

Interpretation & Education Policy

MUSEUM
STRATHROY-CARADOC

1. Introduction

Interpretation and education programs are central to the Museum Strathroy-Caradoc mandate, recognizing the responsibilities the museum carries with respect to educating the community. Through a series of varied programs, displays, activities and events, the museum strives to engage the community in a greater understanding of their cultural heritage.

Interpretive and education programs are firmly based on the Museum Strathroy-Caradoc collection, and complement the goals and objectives contained in the museum's statement of purpose. Such programs are designed to address criteria contained in the research, exhibition and conservation policies formulated by the museum, and follow recognized educational methodology and practices.

As a community museum owned and operated by the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc, the Museum Strathroy-Caradoc functions within the community as an institution working in concert with formal and informal educational partners to provide a valuable educational resource.

2. Interpretation/Education Programs

The variety of programs that Museum Strathroy-Caradoc offers are influenced by such factors as space, the availability of artifacts in the collection, the number of staff, the annual budget and hours of operation. However, Museum Strathroy-Caradoc incorporates into its interpretation and education policy provisions for the following types of programs:

2.1 General Public

This area of programming includes a wide variety of services and programs ranging from guided tours and working demonstrations, to exhibits and displays.

2.1.1 Guided tours are to be offered during public hours, where possible, by means of appointment arranged in advance.

2.1.2 Special assistance with research is to be provided, where possible, by means of an appointment arranged in advance.

2.2 School Interpretation and Education

This area of programming is the most important function of the Museum Strathroy-Caradoc with respect to formal learning and education. A single program for all school students is neither applicable nor recommended, as

the basic program has to be altered to meet the specific skills, needs and abilities of the following user groups:

2.2.1 Elementary (Prim. K-3, Jun. 4-6, Inter. 7-8):

The specific needs and expectations of the defined learner/user group must be considered when planning educational programs for elementary students.

2.2.2 Secondary (Inter. 9-10, Sen. 11-13):

The specific needs and expectations of the defined learner/user group must be considered when planning museum education programs for secondary students. Subject areas for programming range from geography, history, mathematics and science, to family studies, arts education, individual in society, and trades and technology.

2.2.3 Post Secondary:

Educational Programs for this user group should deal with aspects of adult/continuing education, providing opportunities for both formal and life-long learning experiences. Topics to be considered in program planning include local history, techniques of conservation and preservation, genealogical and historical research, arts and crafts, etc.

2.3 In-house Training

Programs are to be designed to assist permanent, seasonal, and volunteer staff as well as Museum Advisory Committee members in interpretation techniques and educational theory.

2.4 Professional Development for Teachers

Organized professional development days are to be developed for introducing teachers to the museum, and for sharing ideas and expectations in preparation for student field trips.

2.5 Special Events/Exhibits

Events/exhibits provide a means of communication and are an important factor in audience development. They also provide ample opportunity for the integration of interpretation and education programs.

2.6 Outreach/Extension

This type of programming is an essential aspect of museum promotion and visibility in the community, and contributes another dimension to its interpretive and education programs. Activities might include participation at fall fairs, public speaking, media interviews, walking tours, traveling displays and education kits.

2.7 Other Audiences

Programs catering to the skills and abilities of pre-school children, and satisfying the needs of early childhood learners may also be developed. Special needs groups (i.e. physically disabled, sight and hearing impaired, mentally handicapped, learning disabled) should have access to both on- and off-site programs. Orientation and training sessions should be developed for senior citizens and retired members of the community, translating into an essential volunteer source.

3. Program Objectives

The interpretation and education programs that are offered by Museum Strathroy-Caradoc strive to achieve the following objectives:

- 3.1 To develop and maintain Museum Strathroy-Caradoc as a dynamic institution committed to providing the community with engaging, innovative, informative, and accurate educational resources;
- 3.2 To develop and maintain Museum Strathroy-Caradoc as a current and relevant educational resource for the community.
- 3.3 To provide the community with educational opportunities, and promote community involvement through interactive educational experiences;
- 3.4 To maintain a high standard of accessibility and flexibility in order to meet the programming and educational needs of all user groups;
- 3.5 To educate the community about the purpose and function of museums as an institution that is vital to our culture and society;

4. Fees

General admission and program service fees are required in order to cover the cost of program development, administration and maintenance. Certain special events may not require a fee, and some fees may be waived at the discretion of the Director/Curator.

5. Resources Required

Museum Strathroy-Caradoc requires the following resources in order to offer interpretation and education programs:

- 5.1 *Funds*: The financial resources required in developing and operating programs are recognized components of the Museum Strathroy-Caradoc annual budget.
- 5.2 *Space*: Interpretation and education activities require a defined amount of space within the Museum Strathroy-Caradoc facility.
- 5.3 *Staff*: A professional staff is required to develop, implement, evaluate, and promote interpretive and educational services and programs.

6. Responsibilities

The following outlines the responsibilities of the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc, the museum Advisory Committee, Museum Strathroy-Caradoc, professional staff members, and third party contributors with respect to interpretation and education:

- 6.1 The Museum Strathroy-Caradoc Advisory Committee recommends the annual inclusion of interpretation/education categories in the annual operating budget.
- 6.2 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc shall, where possible, provide staff with the physical, human and financial resources necessary to develop and implement interpretation/education programs.
- 6.3 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc is responsible for compliance with all copyright legislation related to the development and implementation of interpretation/education programs produced by museum staff.
- 6.4 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc is responsible for compliance with the Standards for Community Museums in Ontario relative to the development and implementation of interpretation/ education programs produced by museum staff.
- 6.5 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc is *not* responsible for compliance with copyright legislation or museum standards related to the development and implementation of interpretation/education programs produced by third party contributors.

- 6.6 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will establish priorities for the development of interpretation and education programs.
- 6.7 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will provide sufficient space and a safe and secure environment for interpretation and education programs.
- 6.8 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will demonstrate a commitment to accuracy and objectivity in interpretation and education programs.
- 6.9 Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will demonstrate a commitment to ethical behaviour in interpretation and education programs.
- 6.10 The Director/Curator will ensure that the themes, content and formats of interpretation and education programs are consistent with the museum's statement of purpose and meet the needs and interest of the communities it serves.
- 6.11 The Director/Curator will demonstrate a commitment to meet conservation standards in the use of artefacts.
- 6.12 The Director/Curator will ensure that responsibility for interpretation and education programming is delegated to appropriately trained staff.
- 6.13 The professional staff members associated with the development of educational programs and activities are responsible for ensuring that these components are systematically evaluated and updated as necessary.

5. Policy Review and Approval

The Museum Strathroy-Caradoc *Interpretation and Education Policy* is approved by the Museum Strathroy-Caradoc Advisory Committee.

The *Interpretation and Education Policy* is to be reviewed on an annual basis, or at any time that changes are deemed necessary. The Director/Curator, in conjunction with the professional staff, conducts the review. The revised version is submitted to the Museum Strathroy-Caradoc Advisory Committee for approval.

This *Interpretation and Education Policy* may not be altered without the consent of the Museum Strathroy-Caradoc Advisory Committee.