

Artscape Wychwood Barns Official Opening Celebrates an Innovative Partnership with All Levels of Government

*Redevelopment of historic Wychwood TTC streetcar repair barns in
St. Clair and Christie community transformed into
multi-tenant arts and environmental centre*

TORONTO -- On Thursday, November 20, 2008 from 3:30 - 6:30 pm Artscape will celebrate the official opening of the Artscape Wychwood Barns, a \$21.2 million redevelopment of the historic Wychwood TTC streetcar repair barns in the St. Clair and Christie community. **His Worship Mayor David Miller, Councillor Joe Mihevc, Ward 21 St. Paul's, Tim Jones, President & CEO, Artscape, and Kathleen Sharpe, Chair of the Artscape and Artscape Foundation Board of Directors** will attend the ceremonial opening of this multi-tenant arts and environmental centre run by and for the community.

"We knew at the outset that we would need a strong and compelling vision to attract the level of interest and investment required to bring the Barns back to life" said **Tim Jones, President & CEO, Artscape**. "Today, all levels of government, numerous foundations, corporations, and individuals have contributed towards the Artscape Wychwood Barns dream. We are thrilled to have a growing chorus of supporters who understood the value of this new model of multi-tenant centres where artists, environmentalists, and community members can rub shoulders, share ideas, and generate creative energy to fuel our city".

"The Government of Canada is proud to work with community partners like Toronto Artscape, who help preserve our heritage while making our communities more vibrant and dynamic," said **Minister Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage**. "This environmentally friendly and innovative space will give artists the opportunity to showcase their creativity and allow for more community participation."

"Thanks to the leadership and dedication of Artscape and its partners, Toronto can be proud of the new Wychwood Barns," said the **Honourable Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance**. "This truly unique facility is a wonderful example of how communities can build partnerships to make our neighbourhoods better places to live, work, and play."

"The Artscape Wychwood Barns is a visionary and innovative transformation of an industrial site into a vibrant, creative and environmental community hub," said **Culture Minister Aileen Carroll**. "Ontario is pleased to support this dynamic development which will help boost the local economy and quality of life."

"The Wychwood Barns project exemplifies Toronto at its best: a flagship of a creative, green, innovative community," said **Michael Bryant, MPP for St. Paul's, Ontario Minister of Economic Development, and Government House Leader**.

"This exciting project is an example of the tremendous work that can happen when all orders of government and the community work together," said **Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Jim Watson**.

The Wychwood Barns are an outstanding example of how a community can come together with the City of Toronto and other governments to turn a dream into reality," said **Toronto Mayor David Miller**. "This incredible redevelopment not only honours our heritage by preserving the past. It focuses on the future through the innovative application of green technology and highlights Toronto's dedication to the arts, artists and creativity."

"The Artscape Wychwood Barns are the fruit of years of hard work and community building by dedicated local residents, Artscape, and all three levels of government," said **Councillor Joe Mihevc, Ward 21 St. Paul's**. "For our community, this is not the end of our work, but it is the beginning of our play. We look forward to coming together in this space, as citizens, residents and creators, and as a community, for generations to come. On this day, I could not be more proud to represent Ward 21 and the City of Toronto."

The multi-faceted Artscape Wychwood Barns showcases a new generation of community centres where arts and culture, environmental leadership, heritage preservation, urban agriculture and affordable housing are brought together to foster a strong sense of community and collaboration. Following in the wake of the newly-renovated Art Gallery of Ontario, Royal Conservatory of Music and Royal Ontario Museum, the Barns are leading the second wave of cultural renaissance development in Toronto and are an example of what can happen when community-builders work hard to put visionary ideas into practice.

The Artscape Wychwood Barns have been carefully planned to be a model of financial and environmental sustainability. The Barns provide extensive community resources and programs while generating the revenue to pay for its operating expenses. Heating and cooling are drawn from the earth's energy, toilets are flushed with rainwater and many other environmental technologies will help make the Barns the first LEED (Leadership on Energy and Environmental Design) certified heritage building in Canada.

The Artscape Wychwood Barns restores a unique architectural gem in Toronto's landscape and provides 60,000 square feet of affordable space in four barns for artists, environmentalists and people working in the fields of education, urban agriculture

and food security. The Artscape Wychwood Barns includes:

- o 26 units of social housing for artists and their families
- o 15 affordable artist work studio spaces
- o 13 offices for non-profit arts and environmental organizations
- o performance, rehearsal and event spaces
- o a community art gallery
- o year-round temperate greenhouse in The Stop Community Food Centre's Green Barn
- o sheltered garden,
- o compost demonstration site
- o outdoor bake oven
- o and is surrounded by a 127,000 sq. ft. new City park that includes a children's play area, an open sports field with a natural ice rink in winter, a fenced in off-leash dog area, and a beach volley ball court

In January 2004, Artscape was selected by the City of Toronto as the preferred proponent for the redevelopment of the former TTC Barns. Artscape's vision for the reuse of the barns was developed through an extensive process of community consultations and a feasibility study published in May of 2002. Construction began in the spring of 2007 and was completed in October 2008.

The City of Toronto's contribution to the Artscape Wychwood Barns is valued at \$4.5 million. The Ontario Ministry of Culture provided \$3 million in funding to the project. In addition, the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program contributed \$1.82 million for 26 units of affordable housing. The Government of Canada, through the Department of Canadian Heritage, contributed \$2.25 million towards the construction of new space for professional arts organizations. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has provided \$25,000 in a Proposal Development Funding (PDF) loan. Proposal Development Funding loans help with the up-front expenses incurred during the process of developing an affordable housing project proposal.

Also attending the ceremony will be representatives from the non-profit arts and environmental tenants of the Artscape Wychwood Barns: **The Stop Community Food Centre, Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts, B Current, Latin American Canadian Art Projects, LEAF - Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests, New Adventures in Sound Art, The Storytellers School of Toronto, and Theatre Direct Canada** along with the **32 artists** who will occupy the **Rent-Geared-to-Income artist live/work studios and individual artist studios.**

Board Members of **GABCA**, the independent, not-for-profit community organization formed in 2008 to manage the Gallery and community use of the Covered Street Barn in the Artscape Wychwood Barns complex will also be in attendance.

Representatives from funding partners who will attend the official opening include **The George Cedric Metcalf Foundation, Hamilton Community Foundation-The Young Fund, Ontario Trillium Foundation, TD Bank Financial Group, Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Green Municipal Fund, Toronto Atmospheric Fund, ING Direct and McCarthy Tétrault LLP.**