



The
Robert
McLaughlin
Gallery

Volunteer Handbook



TABLE of CONTENTS

SECTION ONE: Overview of The Robert McLaughlin Gallery	
About the RMG	4
RMG Guiding Principles	4
History of the RMG	4
The Collection	5
The Building	5
Funding	5
Exhibition Space	6
SECTION TWO: What You Need To Know	
Steps to Becoming an Effective Volunteer	7
Institutional Benefits	7
Orientation	8
Code of Conduct	8
Vulnerable Sector Screening Check	8
How to Obtain a Vulnerable Sector Screening:	9
Emergency Contact Information	9
Scheduling	9
Absences	10
Position Descriptions	10
Staff Supervisors	10
Volunteer and Staff Surveys	11
Dismissal	11
SECTION THREE: Human Resources and Personnel Policy	
Confidentiality	12
Representing the RMG	12
Dress Code & Personal Hygiene	12
Personnel Records	13
Health and Safety Policy Statement	13
Anti-Harassment and Violence Policy Confidentiality	14
Review of Appendices and Supporting Documentation	

INTRODUCTION

At The Robert McLaughlin Gallery we recognize volunteers as active members of the RMG team, and as an integral part of building the resilience and capacity necessary to deliver relevant and impactful programming. In return, the RMG is committed to ensuring all volunteers have an enriching and satisfying experience. We provide volunteers with opportunities to develop and contribute through a greater sense of connection to the local arts community, acquire new and transferable skills, increase personal satisfaction, and enhance social networks.

The purpose of this handbook is to outline institutional history of the RMG practices and policies for new volunteers, and to serve as a reference for existing volunteers. The information contained in this handbook assists in connecting volunteers to the common values, goals and objectives upheld by the Gallery.

On behalf of the RMG, I want thank you for choosing to become a member of our team, and for your invaluable donation of time and effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Powless". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Samuel Powless
Community & Front-of-House Manager

SECTION ONE: Overview of The Robert McLaughlin Gallery

About the RMG

The largest public gallery in Durham Region, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery (RMG) occupies an inspired 36,000 square foot building designed by world-renowned architect Arthur Erickson. Featuring a permanent collection of over 4,000 works of art and seven galleries of diverse and changing exhibitions, the RMG offers vibrant programs for all ages, the RMG Shop, Lounge A, Archives, and Gallery A and education studio.

RMG Guiding Principles

We Put People First

- We empower artists as essential communicators and navigators of our complex times
- We respect and cultivate personal agency
- Our growing collection reflects changing Canadian identities and perspectives

We Contribute to a Vibrant Community

- We serve as a welcoming community hub and gathering place, cultivating civic roots and reach
- We are aware of events that impact our communities and take a firm stance in our response
- We share learning, authority, and expertise with our communities
- We are agile and responsive, making space for diverse stories, experiences, and perspectives

We Embrace Sustainable Innovation

- We foster experimentation and risk taking
- We balance artistic objectives with fiscal responsibility

The History of the RMG

The RMG was founded in 1967 after Oshawa designer William Caldwell organized an exhibition of work by local artists at a commercial space on Simcoe Street. Seeing the need for a more permanent home for the arts, C. Ewart McLaughlin and his wife Margaret (painter Alexandra Luke) offered major financial support and works from their private collection toward the establishment of an expanded public art gallery for the City of Oshawa. The Art Gallery of Oshawa was established on 17 July 1967. It later became incorporated as The Robert McLaughlin Gallery in 1969.

With its incorporation, the Gallery was renamed after Robert McLaughlin, an artist (founder of the McLaughlin Carriage Company), father of Col. R.S. (Sam) McLaughlin (founder of General Motors of Canada), and grandfather of cousins Ewart and Isabel McLaughlin. Both Ewart and Isabel were instrumental in the Gallery's development as

primary benefactors and contributors to the collection. Isabel, a founding member of the Canadian Group of Painters and a prominent modernist painter, provided ongoing generous financial support as well as significant gifts of over 100 works of important Canadian and international works.

