

LEIGHTON --- ART CENTRE

EXPANDING HORIZONS
ART & NATURE STUDIO REDEVELOPMENT



“Art is one of our greatest tools for expressing our shared humanity and for helping us understand our connection within the natural world.”

– Christina Cuthbertson
Executive Director

Our relationship with nature is one of the most pressing issues of our times. At Leighton Art Centre we explore this relationship on 80 acres of grassland in the foothills overlooking the Rocky Mountains. We do this in many ways, including:

- Collaborating with artists who engage with natural systems.
- Working with scientists to care for grassland ecosystems.
- Honouring Indigenous histories, traditions, and art forms that teach interconnection with nature.
- Acknowledging that environmental crisis is unevenly born by equity-seeking communities.
- Centering the needs of the flora and fauna in our operations.
- Giving children the tools of exploration and creativity, paving the way for future innovators.

For 50 years the Art & Nature Studios have been the site of this important work. Unfortunately, they're at the end of their lifespans and urgently need to be replaced. We need your help!

Will you join us on this path?

“I want all kids to be able to make art”

– Nicholas

Nicholas organized a bottle drive and donated the proceeds to give financial assistance to families who can't afford Art & Nature Programs. You can help too! By making a donation today, you leave a powerful legacy for the future!



BUILDING ON A LEGACY

“Barbara Leighton believed anyone could be an artist, because everyone has an inherent need to create. She built an organization that was ahead of its time to explore the relationship between art and nature. We will continue her legacy with a tailor-built Art & Nature Studio to inspire future generations.” – Melissa Cole, Board Member

In the 1970s, Barbara Leighton built the Art & Nature Studios because she knew they were a catalyst for something bigger. They were the containers for creativity, innovation, and exploration. She encouraged everyone to study the land and to learn about the bugs, trees, and flowers. She inspired countless people to expand their horizons. **Now it's your turn to keep this legacy alive! Here's how:**

- **Your support will ensure continuous programming for children, artists, and community.** Instead of closing our doors we have leased a temporary structure to allow more than 6000 students to participate in *Art & Nature* school programs. Without your support, these kids won't have the chance to learn, explore, and create in this unique environment.
- **Your contribution is vital to keeping this ecosystem healthy.** In the next three years we will raise \$3 Million to develop a new Art & Nature studio, which will improve environmental sustainability, organizational capacity, and our efforts to care for the grassland ecosystem at Leighton Art Centre.

“We plant the seeds of creativity by giving kids a chance to explore, get dirty, and make “mistakes” all in a supportive and constructive environment. We’re growing the leaders of tomorrow!”

– Coreen Thornhill, Manager of Public Programs



“BALLYHAMAGE”
the traditional
schoolhouse that was
Barbara’s first Art &
Nature Studio

