



The
Robert
McLaughlin
Gallery

2026-2027

YOUTH ART ACTION COUNCIL HANDBOOK





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Welcome to the Robert McLaughlin Gallery! Thank you for joining our Youth Art Action Council.

Below you'll find the information you'll need to have the best experience possible as a council member.

Please reach out if you have any questions!

- RMG Team

INTRODUCTION

At The Robert McLaughlin Gallery (RMG), we recognize volunteers as active members of the RMG team who help us deliver relevant and impactful programming within our community. In return, the RMG is committed to ensuring all volunteers have an inclusive, empowering, and positive experience. We strive to provide volunteers with opportunities to develop and contribute to a greater sense of connection and compassion with the local arts community, acquire new and transferable skills, self-confidence, advocacy, and enhance social networks. As a Youth Art Action Council member, you will not only represent the RMG, but pave a new way for reaching extended audiences and demographics.

The purpose of this handbook is to outline our institutional history, provide best practices and paperwork, 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 RMG.



WHO WE ARE

ABOUT THE RMG

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery (RMG) is Durham Region's largest public art gallery and a vital cultural destination in Downtown Oshawa. The RMG occupies a 36,000 square foot building designed by world-renowned architect Arthur Erickson.

At the heart of the collection is Canada's largest holding of works by Painters Eleven, made possible in large part through the vision and generosity of artist Alexandra Luke. Today, the RMG continues to celebrate the legacy of Canadian abstraction while presenting contemporary exhibitions, programs, and experiences that connect people through art.

EXHIBITION SPACE

The RMG showcases approximately 16 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 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. The RMG hosts exhibitions from institutions from across the country and in-house exhibitions curated by the Curatorial Team, 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.



WHO WE ARE

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, as well as the RMG endowment and various private grants and donations from patrons. Other revenue received by the RMG comes from membership fees, shop sales, classes and school tours, exhibitions and catalogue sales, venue rental income, and fundraising events.

THE HISTORY OF THE RMG

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery 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 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 pieces of important Canadian and International works.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

SCHEDULING

As a Youth Art Action Council member, you will be asked to commit to designated shifts, including set dates and fixed times for meetings. 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, or scheduled shifts. It is the volunteer's responsibility to provide the Staff Supervisor with their volunteer hours sheets for signatures.

ABSENCE

As a YAAC member, it is asked that no more than three (3) meeting days are missed. This is to ensure you remain part of any and all activities lead by the council. If you are going to be absent from a meeting day, or in case of emergency or illness, you are expected to inform the Staff Supervisor as soon as possible.

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, Staff Supervisors will discuss the issue with the volunteers, offer training/support and if this fails, dismissal will occur.

The Staff Supervisor will authorize the dismissal of any volunteer after consultation with the CEO and/or Director of Finance and Operations. 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.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

STAFF SUPERVISORS

To ensure that your participation in the YAAC is operating effectively for all parties, the council has been assigned a specific staff member known as a Staff Supervisor. 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 senior management
- Ensuring volunteer hours are properly submitted

Alix Voz is the Primary Staff Supervisor of the Youth Art Action Council.

Additional staff contact: Tamae Vassell

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

As representatives of the RMG, volunteers are expected to adhere to the highest standards of ethics, professional conduct, and confidentiality.

RMG volunteers are expected to:

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



COUNCIL INFORMATION

YAAC MEMBER DESCRIPTION

A YAAC Member, or Youth Art Action Council Member, is a teen volunteer at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery who is dedicated towards encouraging other youth to become more engaged with the arts. Through voluntary hands-on experience, the goal of the council inspire creativity, strengthen the community, and make lasting impacts. Together, we are building new opportunities for youth to connect with the arts, share their ideas, and help shape the future of the Gallery.

MEETING GUIDELINES

The Youth Art Action Council will meet biweekly at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery on Wednesday evenings from 5:30 - 7:30 PM as part of the Gallery's new Wellness Wednesday initiative. Wellness Wednesdays provide an opportunity for people to gather and embrace the healing power of art, whether it's viewing or creating.

Report any absences from meetings in advance notice to the Staff Supervisor and Council President. When a maximum of three absences are reached, dismissal from the Council may be permitted. Meetings will accommodate exam seasons.

RMG CONTACT INFO

These contacts may be used to inform the RMG team of any absences, or for a parent/guardian to reach out with any additional questions.

Alix Voz: avoz@rmg.on.ca

Tamae Vassell: tvassell@rmg.on.ca

Gallery Phone Number: (905) 576-3000



IMPORTANT DATES

FALL 2026: FIRST MEETING

Wednesday, September 23rd, 2026

5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

The RMG Youth Arts Action Council will have their first Fall 2026 meeting on Wednesday, September 23rd as part of Wellness Wednesday at the Gallery. During the first meeting, the Council will meet with their Staff Supervisor to go over the Youth Art Action Council Handbook, the expectations the RMG has set for the YAAC, and participate as active learners in the Teen Art Zone.