The Collection: Modern + Beyond

The RMG houses a permanent collection of over 4,000 works acquired as either a purchase, commission or gift. Approximately 60 significant works are on display at any one time. Works include those by important Canadian modernist painters, the Group of Seven, Beaver Hall Group, and the largest museum collection of works by Painters Eleven. The RMG also holds an impressive collection of contemporary Canadian works. Each year acquisitions are made to enhance these holdings.

The Thomas Bouckley Collection, donated to the RMG by the late archivist Thomas Bouckley of Oshawa, is a digital collection containing nearly 3,000 historical photographs of Oshawa and Durham Region. About 100 works are featured in four exhibitions per year.

In addition to collecting art, the RMG acquires research materials. The RMG Archives includes artist files, sketchbooks, exhibition histories, and more. The majority of the permanent collection has been digitized and placed in an online database, which allows greater access for virtual viewing.

The Building

The original gallery was built in 1969 on its present location under the guidance of architect Hugh Allward of Allward & Gouinlock. It was a square, stone, modernist structure allowing for 6,000 feet of exhibition space, offices, and vault storage. In 1987, a \$5.4 million dollar expansion was commissioned and Arthur Erickson, renowned for his love of natural light and materials, was secured to integrate and expand the existing building for a total of 36,000 square feet, to meet the growing needs of The RMG and the community. Erickson built his design around the existing structure, incorporating the original stone façade into the dramatic lobby design, which is flooded with natural light, skylights, and soaring 35-foot ceilings.

Funding

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery building is owned by the City of Oshawa. Funding for the Gallery is generously provided by the City of Oshawa, the Ontario Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, Department of Canadian Heritage- Museum Assistance Program, The Ontario Trillium Foundation, grants from the Canadian Museum Association, as well as the RMG endowment and various private grants and donations from patrons. Other revenue received by the RMG comes from memberships, RMG Shop, classes and school tours, exhibitions and catalogue sales, rental income, and fundraising events.

Exhibition Space

The RMG showcases approximately 18 exhibitions each year, constituting large spaces (Isabel McLaughlin Gallery, R.S. McLaughlin Gallery, Alexandra Luke I & II Galleries, and Gallery A), as well as more intimate projects in the lounge and corridor areas.

Exhibition programming strives to strike a balance between historical and contemporary work exploring various media including painting, sculpture, photography, installations, video, etc., throughout the year. Each year 2-3 exhibitions from institutions from across the country are exhibited, while the remaining are curated in-house by the Exhibitions and Collections staff, as well as guest curators. The RMG also collaborates with other institutions in the production of exhibitions and travels exhibitions across the country, when feasible.

SECTION TWO: What You Need To Know

Steps to Becoming an Effective Volunteer

1. List personal goals and objectives

- Make a list of the reasons you wanted to become a volunteer, the skills you can bring to the position, and the roles and responsibilities you feel passionate about pursuing for the RMG.
- Review Volunteer Position Descriptions with your Staff Supervisor.

2. Be a student of the RMG

- There are lots of material available to help you learn more about the RMG. The more you know about the Gallery, the more you can share and contribute at meetings and in the community.
- Use the Volunteer Handbook as a guide and read 'The RMG' newsletter, [Strategic Plan](#), and Annual Report.
- Visit our website (www.rmg.on.ca)
- Find us on Social Media. Friend us on Facebook; follow us on Twitter (@thermg); check out our photos on Instagram (@rmgoshawa)

3. Take a tour

- You may have visited the RMG in the past and taken the orientation tour; however, by taking a personal tour it may help you to be even more comfortable with the Gallery. As exhibits change, there is always something new to experience.
- Don't forget to visit other art galleries, including those in Durham Region. Show your RMG membership card and get in for free! A glossary of galleries is included in the appendix.

