



DIEFEN BUNKER
CANADA'S COLD WAR MUSEUM | MUSÉE CANADIEN DE LA GUERRE FROIDE

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

A YEAR IN REVIEW

2020 AT A GLANCE

The Diefenbunker: Canada's Cold War Museum, a once-top secret, four-storey underground bunker, is the only one of its kind in Canada and, arguably, in the world. Designed sixty years ago as the centre for Canada's defence against nuclear attack, the museum and its stories have a crucial role to play in understanding our past – and our collective future. This massive, atomic-age artifact reminds us how close humanity came to global annihilation and our mission has never been clearer: to champion a new form of international engagement, one of collaboration, connection, and communication.

The Diefenbunker's one-of-a-kind experiential learning environment, coupled with its award-winning programs, events, and exhibitions, draws visitors from around the world.

\$570,925
received in
operating and
employment
grants

\$347,636
received in
emergency
COVID-19
funding

\$191,935
in revenue
made from
museum tours

17,705 visitors
through the
blast tunnel

9,470
SELF-GUIDED TOUR
ATTENDEES

2,823
PUBLIC TOUR
ATTENDEES

72
SPY CAMP
ATTENDEES

700
OUTREACH
CONNECTIONS

478
EDUCATIONAL
WORKSHOP
PARTICIPANTS

2,171
ESCAPE THE
DIEFENBUNKER
ATTENDEES

1,210
VOLUNTEER HOURS
GIVEN BY 30
VOLUNTEERS

MANDATE

To increase, throughout Canada and the world, interest in and a critical understanding of the Cold War, by preserving the Diefenbunker as a national historic site, and operating a Cold War museum.

VISION

By showcasing/championing Canada's preparedness to secure the seat of government during the Cold War, the Diefenbunker creates this country's most unique learning environment for present and future generations to better understand one of the most critical times in the world's history.

 **4,700**
FOLLOWERS

 **2,282**
FOLLOWERS

 **136,000**
WEB VISITS

 **14,000**
MONTHLY VISITS

 **6,244**
FOLLOWERS

A YEAR OF REFLECTION

A Message from Our Executive Director and Our Board President

In 2020, the world faced a devastating pandemic: COVID-19. On March 13, 2020, the Diefenbunker shut its blast doors temporarily. Like many other institutions and businesses forced to close, we anticipated a two-week shutdown . . . our guess was way off. Together, we endured this unprecedented situation, but not without sacrifice and not without loss.

Three-quarters of the Diefenbunker's operating revenue comes from our visitors and, for four months, our doors remained closed. We struggled – but we carried on. Like many other organizations, the Diefenbunker pivoted to an online, digital model. In looking for new ways to reach more people, we found strength.

By summer, as many parts of the region enjoyed a respite between pandemic waves, the Diefenbunker reopened. We were the first museum to do so in Ottawa. The hiatus had allowed Diefenbunker staff time to enhance our visitor outreach: they produced new signage and wayfinding, as well as a new eight-language audioguide.

Greta Grip, our artist-in-residence, knitted her way through the pandemic, creating works for an outstanding exhibition about containment, protection, health, and safety.

We secured two major grants for the museum that amounted to nearly \$2 million and brought major improvements to visitor experience, exhibitions, and infrastructure.

Throughout this difficult year, the museum has shown itself to be dependable, agile, and creative. The Diefenbunker did more than survive the storm: it led through it. Our museum's story of a nation facing isolation, fear, and global tension during the Cold War will resonate with visitors now more than ever. As a community, we have come through this past year with a new appreciation of engagement, connection, collaboration, and communication.

We attribute the success and endurance of the Diefenbunker to the extraordinary leadership and dedication of our Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, partners, granting bodies, donors, and supporters who, together, enable us to achieve what we do. We thank you all.

Sincerely,

Christine McGuire
Executive Director

Susan McLeod
President, Board of Directors



Reopening the Bunker

After a four-month closure, the museum reopened to the public in July. It was the first museum to reopen in Ottawa. Collectively, we implemented a pandemic-specific Health and Safety Guide, protocols for safely reopening the Gift Shop, and exhibits designed to meet safe distancing.

We had a total of eight grant-funded summer positions, two through Young Canada Works and six through Canada Summer Jobs.