To gain hands-on experience leading an art activity/event, the Youth Art Action Council will be required to attend the Fall Teen Art Zone programs at the RMG. This not only gives the opportunity to learn about programming at the Gallery, but to also build connections with other engaged youth who are passionate about art making.

The YAAC will have their last 2026 meeting on Wednesday, November 18, and return to the Gallery in January 2027.

FALL 2026 MEETING DATES

- Wednesday, September 23 | 5:30 - 7:30 PM (*Teen Art Zone Day)
- Wednesday, October 7 | 5:30 - 7:30 PM
- Wednesday, October 21 | 5:30 - 7:30 PM
- Wednesday, October 28 | 6:00 - 7:30 PM (*Teen Art Zone Day Meet at 6 PM)
- Wednesday, November 4 | 5:30 - 7:30 PM
- Wednesday, November 18 | 5:30 - 7:30 PM (*Teen Art Zone Day)



PAPERWORK

YOUTH ART ACTION COUNCIL MEMBER EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In case of emergency, please list a relative or friend who we may contact. The information collected will be held in confidentiality. Please advise your Staff Supervisor if any information changes to ensure your file has the most current information available.

VOLUNTEER INFO

Full Name:
Full Mailing Address:
Phone #:
Email Address
Birth Date

If you have any additional health concerns (eg. allergies) that you would like us to know about in case of an emergency, please list them below:

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Full Name	
Relationship	
Address	
Phone # 1	Phone # 2
Birth Date	
Volunteer Signature	Date

Please sign to acknowledge that all information provided is accurate.



PAPERWORK

GUARDIAN PERMISSION LETTER

To ensure you have a parent/guardian's permission to participate in the Youth Art Action Council at the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, please have your parent/guardian sign the form below.

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery
72 Queen Street, Oshawa, ON L1H 3Z3

I, _____ (Guardian Name), give permission for
_____ (Participant Name) to attend the RMG Youth Art Action
Council at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery on Wednesday evenings from
September 16, 2026 until November 25, 2026, from 5:30 PM until 7:30 PM.

During this time frame, the participant may also be invited or welcome to attend
other gallery events and activities at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery. Photos and
videos may also be taken of the participant during this time frame.

Guardian Name: _____

Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Emergency Contact Name: _____

Emergency Contact Phone Number: _____



PAPERWORK

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Statement of Purpose

The Volunteer Code of Conduct sets out the behaviours that are expected from all volunteers of The Robert McLaughlin Gallery (RMG). 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.

Volunteer Responsibilities

As a volunteer of the RMG, I am committed to:

1. Treating all individuals (visitors, staff, and fellow volunteers) with courtesy, respect, fairness, sensitivity, and dignity.
2. Respecting and maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information, whether written or verbal, to any persons, authorities, or organizations.
Confidential information includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Information concerning the organization, its paid or voluntary works, its members, financial resources, or donors.
 - b. Information regarding the organization's clients.
3. Upholding the RMG's positive reputation and refraining from misrepresenting the Gallery and its staff.
4. Accepting feedback from staff supervisors and asking for help when needed in order to perform volunteer duties to the best of one's ability.
5. Accepting assignment(s) with an open mind and a willingness to learn.
6. Refraining from pressuring others to accept personal political, cultural, or religious beliefs.
7. Staying informed on exhibitions, events, and programs at the RMG.
8. Being reliable and punctual for shifts and meetings- if you will be late or cannot attend, inform staff supervisor(s) with as much notice as possible.
9. Communicating respectfully and professionally in public, including social media.
10. Avoiding conflict of interest situations and refraining from actions that may be perceived as such.
11. Dress in an appropriate manner for the professional gallery environment.



Safety

1. Respect and use all equipment appropriately and as required for assigned duties.
2. Abstain from all illegal activity including the use, possession, and/or influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on volunteer duty.
3. Follow safe workplace practices, including participation in applicable education sessions, using appropriate personal safety equipment, and reporting accidents, injuries, and unsafe situations.
4. Refrain from using scented products including perfumes, colognes, lotions, etc.
5. Discrimination and/or harassment in any form are completely inappropriate and will not be tolerated.
6. Abusive language and/or disruptive behaviour are completely inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

Reporting

If a volunteer has any new ideas, proposals, difficulties, or concerns, they should promptly contact their Staff Supervisor at (905) 576-3000. To facilitate this, volunteers are encouraged to discuss any problems they experience with the Staff Supervisor at the earliest opportunity.

Name of Volunteer	Name of Staff Supervisor
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Signature of Volunteer	Signature of Staff Supervisor
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Date	Date
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