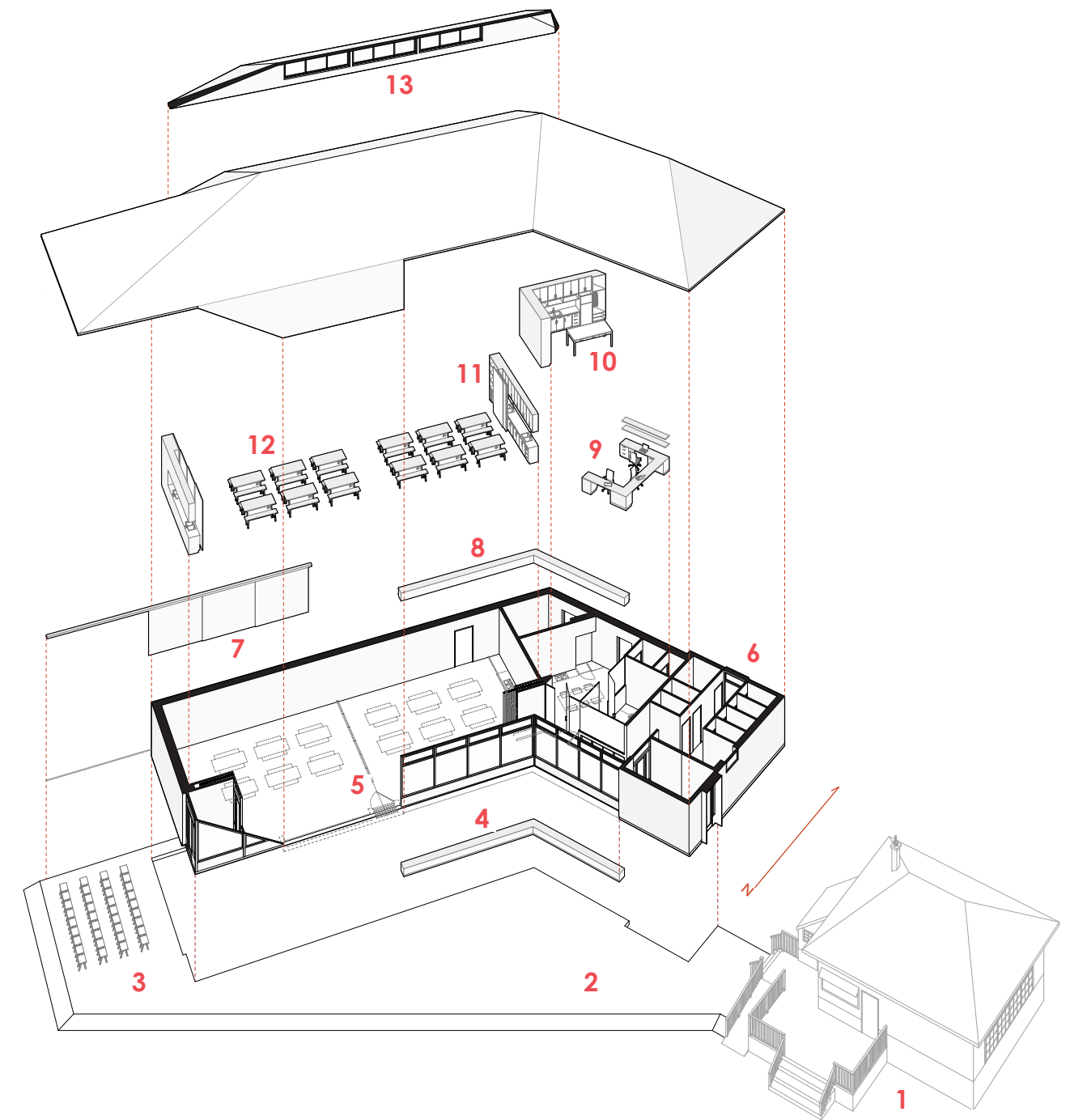
Barbara Leighton was a talented artist who shared her knowledge widely in her community, empowering countless people to live a creative life.

Leighton Art Centre continues this legacy by providing opportunities kids, artists, and to community learn, make art, and share wisdom.

BIG SKIES OPEN MINDS

“The new Art & Nature Studio will give Leighton Art Centre a flexible space where they can open minds to new ideas! The building itself will be a teaching tool, foregrounding environmental sustainability and inclusive design.”

– Simon Fernandes
Principle Architect, AAA, Works of Architecture



ART & NATURE STUDIO FEATURES

- 1 Ballyhamage 2 Outdoor Gathering Space 3 Outdoor Classroom
- 4 Outdoor Seating 5 Acoustic Room Divider 6 Accessible Washrooms
- 7 Sliding Weather Screen 8 Interior Storage & Window Bench 9 Admin Space 10 Meeting Room
- 11 Millwork Storage 12 Fully Accessible Studios 13 Clerestory Dormer

IT'S TIME TO BLOOM

A new studio is imperative to achieving our mission and vision. It is also crucial to our long-term financial sustainability. More than half of our annual visitors participate in programs in the Art & Nature Studios. Without your support we will not have enough space to maintain our current level of programming nor will we be able to grow into the future. **Your contribution to the Expanding Horizons Campaign will ensure sustainability for years to come.**