Institutional Benefits

Active volunteers receive complimentary membership to the RMG. In addition to staying in touch with all upcoming exhibitions, events and happenings, member benefits include:

- Invitation to Private Membership events and Volunteer Recognition events
- Reduced Rate for Art Classes & Camps
- Free Admission to most Public Art Galleries in Ontario
- Voting Privileges at Annual General Meeting
- 10% Discount at RMG Shop on selected items
- On request, Staff Supervisors will provide letters of recommendation

Volunteer Orientation + Your Staff Supervisor

Orientation includes a tour, outline of volunteer opportunities, and an overview of procedures and responsibilities. In addition, specific training related to projects and positions may be required and delivered later by a supervisor. Once all necessary screening and paperwork has been completed, each volunteer will be assigned a Staff Supervisor who will be their main contact responsible for managing their day-to-day work. The Staff Supervisor will consult with the Community & Front of House Manager for feedback, direction, and assistance.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

Volunteers have the same rights and protections as staff members and are protected from abuse and harassment, and should report any such occurrence to the Community & Front of House Manager. As representative of the RMG, volunteers are expected to adhere to the highest standards of ethics, professional conduct, and confidentiality. The Code of Conduct sets the parameters by which we treat each other and is intended to create an environment that is inclusive, supportive and encouraging to all. New volunteers are required to meet with the Community & Front of House Manager to review and acknowledge that they have read and accepted the terms outlined in the “Volunteer Code of Conduct.” Volunteers will retain a copy for reference.

RMG volunteers are expected to:

- Adhere to the goals of the RMG
- Be reliable
- Respect confidentiality
- Be accountable for your actions
- Act with respect
- Ask for support when needed
- Perform task as outlined in opportunity descriptions and by staff supervisors
- Be courteous to the public, staff, members, and other volunteers
- Wear a Volunteer lanyard while on duty, unless otherwise directed

Vulnerable Sector Screening Check

Prior to being appointed, volunteers are required to complete a Vulnerable Sector Screening check for the purpose of keeping program participants, other volunteers, staff, and our organization safe.

The RMG screens all volunteers as they are often:

- entrusted with the care of vulnerable clients or customers
- responsible for public money
- working with third-party organizations that require criminal record checks

Please note: volunteers under the age of 18 are not required to obtain a Vulnerable Sector Check; instead, youth volunteers are required to provide the Community & Front of House Manager with a signed letter of consent from a parent or guardian.

How to Obtain a Vulnerable Sector Screening Check:

Volunteers living in Durham Region must visit a local police service to obtain a Vulnerable Sector Screening Check. Those living outside of the Region must visit a police station in their own municipality. The Community & Front of House Manager will provide individuals with a formal letter indicating that they will be volunteering at the RMG. Screening will be done at the volunteer's expense and this letter must be presented to the police service in order to receive the charity rate of \$20.00 (regularly \$55.00).

All checks will be mailed to the volunteer and they are responsible for providing the Community & Front of House Manager with a copy of results. The RMG will accept Vulnerable Sector Screening Checks that have been obtained previously, if they were completed within the last year. Criminal Information Requests are kept on file and valid for 3 years. The Community & Front of House Manager will contact volunteers who have come due and are required to be re-screened.

Emergency Contact Information

In case of emergency, we ask that volunteers inform us in advance of any health concerns and provide the Community & Front of House Manager with contact information of a relative or friend in case of emergencies. It is the responsibility of each volunteer to regularly update their personal contact information and emergency contact information. This update can be made by contacting the Community & Front of House Manager or Staff Supervisor.

Scheduling

Depending on the position, Volunteers will be asked to commit to a certain time frame prior to being scheduled for their first shift. Scheduled shifts are set with Staff Supervisors. It is important for all volunteers to track and keep record of the amount of time donated to the RMG. This includes any meetings, training and scheduled shifts. Volunteers are required to record their hours on "Charity Republic". The Community & Front of House Manager will review total hours submitted to Charity Republic to evaluate individual recognition awards, program development, and for granting purposes.

