dust-free) standard.
- Environmental systems and fixtures will achieve LEED Silver status.
- IT infrastructure and operational plans are underway, as well as best-practice security and facilities-management strategies.