

MEDIA RELEASE

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Community Building Fund supports Canadian Arabic Orchestra amidst pandemic challenges

Mississauga, ON – In 2021, the Canadian Arabic Orchestra received a \$100,000 grant from the Government of Ontario's Community Building Fund – Operating stream. This funding, delivered by the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) over 12 months, is supporting our organization's annual operations and viability amidst the challenges of COVID-19.

"The Canadian Arab Orchestra continues to bring the community together through a celebration of cultural music, giving people a sense of unity during the trying times of the pandemic. Congratulations to the CAO on being awarded the Community Building Fund. I look forward to many more achievements!" said MPP Kaleed Rasheed, Mississauga East-Cooksville.

Following the onset of the pandemic, the orchestra's operations were reduced to 30 per cent, with most programming being postponed or streamed online free of cost. With no in-person events or ticket sales, the orchestra reported a 60 per cent loss of revenue. The money awarded from this grant is being used to pay staff salaries and rent expenses until things go back to normal.

"After a hiatus of nearly 18 months, we held our first in-person concert in August 2021. The feeling was electric as we were able to reconnect with our audience and communities in a sold-out event, that has seen more than 35 concerts since, presenting more than 14 music groups and scores of artists from different cultural backgrounds," said Wafa Al Zaghal, President and CEO of the Canadian Arabic Orchestra. "We are working our way back to normal operations, and we are on the road to recover from our revenue losses. Thanks to the grant awarded by OTF, the orchestra was able to sustain itself during the pandemic and survive to work towards rebuilding and growth."

The Canadian Arabic Orchestra is committed to connecting people through the universal language of music. If you wish to know more about our events and programs, please visit the website at: www.canadianarabicorchestra.ca.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) mission is to build healthy and vibrant communities across Ontario. As an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations, last year, OTF invested nearly \$209M into 2,042 community projects and partnerships, which included funding for the Government of Ontario's Community Building Fund. Since 2020, OTF has supported Ontario's economic recovery by helping non-profit organizations rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Visit otf.ca to learn more.

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