Absence

If a volunteer is unable to come into work on their scheduled day or in cases of emergency or illness, they are expected to inform their staff supervisor as promptly as possible.

Position Descriptions

Art Studio Assistant - Art Studio Assistants (ASA) help our renowned Learning and Engagement Department with a variety educational programming, including children's art classes and school programs developed in-house. Assisting the Learning and Engagement Department is an excellent way to learn about a range of artistic techniques and practices, as well as gain valuable practical experience working with children of all ages.

Collections Assistant - Collections Assistants support the Curatorial Department in managing the Permanent Collection, the Thomas Bouckley Collection, and the Library through a variety of tasks, such as helping with research, organizing and cataloguing art books, and other administrative work. Volunteering as a Collections Assistant is an excellent way to gain experience in archives and records management, and be actively involved in the behind-the-scenes work that is integral to the success of the Gallery.

Communications + Digital Media Associate - Associates assist our Communications and Digital Media Department with a variety of projects and tasks. Assisting the Communications and Digital Media Department is an excellent way to learn about professional communications for arts and culture, as well as how digital media technology can be leveraged to promote art institutions, engage audiences, and connect with communities in a meaningful way.

Events Team - Events Team members provide support during public programming such as RMG Fridays, Exhibition Openings, and other special events by being friendly Gallery ambassadors and by ensuring a fun and respectful environment for guests. Specific roles include Coat-Check, Gallery Attendants, and Stagehands. Assisting with Event programming at the Gallery is a great way to meet new people, and stay actively involved in the arts community.

RMG Shop Associate - Featuring the work of talented local artisans, as well as products designed and manufactured by indigenous artisans from across the country, the RMG Shop offers a unique shopping experience to Downtown Oshawa. The RMG Shop Volunteer Staff are integral to the successful operation of the Shop, and function as ambassadors to guests visiting the Gallery day-to-day.

Staff Supervisors

Each volunteer will be assigned to a specific staff member, known as a Staff Supervisor, to ensure that the placement is operating effectively for all parties. Staff Supervisors are responsible for:

- Working with volunteers to establish a schedule
- Training volunteers on their specific duties
- Supervising and evaluating volunteer performance
- Promptly reporting any issues to the Community & Front of House Manager
- Listing available shifts on Charity Republic, and ensuring volunteer hours are being properly submitted

Volunteer and Staff Surveys

The RMG will regularly monitor and evaluate the work of all volunteers. At least once a year, the Community & Front of House Manager will distribute surveys to volunteers and staff to assess the performance of the Volunteer Program.

Volunteer surveys aim to:

- Improve the overall experience for volunteers
- Assess individual contributions according to opportunity descriptions
- Identify and address areas of success and improvement in work performance
- Identify other areas of interest within the RMG

We value the experience and insights of our volunteers and encourage feedback about our organization, processes, and programs. Such feedback can be passed through Staff Supervisors or the Community and Front of House Manager.

Dismissal

The RMG reserves the right to terminate a volunteer who does not adhere to the policies and procedures of the RMG or who fails to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignments. In the instance of poor performance, the Community & Front of House Manager will discuss the issue with the volunteers, offer training/support and if this fails, dismissal will occur.

The Community & Front of House Manager will authorize the dismissal of any volunteer after consultation with the CEO, Head of Finance and Administration, and staff supervisors. Notice of dismissal will be provided in writing.

In cases of severe misconduct including fraud, theft, gross insubordination, violence or threats of violence, immediate dismissal will be warranted.

SECTION THREE: Human Resources and Personnel Policy

The purpose of the Human Resources and Personnel Policy section is to provide a consistent reference for applying human resource policies, developing new policies, and revising existing policies and practices.

Confidentiality

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery expects the highest standards of confidentiality to be maintained by volunteers, not only in regard to matters relating to The Robert McLaughlin Gallery Board of Trustees and business, but also in all membership business.

