

# inSpire

A newsletter from Friends of The Spire



## **Dear Friends:**

It has been a while since we have contacted our supporters and those who have asked to be part of our mailing list. We are grateful for your support!

The pandemic certainly affected our community and our building. As of the beginning of December, we are pleased to report that use of our space by performance and many other organizations has now increased to close to pre-pandemic levels.

Here is an update regarding changes and progress for 2021-22.

## **December 2022**

## Continuity and Change at The Spire in 2021-22

**Staffing Changes at The Spire.** At the end of June 2022, our long-time Operations Manager Donald Mitchell left his office for the final time, having worked tirelessly on our behalf for more than 10 years. Don wanted some new adventures, and we all agree that he left the operation in excellent shape. The congregation celebrated Don's time with us at a gala event in June, complete with congratulatory speeches, a song in tribute, and many good wishes from everyone.

On Hallowe'en we welcomed new General Manager, Sam MacLeod, who brings experience in operations (Thousand Islands Playhouse) as well as community building and fund-raising (Almost Home). Sam is



keen to work with the boards of Friends of The Spire, the Business Management Group, and the congregation of Sydenham Street United Church, to advance the collective work of our organizations.

Sam's task will be interesting, given the variety of tenants, users and groups involved in our wonderful heritage building. We look forward to working with Sam.

We also welcomed Custodian Les Campbell, at right, who comes with a wealth of experience in construction, carpentry, and



problem-solving.

For more than a year, Dana Ruprecht has been our media specialist, uploading wonderfully creative images of the building and people who learn, sing, play and work there. Find Dana's work



on our Facebook page or Insta Gram, and her photo below.

Photos by Dana Ruprecht

## Board Changes at Friends of The Spire Inc.

We are sad to report that in December 2021, long-time board member Ross Cameron died, leaving a large hole in our board. Ross had worked tirelessly to deal with issues of governance for our operations. We connected in the spring with Cynthia Beach, whose



wide experience in city affairs, community building and actual community buildings, has already served us well on the Board of Friends. Marc Garniss also joined the Board. A significant handover involved the move of founding chair Bruce Hutchinson to Past Chair, and the elevation of Steve Campbell to Chair and President of Friends. Steve is a hands-on leader, having renovated the two small washrooms on the second floor, helped haul the large new cooler into the lower kitchen, and become a committed member of The Fixers.

Photo above, Steve pauses during some “fixer” work. Photo right: Bruce, too, is hands-on.



**Building Changes at The Spire.** The Board of Friends has worked hard to secure grants from the Government of Canada’s Canadian Communities Revitalization Fund, the Kinsmen Club of Kingston, the Churchill Family Foundation, the Smith Family Foundation, and a local philanthropist, as well as many donors from



the city and beyond – to help complete several projects to maintain and sustain the building. In the summer of 2021, we installed 30 new windows in the non-heritage portion of the building and resurfaced the heritage portion of the roof – seriously expensive projects that will keep everyone warm and dry for a couple of decades. We are currently renovating both kitchens, up and down, to make them more environmentally friendly and commercially appropriate. We have encountered many delays because of supply chain slow downs across the

globe, but our new appliances are in, and we are exploring options to outfit a dining room. Installing new countertop, at left. Photos Ellie Deir



Our most recent and loveliest addition to this beautiful heritage building is **The Spire Gallery**, officially opened on October 29, 2022, with a toast of prosecco served by Eric Carstens, and an opportunity to view paintings or drawings of the exterior by various artists. Barb Carr and Steve Campbell cut the Spire Gallery ribbon at the



official opening in the Narthex.

**Future projects** include enhancements to the performance hall/sanctuary to provide new sound and lighting as well as projection and streaming capabilities. Friends are currently exploring various options to ensure that the heritage



features that we all love are maintained while we improve the audience and performer experience for all. Below, an audience enjoys an October concert. Above: modern lighting, heritage capital.

Photos Dana Ruprecht



**Thank you.** As always, we are grateful for the many supporters of our venture – individuals and families who see the value to our community of the work we do at The Spire. Your support is invaluable to us.

As we approach the end of the year and the final days to receive a charitable tax receipt for 2021, we hope you will consider a donation to Friends of The Spire.

Your gift helps to continue the ongoing work we need to do to maintain and improve our community hub, which, among other things, provides affordable space for many local not-for-profit organizations who use The Spire.

You may earmark your donation in a variety of ways. Donations may be made through our [website](#). If you make a donation, please accept our sincere thanks.



Photo Jennifer McKendry

On behalf of Friends of The Spire, we wish you and your loved ones a very warm and joyous Holiday Season and a wonderful new year.

We look forward to seeing you at [The Spire!](#)

For Friends of The Spire, Inc.

82 Sydenham Street, Kingston, K7L 3H4

<https://www.thespirekingston.org/>