



MEDIA RELEASE

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**ABBOTSFORD MUSEUM WINS AWARD FOR
COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING**

The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford has won a prestigious national award for its work to engage the local community—one of just two such awards to be presented nationally. The museum has won the 2016 Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Community Programming.

The Governor General's award recognizes community projects that tell stories about our past in unique and innovative ways. The Reach has been recognized for *Voices of the Valley*-- a permanent museum exhibition and interpretive program, developed in collaboration with the MSA Museum Society in Abbotsford. *Voices of the Valley* tells the story of the Abbotsford community through the eyes of individuals who have shaped it, and features on-site educational activities, interactive technologies, and engaging school programs.

"*Voices of the Valley* presents information through multiple voices, multiple stories, even conflicting voices—allowing people to draw their own conclusions," says Kris Foulds, The Reach Curator of Historical Collections. "For example, was the drainage of Sumas Lake positive in that it opened up agricultural land for settlers? Or negative for the First Nations who saw further encroachment on their territory and more land taken away for settlement?"

"The Reach has demonstrated that museums are more than collections of artifacts; they are relevant places of learning that can engage an entire community," says Janet Walker, President and CEO of Canada's History, which administers the award. "By allowing citizens to explore multiple sides of the same question, The Reach helps residents develop a richer understanding of how their communities have changed over time and give greater context to their lives today."

The Reach Gallery Museum will be presented its award by His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, at Rideau Hall on November 28. Also receiving the award will be Centre d'archives de Vaudreuil-Soulanges in Vaudreuil-Dorion, Quebec.

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About the Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Community Programming

First presented in 2011, the Governor General's award aims to inspire small, volunteer-led community organizations in the creation of innovative programming that commemorates important aspects of our heritage. Projects are evaluated on their audience reach, community impact, and contribution to greater public understanding of Canada's history.

About Canada's History

Canada's History is a national charitable organization whose mission is to promote greater popular interest in Canadian history, principally through its publishing, education, and recognition programs. In addition to administering the Governor General's History Awards and publishing *Canada's History* magazine (formerly *The Beaver*) and *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids*, Canada's History produces a number of educational and online programs to encourage a Canada where people are deeply engaged in connecting with their shared past.