PROJECT TIMELINE

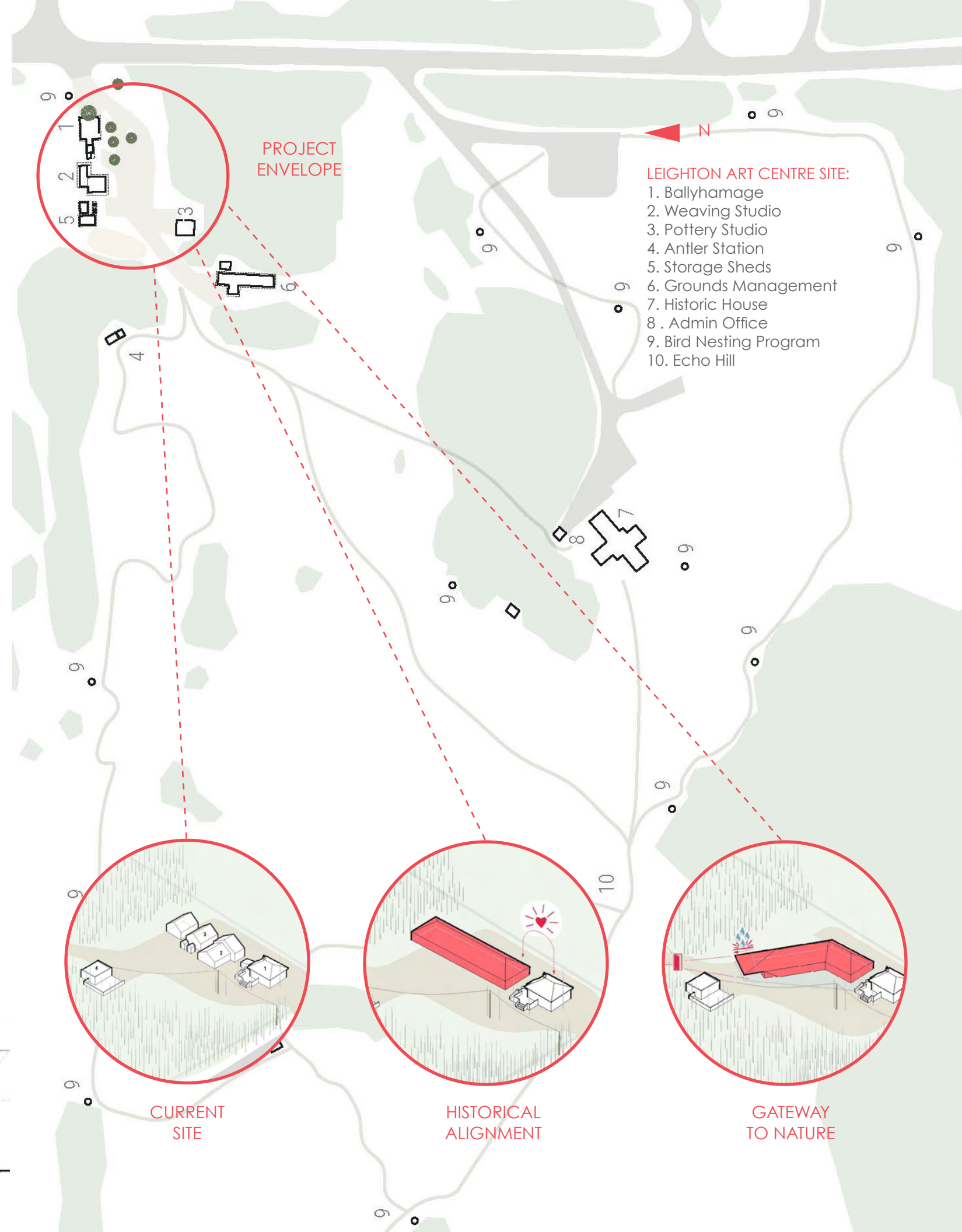
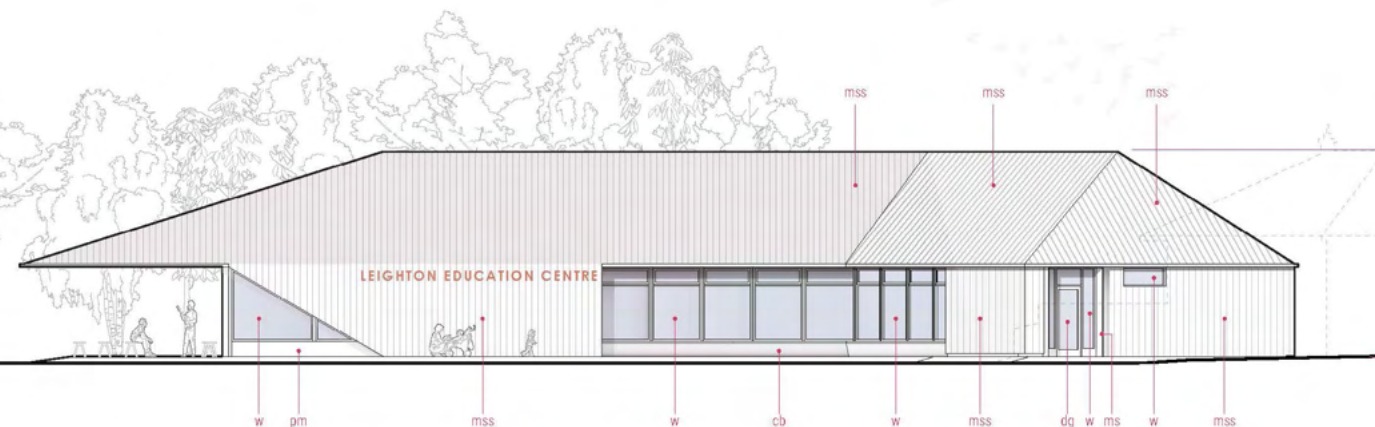
2020 Infrastructure assessment determines Weaving Studio and Pottery Studio urgently need to be replaced. "Ballyhamage" requires renovations.

