

For Immediate Release

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Museum of Health Care encourages Canadians to become part of the COVID-19 historical record

Museum calls for personal stories from Canadians affected by COVID-19 as part of the COVID-19 Collection project

Kingston, ON—If you ever wanted to be a part of history, this is your chance! The Museum of Health Care at Kingston is issuing a nation-wide call, urging all Canadians to share their personal COVID-19 stories in an effort to lay the foundation for a future COVID-19 Collection at the Museum.

Margaret Angus Research Fellow**, Savannah Sewell, is heading the collaborative project that will include an artifact collection, an archive of narratives, a manuscript, and a lecture. The project will explore the lived experience of Canadians and Canadian residents during the COVID-19 pandemic to record information regarding everyday life for future research.

Canadians who have experienced any of the following are encourage to add their personal story to the COVID-19 project: illness due to COVID-19; personal loss of any kind; currently employed in government, education, healthcare, or business owners who have been affected by COVID-19; have had their lives drastically altered due to the pandemic. All stories, in any form, are welcome. Whether by video, email or handwritten letter, the value of personal experiences of this pandemic cannot be understated.

The Museum is pleased with the response so far to an earlier call for COVID-19 material artifacts such as vaccination vials, personal protective equipment, and other related medical items. These items will be an excellent addition to the its already well-established collections from past pandemics. Featured alongside these important artifacts on display at the Museum are the stories of the human impact of these historic events—something the Museum is looking to repeat with the COVID-19 Collection.

As Canada’s foremost resource for medical and health related artifacts, the Museum of Health Care is a natural choice to head this project. With a collection of over 35,000 items, some of which include items that are last of their kind, the Museum has the expertise to capture this monumental time in history for future generations.

If you or someone you know is interested in participating in the COVID-19 Collection project, please contact the Museum of Health Care at museum@kingstonhsc.ca or call 613-548-2419.

Quotes

Savannah Sewell, Margaret Angus Research Fellow and Project Lead, COVID-19 Collection, Museum of Health Care at Kingston

"This project means the world to me because it will provide a holistic and detail-oriented research base that is so unique. Researchers in the future won't have the problems that colleagues and I have had in the present, while researching things like the Spanish Flu, when they research COVID-19, because we're preparing for their work. How exciting is it that this project could mean that in 100 years, no one has to use the word unprecedented, or that they might know what to expect a little better than we did, or that we will have given them every day details that make learning so much easier."

Ian Gemmill, MD, COVID-19 Collection Project Supervisor, Museum of Health Care at Kingston

"We are making history every day during this pandemic, and it is critically important that the events be recorded so that future generations understand what happened, and how we as a society responded. This project will lay the foundation for the Museum's chronicling of the pandemic."

*Christopher J. Ruty, Ph.D., professional medical/public health historian and Adjunct Professor, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto**

"We have lived through, and continue to live through, an unprecedented global pandemic. But 26,000+ Canadians did not live through it, and almost 1.5 million have been infected. While many might wish to forget such a traumatic experience, it is vital that we don't. Although it is unusual for a museum to be gathering materials for a COVID-19 pandemic collection while still in the midst of the pandemic, preservation of distinctive items generated by the pandemic, and especially written, audio and video recordings of personal experiences, stories and perspectives about living through the pandemic -- or by or about those who did not -- can help build a rich, relevant and lasting legacy for future generations."

**guest-curator of the Museum of Health Care's "Vaccine and Immunization: Epidemics, Prevention and Canadian Innovation" exhibit.*

About the Museum of Health Care at Kingston

The Museum of Health Care at Kingston connects visitors with the experiences of people in the past to provide context and perspective on today's health issues. The Museum is Canada's national resource for health care history. Through exhibitions, guided tours, education programs, our online collection catalogue, and a curated blog, we provide a wide-ranging audience access to Canada's rich health care past. We strive to inspire wonder, to promote learning, and to create knowledge that will contribute to a better future in health and health care. For more information visit:

<http://www.museumofhealthcare.ca/>

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