We adjusted our operational hours to Wednesday to Sunday, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and implemented staggered entry times. Following safety guidelines, we offered French and English tours daily throughout 2020. We continue to adapt and pivot during these challenging times and we remain focused on the health and safety of our staff, volunteers, and members of the public, while continuing to provide our visitors with a unique museum experience.



"Totally not what we expected, it was fantastic! It never occurred to us it was four floors, we really knew nothing about it but the basics. We learned so much, thank you."



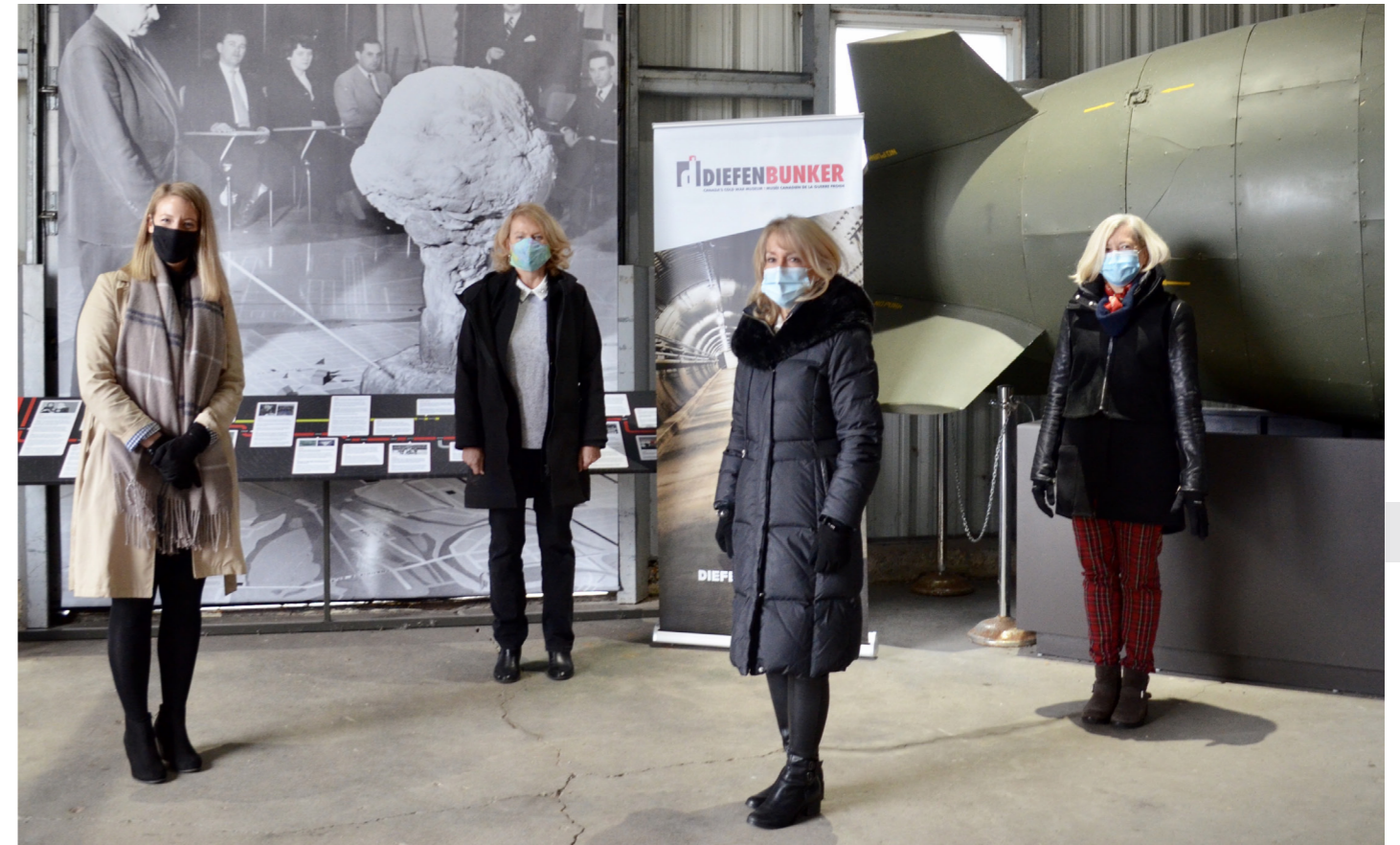
A PATH FORWARD

Improved Visitor Experience

Despite the challenges faced during 2020, the Diefenbunker continued to improve the overall visitor experience, attract new audiences, and enhance Canada's most significant Cold War artifact.