Requirements

Volunteers will observe all appropriate related policies and established lines of communication.

Volunteers will not divulge particulars regarding staff members, Board of Trustees, volunteers, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery member organizations, or organizations/individuals receiving and/or applying for funding from The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, except as required by law or as authorized by the CEO.

Breaches of this policy are grounds for dismissal. Breaches of this policy after separation may lead to legal action.

Representing the RMG

To mandate a positive image of The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, when conducting the work outside of their regular workspace, all volunteers represent The Robert McLaughlin Gallery.

All volunteers are expected to represent and conduct the business and affairs of The Robert McLaughlin Gallery in a professional manner and to treat others in a fair, respectful, equitable, and consistent manner.

Dress Code

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery requires all volunteers to present themselves in a professional manner, concerning attire, personal hygiene, and appearance. These standards are commensurate with our organizational practices of appropriate business conduct, professionalism, and dress code.

Volunteers are asked to dress appropriately for their duties. Generally, smart casual attire is accepted. This ensures that clothes are comfortable while still neat, clean, and suited to a professional environment. The following guidelines outline appropriate attire for volunteering at the RMG:

- Jeans may be worn, but like all pants they must be free of rips, frays, or stains
- Shorts, skirts, and dress may be worn but must be knee-length or longer
- High-heels (and other open-toed shoes) may be worn
- Running shoes may be worn as long as they are clean and laces are tied
- No midriff-baring or backless shirts

If you have any questions regarding the dress-code policy, please speak with your Staff Supervisor for clarification.

Personnel Records

Personnel records are sensitive information and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of individual files. Volunteers are required to report changes of address, telephone number, etc. to the Community & Front of House Manager as soon as possible, so that volunteer profiles and membership information can be updated, as required. There will only be one official personnel record for each volunteer kept; the Community and Front of House Manager will keep this record.

The personnel record will contain the following:

- Volunteer Application
- Resume
- Copy of Vulnerable Sector Screening Check
- Signed Code of Conduct
- Emergency Contact Form
- Reference checks conducted prior to volunteering
- Any letters of commendation or reference
- Any letters of discipline
- Copies of any correspondence on a volunteers behaviour or work performance

Personnel files will be destroyed one year after a volunteer has become inactive with The Robert McLaughlin Gallery unless otherwise required by legislation or because of legal action undertaken by the volunteer or The Robert McLaughlin Gallery.

Health and Safety Policy Statement

The RMG is committed to the prevention of illness and injury through the provision and maintenance of a healthy and safe workplace. The Gallery endeavors to meet its responsibilities for the health and safety of the members of its community by adhering to relevant health and safety standards and legislative requirements, and by assigning general and specific responsibilities for workplace health and safety.

The RMG takes all reasonable steps to acquaint its volunteers with their rights and duties in the workplace and applicable regulations and procedures for protecting their health and safety. Where appropriate, the RMG establishes special arrangements and programs to assist in maintaining safe conditions and work practices and facilitating

volunteers' participation in health and safety activities, including health and safety communities.

All individuals shall protect their own health and safety by complying with prevailing regulations and standards, and with safe practices and procedures established by the gallery. Volunteers must report any health hazards and unsafe conditions or practices to their Staff Supervisor for corrective action.

It is a primary duty of all supervising staff members, as defined under the Occupation Health and Safety Act, to ensure that any persons under their direction are made aware of and comply with all applicable health and safety policies and procedures. They are responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the workplace are safe and that any risks, hazards, and safety violations drawn to their attention are investigated and corrected promptly.

*Please note: staff supervisors will direct volunteers assisting with installations and set up. Under **no circumstances** should volunteers be permitted to lift heavy objects or use ladders.*

Anti-Harassment and Violence Policy

Intent

The RMG is committed to building and preserving a safe working environment for its volunteers. In pursuit of this goal, the RMG does not condone and will not tolerate acts of harassment and/or violence against or by any Gallery volunteer. As such, this policy prohibits physical or verbal threats – with or without the use of weapons – intimidation, or violence in the workplace to minimize risk of injury or harm resulting from violence to RMG volunteers.