2021 *Education Centre Operations and Strategic Direction Review* outlines key demographics, areas of growth, partnerships, and forecasted budgets for the first five years in the new Art & Nature Studio. Works of Architecture come on board to design the studio.

2022 Calgary Foundation generously supports a temporary structure to enable programming until 2025. A feasibility study and open house are conducted to gain valuable feedback from community stakeholders.

2023 – 2024 Focus on fundraising, community outreach, planning, and development. Break ground on new Art & Nature Studio. Begin construction project management.

2025 and Beyond Launch new Art & Nature Studio and continue to foster transformative experiences with art and nature.



FLOURISHING WITH ART & NATURE

The Art & Nature Studio is so much more than a building, it's a chance to make a difference in our community.

We have seen first-hand the confidence and resilience that comes from giving kids tools for expressing themselves. Each year we help thousands of children express themselves through art in new and creative ways. This makes a huge impact on students who struggle to learn in traditional ways, children learning English as a second language, and kids experiencing a difficult situation. **We need your help to continue offering transformative experiences with art and nature.** By donating today, you ensure our leaders of tomorrow develop the creativity they'll need to flourish in school and beyond! Here's what we can do together:

- **By contributing now you're ensuring the future of our programming.** The new studio will allow us to continue offering Art & Nature school programs. Additionally, we plan to grow this program from 6,000 to 10,000 students by year three.
- **You will make it possible to increase capacity for summer camps by 50%.** This popular program sells out quickly and we often see kids returning year after year. As one of our longest-running programs, many former summer campers are now grown and sending their kids to camp.
- **A donation to this project means more artists will be supported at every stage of their artistic development.** The new studio will follow in Barbara's footsteps and make it possible to double artist workshops by year five.
- **You can give back to the community by supporting improved accessibility.** The development of a fully accessible, multi-purpose space will broaden community connection and engagement.



"I remember coming to Leighton Art Centre when I was a kid - that's why I became a teacher! Years later, I was excited to come back and teach Art & Nature programs. I discovered how powerful learning could be when you use hands-on experiences with art and nature. I became a better teacher and now I get to see the next generation flourish."

– Lauren Wills, Art & Nature Educator

A PLACE OF BELONGING

We want to share this place with everyone! Your participation is vital to helping Leighton Art Centre fulfill this purpose.

You'll be standing up for:

- **Supporting children and artists with disabilities.** The new studio will be fully accessible and allow people with diverse abilities to enjoy the space in comfort. Additionally, Leighton Art Centre enjoys a strong relationship with National accessArt Centre (NaAC), Canada's leading arts organization supporting artists with developmental disabilities. From 2018 to 2023 LAC has partnered with NaAC to develop and showcase the work of artists with a range of developmental disabilities.
- **A safe and healthy creative space** where discrimination is never tolerated and artists of all skill levels are supported in their artistic development. For 50 years Leighton Art Centre has been a launching pad for emerging artists.
- **Subsidized programs for schools and families who need financial support.** With the help of donors, Leighton Art Centre offers bursaries to schools and families who require financial support. With your help we aim to triple the scope of this program over the next five years.
- **Hands-on tours for under-served communities** including English-second-language groups, seniors, and at risk youth. Over the next five years, we will strengthen our commitment to under-served communities by developing programs with diverse community partners.
- **Commitment to the Calls to Action outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.** In 2022 we received funding for a Truth and Reconciliation Advisor to develop content and policy that will strengthen our commitment Indigenous communities and build on our responsibility as stewards of history and nature.