The museum met some major achievements, producing exterior and interior directional signage, making compelling enhancements to its exhibitions, creating a dedicated Youth Room, and developing an eight-language audioguide. As an aging historic site, it also benefited from several behind-the-scenes infrastructure and building improvements, such as an increase in the number of accessible washrooms and pertinent mechanical and electrical upgrades.

The Government of Canada awarded the Diefenbunker \$400,000 from the Canadian Experiences Fund, through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario. This support has significantly improved tourism services, youth programs, and the overall infrastructure and sustainability of this national historic site.



Investing in Our Future

In 2020, we announced that the museum would be receiving urgent funding to upgrade and restore the one-of-a-kind museum, national historic site, and Canada's most significant Cold War artifact: the Diefenbunker underground bunker.

As an aging historic site, the 1960s-era nuclear bunker is in crucial need of infrastructure and building improvements. These include new ventilation, plumbing and mechanical systems, modernization of its sixty-year-old washrooms to meet accessibility standards, and upgrades to outdated and inefficient electrical systems. These infrastructure improvements will allow the museum to thrive as a visitor-centred, relevant, and vibrant organization, while preserving a critical aspect of Canadian history.

To keep current visitors coming back and to draw new ones, while we are maintaining an incredible artifact, we need to bring the Cold War bunker into the twenty-first century. This funding will go towards that goal; it will safeguard a unique piece of Canadian history.

The Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario are providing \$1.1 million from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program's Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure stream, which is designed to improve the infrastructure of cultural institutions such as museums and Indigenous heritage centres. This is the largest investment made in the museum over the past ten years. The Diefenbunker is committing \$400,000 of its own funds towards the project, for a total of \$1.5 million. We expect the infrastructure upgrades to be completed by the end of 2022.



IGNITING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Events and Programs

The Diefenbunker's special events and programs have been significantly impacted by COVID-19. In 2020, we were able to safely offer three events: Atomic Love: A Touring Wine & Cheese, a modified Toddlers' Halloween Hunt, and a modified Bunker Holiday Cheers, as well as some early seasonal (pre-pandemic) Heritage Day, Winterlude, Family Day, and Valentines for Veterans programming

Collections

The collections department has made great strides in streamlining our system of storage and collections management, developing best-practice procedures, and following record-keeping protocols. A conservator was hired to work on two original photomurals in the Cafeteria and Youth Room. Once they were repaired, plexiglass barriers were made to protect them. To protect another significant artifact in the museum, a structure-built display was installed around the FENCO model in the *Building the Bunker* exhibition. Like the photomural barriers, this will mean that the model can still be seen and appreciated, but it will be less vulnerable to damage.

As of the end of 2020, 50 per cent of our collections records had been digitized, which means that they can be accessed by researchers and the public through the Ottawa Museums and Archives Collections website. To make our digitization project easier, we chose a dedicated photo room and purchased the equipment needed to document our artifacts and records for online distribution and improved record-keeping. Lastly, on the 100 Level, we conducted a significant reorganization, taking inventory and assessing objects, so that we could dispose of excess items and make better use of the space in our storage areas.

Exhibitions

Containment: Knit Your ---.art, Temporary Exhibition October 2020 to February 2021

Greta Grip, this year's artist-in-residence, created her exhibition with a knitting-as-espionage theme. In *Containment: Knit Your ---.art*, Greta originally sought to explore the relationship between knitting and covert messaging during wartime but, as the exhibition evolved, she drew inspiration from the current pandemic, which had more and more people chipping in to, once again, "knit your part." The final exhibition looked at how our feelings of uncertainty around the pandemic and public messaging related to emergency preparedness compared to anxieties prompted by the Cold War.

Containment: Knit Your ---.art premiered on October 15, 2020, through a virtual vernissage released on YouTube and an Instagram livestream with the curator and artist.



Mayor Jim Watson presenting the Ottawa Heritage Day proclamation to the Diefenbunker Museum. Credit: City of Ottawa



Butler Hut, Permanent Exhibition

In March 2020, we transformed our *Butler Hut* into a world-class entranceway to the museum. The exhibition sets the stage for the underground experience that awaits visitors, by explaining how the museum presents the Cold War, Canadian-specific content, and Diefenbunker-specific content.

