

Bancroft pledges financial support to Canadian Peace Museum

By **Nate Smelle**

Thanks to the support of Bancroft council, the Canadian Peace Museum is now one step closer to making the community the Peace Capital of Canada. The museum's president Chris Houston learned of the town's decision to formally back his team's initiative in a letter from the town received on July 3. The letter issued on behalf of the town by clerk Amber Wannamaker acknowledges that council has committed \$5,000 as an initial reserve, which forms part of a larger \$25,000 budget-pending commitment.

Houston identified the town's pledge for funding to help establish the new museum in Bancroft as a "major milestone" in their ongoing fundraising efforts to bring the Canadian Peace Museum to life.

Noting how this financial support underscores the town's dedication to promoting peace, human rights, and global health, aligning with their strategic plan, Building Our Future, he said Bancroft's support extends beyond financial backing, pointing out how in the letter they actively call upon other levels of government and philanthropic donors to contribute to this vital initiative.

Highlighting how the Canadian Peace Museum's vision resonates with Bancroft's goals for community development, tourism, economic growth, employment, and retail, Houston cited a recent survey undertaken by the museum's advisory board which found that:

• Seven per cent of Canadians (and 12 per cent of Ontarians) are very likely to visit the Canadian Peace Museum in the next five years;

• 65 per cent of Canadians think that a commitment to peace is one of Canada's main values;

• 70 per cent of Canadians think that Canada's museums should reflect Canada's values;

• 69 per cent of Canadians think that it is important for Canadians to learn about how we have advanced peace throughout our history; and,

• 75 per cent think that it is important for Canadians to learn about Canada's mistakes that have hindered peace throughout our history.

According to Houston, these findings show the potential for high visitor numbers, while attesting to the museum's role as "a significant addition to Bancroft's existing heritage and tourism attractions. Furthermore, he said they also demonstrate how the Canadian Peace Museum promises to deliver Bancroft community and the surrounding area with a substantial boost to the local economy.

Expressing his gratitude for the town's support, Houston said, "We are deeply thankful to the Town of Bancroft for their early and enthusiastic backing. Their commitment is a testament to the community's belief in the importance of peace, education, and cultural heritage. We look forward to working together to bring the Canadian Peace Museum to fruition and invite other government bodies and donors to join us in this transformative project."

Dr. Deji Ayonrinde, a Professor of Psychiatry at Queen's University, is another member of the Canadian Peace Museum's advisory board. As part of the team working alongside Houston to bring the Canadian Peace Museum to Bancroft, he is happy to see the town commit financial support to the campaign. Hoping to see other municipalities in the area get behind the new museum as well, he pointed out how the peacefulness of the local natural environment in North Hastings makes Bancroft "the economic hub of the region" and "the perfect place for the museum."

?In an age of fluctuating global and climatic security, uncertainty fuels and perpetuates anxiety across the lifespan in many communities,? said Dr. Ayonrinde.

?Normalization of conflict and unrest erodes our collective mental health and humanity ... Peace is foundational to emotional well-being ... Away from urban hustle and bustle, Bancroft's diverse landscape and natural beauty sets the perfect accessible backdrop for contemplation and reflection about peace."