Thank you for letting us have a
chairs for letting us go
on the fieldtrip for
free!! I Loved the
bons and obey the Rebl.
for all of



One of the most significant costs associated with our programming is transportation. Buses are expensive, but they're also high occupancy vehicles that carry up to 72 people at a time - making them an environmentally efficient way to travel. **Let us know if you'd like to help bring kids to Leighton Art Centre by donating to programming!**



Did you know the land at
Leighton Art Centre speaks?

Each year thousands of children learn about sound waves when experience "Echo Hill." This is a fun way to learn about sound and a great chance to discuss the idea of listening to the land. Some ornithology experts use sound to determine the health of an environment by recording bird song. This helps them determine what species of bird are in the area, how many there, and if they are happy and healthy.

LISTENING TO THE LAND

"To Leighton Art Centre: Thank you! I loved the echoing, and the table of bones, and the mountains!"

– Kaden, Grade 1
Art & Nature School Program Participant

Leighton Art Centre is an outstanding place to experience nature. Hands-on nature programs strengthen our connection to this important grassland ecosystem, which raises environmental awareness and opportunities for stewardship. **Here's how you can help the land by supporting the *Expanding Horizons Campaign*:**

- **The new studio will significantly improve our environmental impact.** The new Art & Nature Studio improve water and waste management and will incorporate rain water harvesting, solar energy, and sustainable design.
- **Increased programming space** will allow us to expand our environmental programs. We currently run a migratory bird ecology study led by naturalist Jim Critchley, which monitors and studies the ecology of mountain bluebirds, tree swallows, house wrens, bats, and native bees. Ongoing collaboration with scientists will improve our stewardship initiatives.
- **The Art & Nature Studio will enable new types of programs** such as artists-in-residence with artists exploring the relationship between art and nature. We will also have the capacity for lecture series (including virtual) with ecologists who study grasslands, and storytelling events with Indigenous teachers.

PLANTING SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

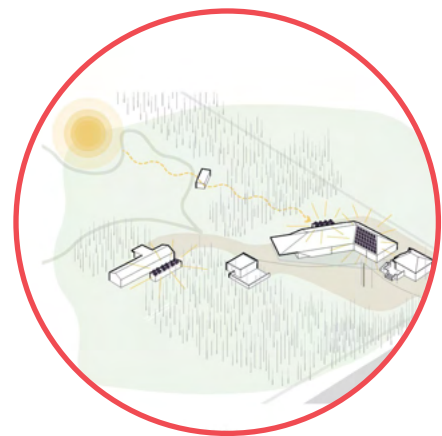
CHILDREN OF TODAY WILL BE THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW.

Let's give them a love of nature, a place of refuge, and all the creativity they'll need to tackle the challenges ahead. Your contribution is an investment in their future.

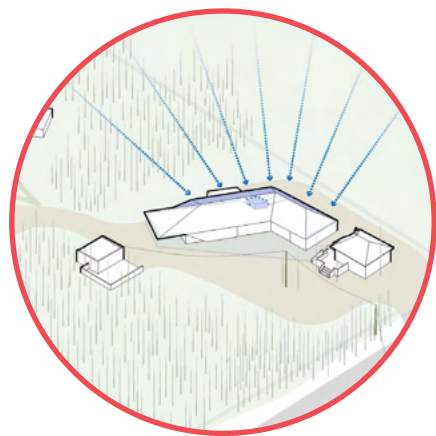
Here's what we can do together:

- **Protect the land** and its natural inhabitants ensuring everyone has the chance to enjoy its diversity and splendour.
- **Harness the power of art** to open minds to big ideas and innovative ways of seeing the world and our place within it.
- **Partner with Indigenous communities** to begin repairing historical injustices.
- Make sure our leaders of tomorrow have many ways to **express complex ideas**.