75th Anniversaries, Online Exhibitions

In September 2020, our Visitor Experience team shifted its focus from on-site to online content, in presenting this exhibition commemorating the 75th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as the 75th anniversary of the defection of Igor Gouzenko. For Hiroshima, on August 6, and Nagasaki, on August 9, we developed three social media posts per day to be shared simultaneously across all social media platforms. One post highlighted the history of the events on that date, one retold an oral history of the event from a Canadian perspective, and the last showcased an object from our collection that is tied into the event. These posts then connected to a more in-depth blog entry on our website, which included resources for further learning. The online exhibition about Gouzenko followed the same format used for Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



A One-of-a-Kind Rental Venue

The museum offers rental spaces suitable for all types of events, from meetings to catered dinners, weddings, birthday parties, and evening receptions. Our setting is also a great inspiration for filmmakers in the region. In 2020, the Diefenbunker was rented for a live-action role-play event, photo-shoots, and major motion pictures.



"Being 77 years old I was able to impart some knowledge to my teenage granddaughters and was really able to relate to a lot of the [museum] items. I was in the air force in the early 60s and used some of the communications equipment displayed."

A Museum Shop with a Story

We are continuing our partnership with Chapter One Studio, which began when the Gift Shop opened in 2019. We strive to provide visitors with items that highlight the Cold War era, so that their experience extends past the museum's doors and into their homes.

In May, we launched an online store through Shopify, so that items are still available even when visitors are unable to come to the Gift Shop in person.



Spy Camp

In 2020, we welcomed 70 children to a pandemic-safe version of Spy Camp over the course of 10 weeks. While striving to provide the same quality experience offered in previous years, we reduced the number of campers, had designated sets of art supplies for each child, and adapted activities so that participants had more time outside where they could be physically distanced.



Educational Programs

Although COVID-19 forced closures and cancellations from March onwards, in January and February 2020 we delivered workshops to approximately 480 participants, including school groups, military cadets, and adult teams. We also offered popular activities for Winterlude, both on-site and at Rideau Hall, and we managed to continue our annual tradition of having children make Valentine's Day cards for veterans.



Marketing and Communications

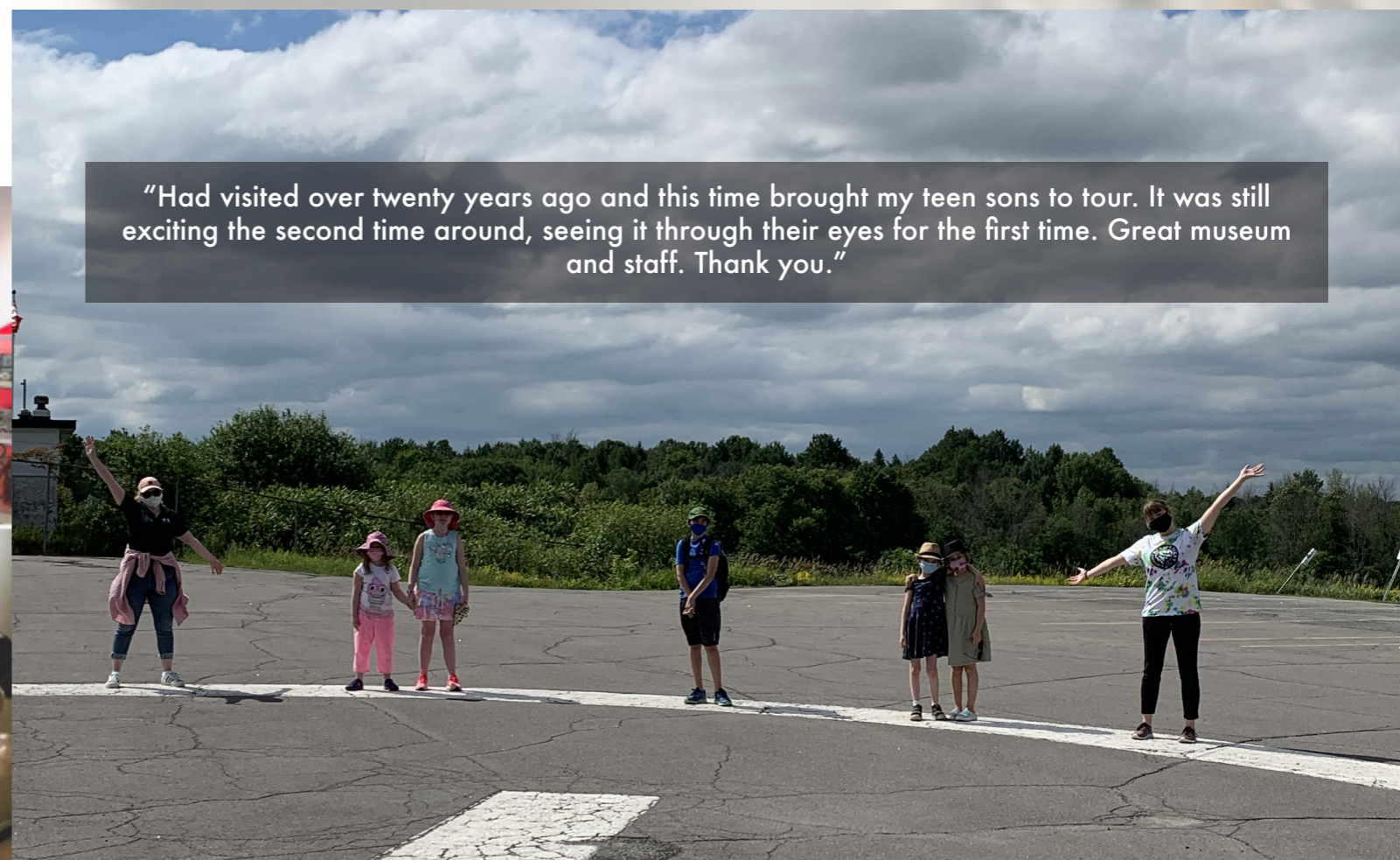
The museum continued to create innovative marketing strategies and dynamic social media content. We also expanded our print and digital advertising, media outreach, and key marketing partnerships.

