



***MEDIA RELEASE***

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

## **Barrie's first public piano installed at Meridian Place**

(Barrie, ON) There is music in the air downtown. A public piano was installed at Meridian Place today for everyone to play and enjoy. This project was entirely community focused, and made possible due to generous donations from the community.

Michelle Hardie, a local resident, sought out a donated piano, paid for it to be moved, and has volunteered her time and money to assist in its upkeep. This is her first project with her organization, "Millions of Miracles," which is a non-profit organization focused on implementing community based projects throughout Barrie.

The piano was moved into Art in House, where owners Mar and Jon Lewis graciously allowed the artists to use their space to design and paint the piano. Local artist Bhreagh Campbell designed and painted the piano, using paints paid for by the Barrie Arts Committee. Andy Thompson of Thompson Architecture designed and built a small rooftop for the piano to help protect it from the elements during its time outside. Extreme Imaging donated vinyl lettering to attach to the side of the piano for us to advertise the contributing sponsors. Finally, the piano is being moved from Art in House to its home in Meridian Place with the help of local volunteers, Steven Henderson, Will Crosson, Mac Orlando and Connory Ballantyne.

"We are overwhelmed by the generosity and passion from our community members who all pitched in and helped bring this idea to life," said Karen Dubeau, Director of Creative Economy at the City of Barrie. "Barrie's first public piano will bring added vibrancy into our downtown core and help to animate Meridian Place. We invite community members out to come and enjoy the piano".

Based on the community response to this pilot initiative, the City could investigate the potential for an expanded public piano program which could include a variety of sponsorship opportunities for businesses to have their branding on pianos that would be painted and dispersed throughout different neighbourhoods and parks in the City.

Public pianos have been implemented in cities all over the world as a means of community engagement and creating vibrant public spaces. These installations invite people from all walks of life to participate, observe, listen, and come together over a shared love of music.

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***For more information, please contact:***

Scott LaMantia  
Senior Communications Advisor  
[scott.lamantia@barrie.ca](mailto:scott.lamantia@barrie.ca)  
705-739-4220 x4529