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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fort Heritage Precinct to Receive 2024 Leadership Award for Engagement from the Alberta Museums Association

August 14, 2024

Edmonton, Alberta - The Alberta Museums Association (AMA) is pleased to announce the Fort Heritage Precinct as the recipient of the AMA's 2024 Leadership Award for Engagement, in recognition for their work to share authority and tell a fuller picture of the heritage and culture of Fort Saskatchewan through their Community Partnered Exhibit Series.

The Fort Heritage Precinct's Community Partnered Exhibit Series sought to more accurately and fulsomely represent the diverse community of Fort Saskatchewan. Pairing the technical expertise and experience of the museum team with stories provided by the community opened the doors to members of the community who have, hitherto, been either unrepresented or underrepresented by collecting practices, exhibits, and programs. These exhibits included partnerships with the Fort Black Society, the Robin Hood Association for people with developmental disabilities, the Fort Saskatchewan Pride Committee, and a conceptual art exhibit by Steacy Easton, a disabled and LGBTQ+ artist, that explored ideas around family, memory, and the changing built environment of Fort Saskatchewan.

The exhibits opened a public space for community members to share their stories in their own words and increase public knowledge about their organizations and different cultures, perspectives, and experiences. For example, the Robin Hood Association (RHA) exhibit featured artwork created by RHA clients and panels on which RHA clients wrote about what diversity and inclusion means to them. The Fort Black Society Exhibit introduced visitors to the rich and diverse cultures of Africa through material culture, audio-visual components, and a program featuring East African food, stories about West African customs, and the experience of a first winter in Canada.

"This initiative not only showcased the diverse cultural backgrounds within our community but also set a precedent for future collaborations aimed at inclusivity," said Gloria Brathwaite, President of the Fort Black Society. "The Fort Heritage Precinct's proactive approach in addressing historical exclusions and their dedication to creating an inclusive community is truly inspiring and worthy of recognition."

The efforts made to break out of the institutional norm of focussing exclusively on settler and North-West Mounted Police narratives has resulted in exceptional relationship-building and community storytelling in Fort Saskatchewan, positioning the museum as a place where everyone can go to learn about others, and where they can share their own stories as well.

Nominations for the Leadership Awards are adjudicated by the Leadership Awards Committee, comprised of Individual Members of the AMA. The Award will be presented at an



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Awards Ceremony during the AMA's 2024 Fall Gathering. The Fort Heritage Precinct's achievements will be celebrated during this Awards Ceremony, taking place on Saturday, September 14, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology in Drumheller, Alberta.

Background

The Leadership Award for Engagement recognizes those who cultivate museum and community interaction. Recipients in this category are continually searching for ways to engage the public with culture. They see museums as a fundamental part of society - as something to be accessed and embraced by everyone. They lend their space and ideas to engaging programming and other activities that take museums outside their traditional roles in society and encourage inclusive conversations. They create opportunities for reconciliation, hope, and healing. They seek to connect people to museum collections in unusual and daring ways. They advocate for museums as evidenced through their everyday work. They engage various communities to tell exceptional stories that could otherwise be overlooked. These initiatives provide meaningful experiences for Albertans to discover more about the stories of the people and cultures that define our history and shape our modern communities.

The AMA Leadership Awards recognize the exceptional work of Alberta museums and museum professionals in creating value, accessibility, and relevance in their communities. The Leadership Awards recognize excellence, innovation, and creativity in Alberta's museum community in three categories: Engagement, Education, and Sustainability. More information about the AMA Leadership Awards can be found on the [AMA website](#).

The Alberta Museums Association provides a variety of programs and services to over 500 museums and museum professionals across Alberta. Through its focus on community engagement, social responsibility, and sustainability, the AMA utilizes its funding, accreditation, awards, and professional development opportunities to support institutions in their vital role as leading contributors to the social, cultural, and educational fabric of Alberta. The AMA believes that museums can leverage their positions as trusted institutions to encourage respectful dialogue, provide educational opportunities, and bring awareness to some of society's most pressing issues.

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