Our virtual tours were front and centre on our website and in our online communications.

Our "When you're ready, we're ready for you" campaign for reopening was featured on numerous media outlets throughout the summer.



"Had visited over twenty years ago and this time brought my teen sons to tour. It was still exciting the second time around, seeing it through their eyes for the first time. Great museum and staff. Thank you."



Our Team

Staff

Christine McGuire, Executive Director
Lana Clouthier, Finance Manager
Kelly Eyamie, Business Development Manager
Courtney Gehling, Visitor Experience Manager
Craig Humphrey, Acting Facilities Manager
Angelina Roncali, Operations Manager
Sean Campbell, Visitor Experience Lead
Shannon Ford, Collections Project Lead

Tobie Champion-Demers, Event & Rental Coordinator, Financial Assistant
Corinne Rikkelman, Social Media Coordinator
Ben Mahar, Education and Program Coordinator*
Jennifer Fink, Booking Coordinator*
Derek Scobie, Facilities Coordinator*
Mathew Dunne, Team Supervisor
Jessica Huang, Team Supervisor
Robyn Easton, Education Assistant

Charlotte Dovbniak, Guide
Alysia Emmanuel, Guide
Eric Fitzgibbon, Guide
Keira Kelly, Guide*
Ariel McIntyre, Guide*
Helen Harrison, Guide*
Olivia Hewitt, Guide*
Samantha Jacques, Guide
Leo Joy-Clark, Guide*
Samantha O'Keefe, Guide
Emma Bronsema, Guide*
Teigan Goldsmith, Guide*
Grant Smith, Guide*
Dave Gooding, Escape the Diefenbunker Receptionist*

*Departing in 2020

"Our guide was super-knowledgeable and super-friendly. Please give her our highest praise!"



Board of Directors

Susan McLeod
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 Consultant, Susan McLeod Solutions

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 Col. (ret'd), RCAF

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 Linda Nixon Consulting

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Paul Leduc
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 Retired Chief of Finance, National Gallery of Canada

Michael Robb
 Director
 Facility Manager, University of Ottawa

Lorraine Mastersmith
 Director
 Partner, Gowling WLG



"[It] was so clean . . . and very comfortable – to the point where I didn't give COVID a second thought. The displays were very engaging despite being less interactive due to the COVID situation . . . I'll have my boys (8 and 11) print out the pictures they took and create a narrative based on our visit. This was an interesting, painlessly educational, and memorable, family outing. I'm very glad we went!!"