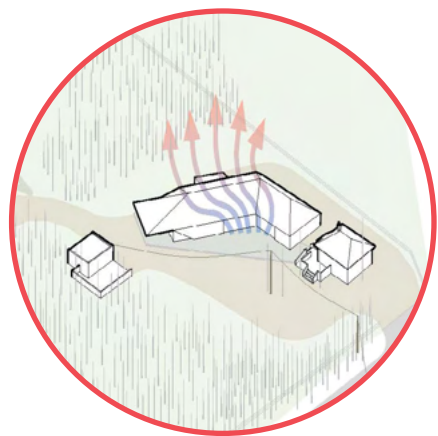
The lanterns in this image were part of *INISKIM: Return of the Buffalo*. *INISKIM* used spoken word, traditional Blackfoot song, dance and Nakoda drumming to retell the story of the buffalo in North America. The story of the buffalo is a starting point for cultural exchange, and their return is a significant moment pointing toward healing and a better way forward. Their return is also an important ecological moment that teaches us of our shared connection to the land, and to the many beautiful facets of nature. *INISKIM* is just one example of how Leighton Art Centre harnesses the power of art and nature to understand our past, present, and future.



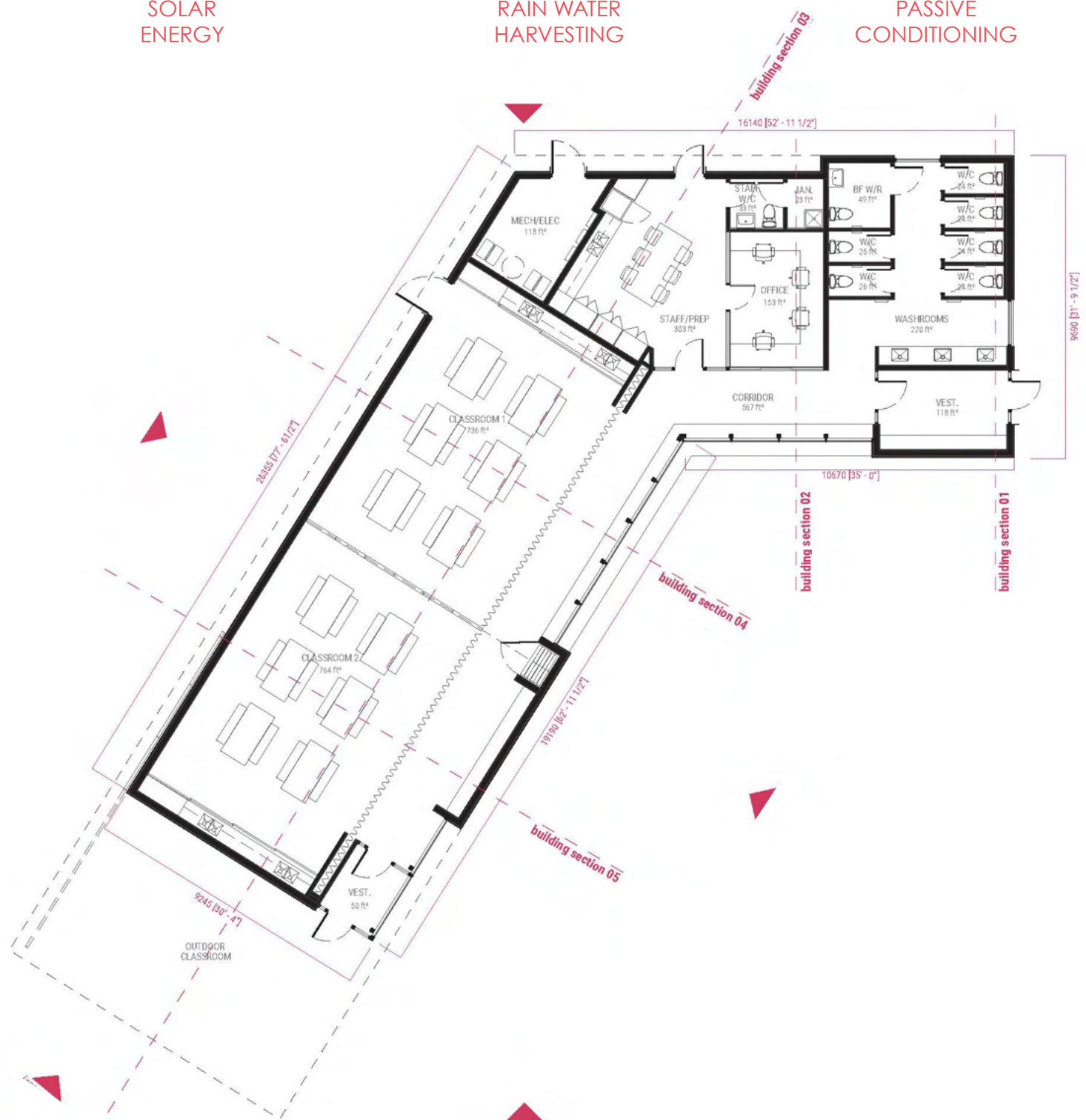
SOLAR ENERGY



RAIN WATER HARVESTING