It is also a violation of The Robert McLaughlin Gallery's Anti-Harassment and Violence Policy for anyone to knowingly make a false complaint of harassment or violence, or to provide false information about a complaint. Individuals who violate this Policy are subject to disciplinary and/or corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

Definitions

1. **Harassment** – Defined as any interaction between individuals that can be characterized as unwelcome intimidation, bullying, violence, or misconduct. The Robert McLaughlin Gallery rejects and entirely disapproves of all harassment based on the grounds of race (i.e. colour, ethnicity, origin, nationality, and descent), sex, marital status, age, sexual orientation, gender history, religious beliefs, political convictions, disability, or medical condition.

Such acts include:

- Inappropriate physical conduct
- Creating an intimidating or offensive working environment
- Creating a degrading, humiliating, or hostile work environment.

2. **Violence** – Violence is defined as any interaction or acts of aggression or hostility between individuals that involve the following: Causing physical injury to another person; the utterance of threatening remarks; creation of a reasonable fear of injury; subjecting another individual to emotional distress; damaging volunteer or volunteer property; the possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon while on the Gallery’s property or while conducting Gallery business; harassing surveillance (such as stalking); bringing weapons into the workplace; displaying extreme stress or resentment; displaying irrational behaviour.
3. **Threats** – Threats of violence or harassment are considered serious and will be treated accordingly. Threatening behaviour includes but is not limited to the following: Throwing objects at another person; saying that one is going to harm another individual or property; making threatening or menacing gestures; obsessive behaviour (e.g. unprofessional and/or excessive romantic interest); any such behavior indicating that the individual is irrational or mentally ill and poses a danger to others; escalation of personal circumstances within the workplace (e.g. impending divorce, custody battles, etc.).
4. **Weapons** – The following items are considered weapons and are strictly prohibited in the workplace or while conducting gallery business:
 - Firearms such as pistols, revolvers, shotguns, rifles, and so on
 - Dangerous knives not required for the performance of job duties
 - Any explosive or explosive devices
 - Sling shots, baseball bats, clubs, or blunt objects
 - Metal knuckles
 - Air guns, pellet guns, and blow guns
 - Any replica of the above items
 - Any other item that could be used to inflict injury upon another individual and/or property

Policy and Procedures

The RMG volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any violent or harassing behaviour towards others. Any physical, verbal, or visual act – with or without a weapon, as defined above – that threatens, intimidates, creates fear, or has the purpose of interfering with an volunteer’s job duties, or similarly creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment, is forbidden.

Review of Appendices and References

Title	Summary
Interview Questions	Used by the Community & Front of House Manager as a guide when meeting new volunteer candidates.
Reference Questions	Used by the Community & Front of House Manager as a guide when checking volunteer references.
Volunteer Code of Conduct	Intended to create an environment that is inclusive, supportive and encouraging to all. Sets out the behaviors that are expected from volunteers. Document must be read and signed by all volunteers. A copy is given to the volunteer for their records.
Emergency Contact Form	In case of emergency, volunteers are asked to list any health concerns and the contact information of a relative or friend who we may contact. Volunteers are responsible for immediately advising the Community & Front of House Manager of any changes.
Orientation Check List	Checklist used to assist with the orientation process. To be completed by the Staff Supervisor and Volunteer during their initial meeting. Items will be signed off when completed.
Volunteer Position Descriptions	<p>Outlines position description, benefits, competencies required, competencies developed and supervisor contact information. Created in consultation with the team.</p> <p>Positions Include: Art Studio Assistant Collections Assistant Communications + Digital Media Associate Events Team Member RMG Shop Associate'</p>