Our Valued Volunteers

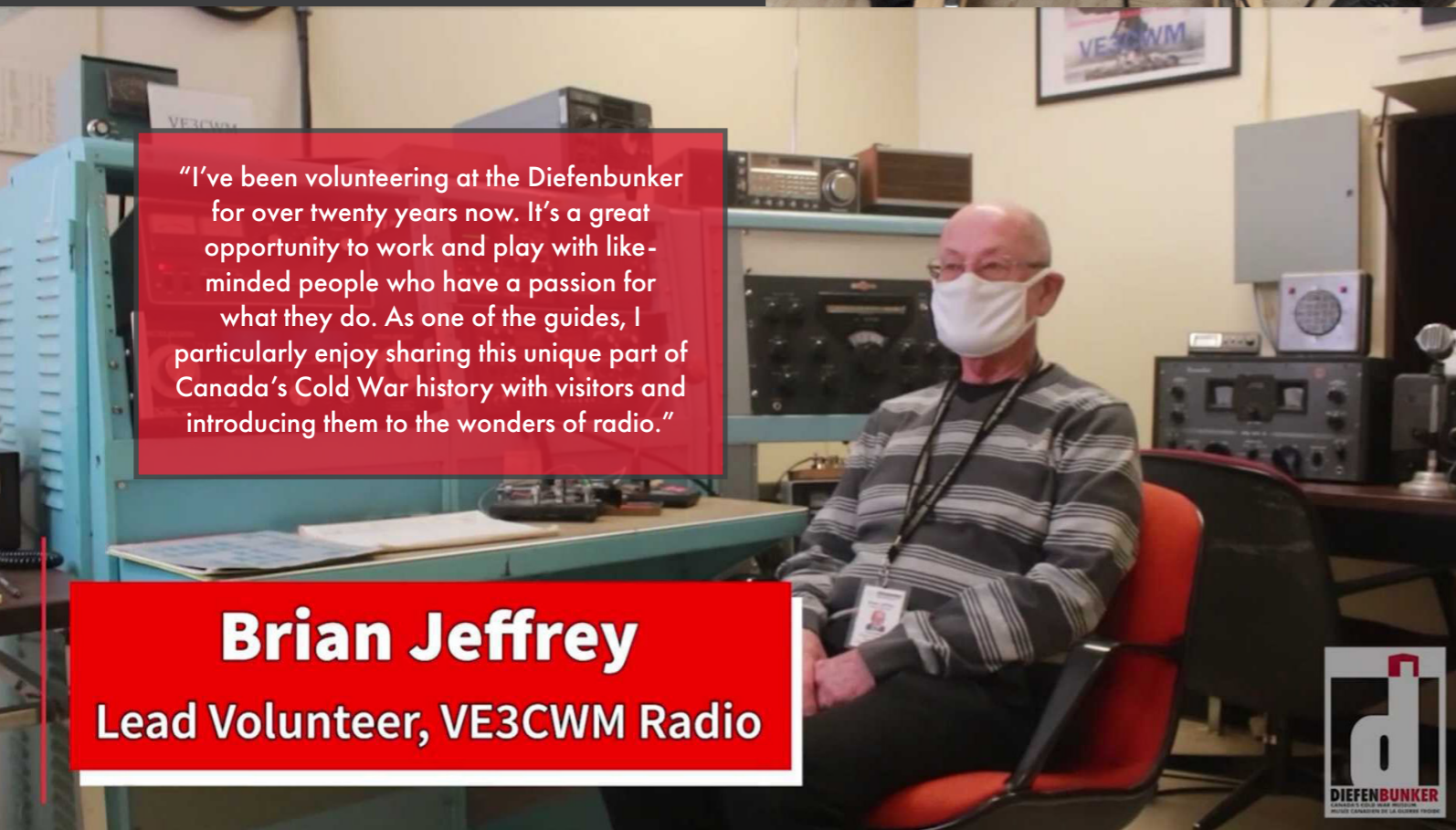
Our museum exists thanks to a group of dedicated community volunteers who, over twenty years ago, recognized the importance of preserving the Diefenbunker and its history. Then and now, we are indebted to all our volunteers. Our success today is a result of the thousands of hours they have contributed. Thank you!