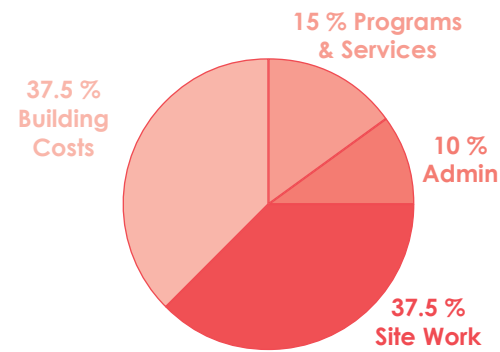


PASSIVE CONDITIONING

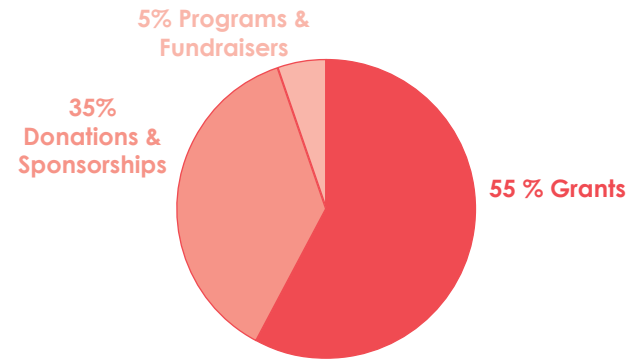


CAPITAL PROJECT \$3M

Anticipated Expenses



Anticipated Revenue Sources



YOUR GIFT

Your gift will make a significant difference to children, artists, and our community. Our most urgent need is to raise at least \$500K to match with grants. However, you may prefer to designate your gift for programming or our legacy endowment. We would be happy to find the right fit for your gift.

PROJECT SCOPE

Expanding Horizons: Art & Nature Studio Redevelopment will address the urgent need to replace aging infrastructure in the Education Centre. This is the first phase in addressing larger accessibility and capacity limitations at Leighton Art Centre.

Current Project: 2020 - 2025

Art & Nature Studios

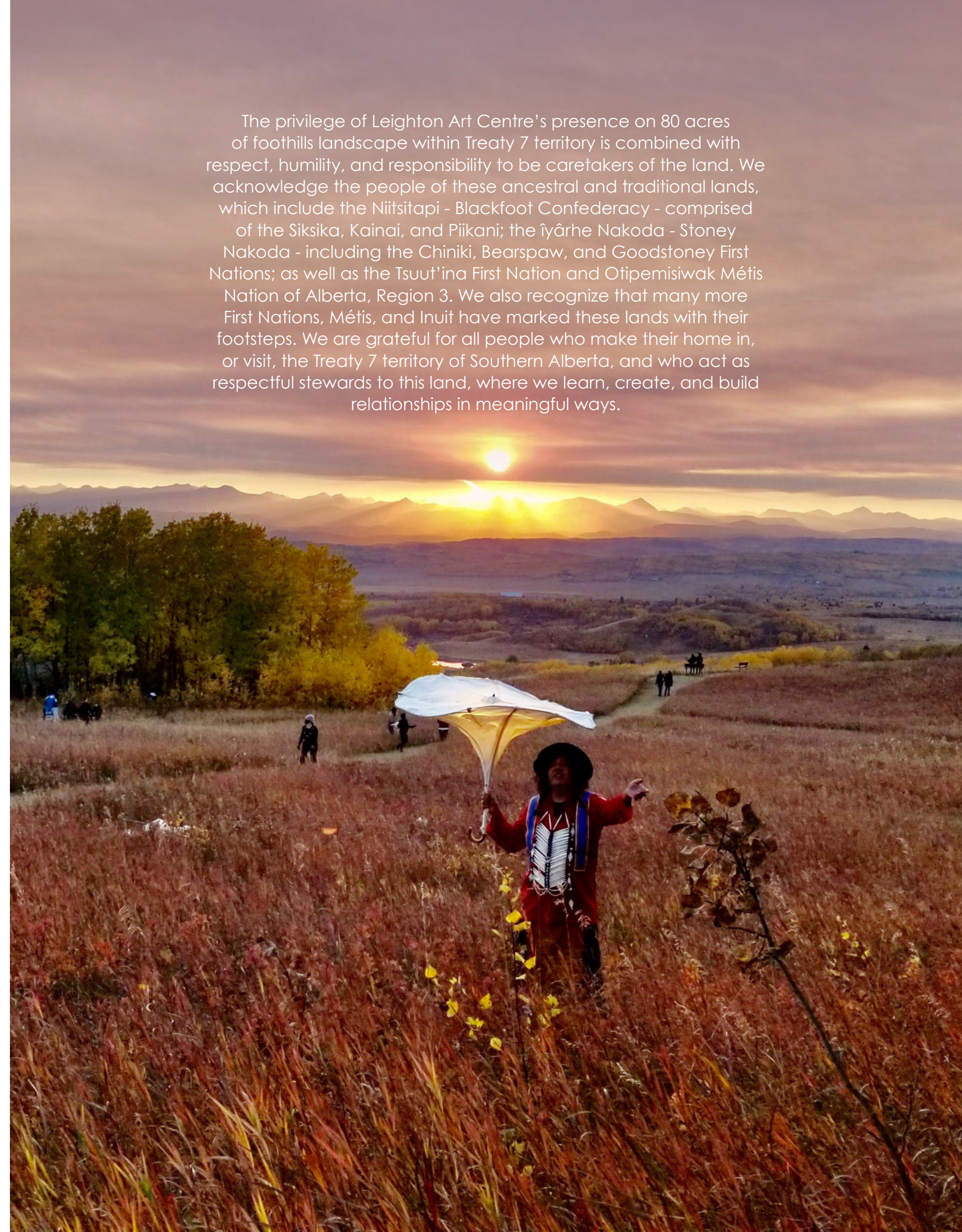
- Art & Nature Studio Accessibility and Inclusive Design
- Solar Energy
- Long Term Strategic Visioning
- Public Program Development
- Build Revenue Capacity
- Water and Waste Management
- Measure Carbon Footprint
- Improve Environmental Sustainability

Future Site Development:

Museum and Outdoor Spaces

- Historic House Preservation
- Art Collections Storage
- Food Services
- Administrative Space
- Outdoor Accessibility and Inclusive Design
- Trail Development
- Site Navigation and Parking
- Water and Waste Management

The privilege of Leighton Art Centre's presence on 80 acres of foothills landscape within Treaty 7 territory is combined with respect, humility, and responsibility to be caretakers of the land. We acknowledge the people of these ancestral and traditional lands, which include the Niitsitapi - Blackfoot Confederacy - comprised of the Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani; the îyârhe Nakoda - Stoney Nakoda - including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations; as well as the Tsuut'ina First Nation and Otipemisiwak Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3. We also recognize that many more First Nations, Métis, and Inuit have marked these lands with their footsteps. We are grateful for all people who make their home in, or visit, the Treaty 7 territory of Southern Alberta, and who act as respectful stewards to this land, where we learn, create, and build relationships in meaningful ways.





Your partnership will enable us to “raise a new roof” to house our programs and community for generations to come. We aim to raise over \$3M over the next three years. Our most urgent need is to collectively raise the first \$500K-\$750K this year, to match with grants, which will enable us to break ground and begin growing deep roots for future generations. Your lead gift is transformational and may reduce our overall fundraising goal by half. While we welcome your gifts to support programming and endowment, our most urgent need is to replace the dilapidated studios now.

Will you jump in and champion our future?

Contact: Deb Duncan, Campaign Director
deb.duncan@leightoncentre.org

Christina Cuthbertson, Executive Director
 403-931-3153 • christinac@leightoncentre.org

Leighton Foundation Charitable Registration : 119241917 RR0001

Cover Image *Wandering With Wonder* (2021), immersive outdoor musical storytelling experience developed by Samantha Whelan Kotkas
Renderings by Simon Fernandes and Logan Armstrong of Works of Architecture.
Facing Page Children, artists, and community make art and explore nature at Leighton Art Centre. Historic images from Leighton Art Centre Archives show Barbara creating a legacy that continues to this day.

LEIGHTON --- ART CENTRE

“We are all born artists with uninhibited creativity. The challenge is to remain curious, embrace opportunities, and look beyond the horizon ahead of us.”

– Jill Cross
Lifelong Supporter