Volunteers

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Hunter Bagby | Gord Heath |
| Tim Baily | Brian Jeffrey |
| Jamie Bastien | Jeremy Jones |
| Doug Beaton | Richard Kirby |
| Lorne Beaton | Derek Knowles |
| Chris Bisailion | Erhan Kum |
| Robert W. Boyd | John McGowan |
| Mike Braham | Graham Patterson |
| Thane Brown | Mark Schacter |
| Ralph Cameron | Peter Sharp |
| Judith Collier | Nick Shepherd |
| Fred Crowe | Arthur Smith |
| Louise Fox | Pat Stever |
| Dave Green | Graham Wheatley |
| Reg Gulliford | Arthur Smith |

In 2020, our dedicated volunteer radio operators connected with close to 1,000 people in 400 countries around the world.



"I've been volunteering at the Diefenbunker for over twenty years now. It's a great opportunity to work and play with like-minded people who have a passion for what they do. As one of the guides, I particularly enjoy sharing this unique part of Canada's Cold War history with visitors and introducing them to the wonders of radio."

Brian Jeffrey

Lead Volunteer, VE3CWM Radio

THANK YOU to Our Supporters

In 2020, numerous donors, sponsors, and partners provided us with essential support to ensure the stewardship, programming, and safekeeping of the Diefenbunker. Thank you.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Attractions Ontario | Audrey Bélanger Baur |
| Canadian Forces Artists Program | Katerina Brooks |
| Canadian Heritage Information Network | Dorothy Browns |
| Canadian Museums Association | Dan and Megan Davies-Ostrom |
| Canadian War Museum | Jacqueline Donogh |
| Capital Heritage Connexion | David Easton |
| Carleton University | Kelly Eyamie |
| Chapter One Studio | Vanessa Falcone |
| Escape Manor | Brad Heath |
| Greenmelon Inc. | Frank Hedley |
| Haunted Walk of Ottawa | Brenda Langman |
| Jiffy Photo & Print | Ian H. Maclean |
| KIN Vineyards | John Manson |
| KWC Architects Inc. | Christine McGuire |
| Morrison Hershfield | Susan McLeod |
| Ontario Museum Association | Frances Moffatt |
| Ottawa Amateur Radio Club | Anne Musca |
| Ottawa Board of Trade | Paul Ozark |
| Ottawa Museum Network | Pat Quinn |
| Ottawa Tourism | Kerry Reimer |
| Rhapsody Strategies | Deborah Shelton |
| Ridge Rock Brewing Company | Sharon Stull |
| Savvy Company | Roy Thomas |
| Shouldice Mechanical Inc. | Peeranut Visetsuth |
| The Swan at Carp | Christos Xarchos |

Grants Received

- | | |
|---|--|
| Bilingual Ottawa Grant, Association des communautés francophones d'Ottawa | Museums Assistance Program, COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund, Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada |
| Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, Business and Industry, Government of Canada | Museum Service Agreement, Cultural Funding Support, City of Ottawa |
| Canada-Ontario Job Grant, Colleges and Universities, Government of Ontario | Preventing Disease Transmission Training and Personal Protective Equipment, Red Cross |
| Canada Summer Jobs, Employment and Social Development Canada, Government of Canada | Rural Community Building Grant, Rural Affairs, City of Ottawa |
| Canadian Experiences Fund, FedDev Ontario, Government of Canada | Summer Experience Program, Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, Government of Ontario |
| Community Museum Operating Grant, Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, Government of Ontario | Translation Grant, Ottawa Museum Network |
| Enabling Accessibility Fund, Employment and Social Development Canada, Government of Canada | Young Canada Works, Canadian Museums Association |
| Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, Infrastructure Canada, Government of Canada and Infrastructure Ontario, Government of Ontario | |



Get Involved!



Buy an Annual Pass

An annual museum pass gives you unlimited general admission to the Diefenbunker, as well as discounts on our merchandise, special events, and programs.



Become a Donor

Your donation helps the museum preserve Canada's most significant Cold War artifact and an important piece of Canada's history. Please consider supporting the Diefenbunker with a one-time, monthly, or annual gift.



Become a Volunteer

Join our team of dedicated volunteers! If you would like to help out at special events or with museum operations — including exhibit design, construction, administration, archives, or social media — then the Diefenbunker is the place for you.