The Time is Now — Support the Restoration of London’s Fugitive Slave Chapel at Fanshawe Pioneer Village

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LONDON, ON (February 1, 2022) - In concert with Black History Month, Fanshawe Pioneer Village is kicking off a capital campaign beginning February 1, 2022 to relocate the Fugitive Slave Chapel building to the Village. The time is NOW, and we need your help.

February is Black History Month, a time to celebrate and honour the legacy of Black Canadians and their communities. “The history that is associated with The Fugitive Slave Chapel involves our ancestors’ passage through the Underground Railroad to Freedom. It is important for members of the Black Community, in London, to see historical buildings that tell "Our Story". It is even more important for the community at large to become more informed of the role London played in the Freedom of Black slaves”, shared Nikisha Evans, President of the Congress of Black Women of Canada, London Chapter.

“The History and preservation of the Fugitive Slave Chapel, is not only important to London’s Black history, but also to Canadian History. Let us never forget that as one of the terminus points on the Underground Railroad, the population of former slaves increased during the nineteenth century and many found this a place of safe gathering and worship. The preservation of this important building at Fanshawe Pioneer Village will ensure it is respected and honoured by those who come after us, and offers education to future generations about the journey of fugitive slaves who found refuge in it,” added Harold Usher, former City Councillor, and member of London’s Black community — in support of the project.

Together with support of local community groups — London Black History Coordinating Committee, the Chapel Committee, Congress of Black Women of Canada, Black Lives Matter London and the British Methodist Episcopal Church — the London & Middlesex Heritage Museum (which operates Fanshawe Pioneer Village) is working toward the long-term preservation and programming of the Fugitive Slave Chapel.

“The addition of the Chapel building to the Village aligns well with our Museum’s mission to connect our communities by remembering, sharing and celebrating local histories, and also helps include more voices in the story we share. It is an exciting opportunity, and we are working with our community partners to ensure it is presented authentically,” says Dawn Miskelly, Executive Director.

As it stands, the building is at risk of further deterioration. If we do not act NOW, a key piece of the London area’s Black History could be lost. The fundraising goal to support the relocation and restoration of the Fugitive Slave Chapel at Fanshawe Pioneer Village is $300,000.

Tom Peace, Board Chair, Fanshawe Pioneer Village, adds, “We want to ensure this project is successful, and the Chapel finds a welcome and permanent home where its story can be shared at Fanshawe Pioneer Village. We have planned a series of benchmarks to guide the process over the course of approximately one year, but need financial support from the community to help achieve this goal. Help us make this happen – the time is now.”

Donate TODAY: The Chapel Project — London Community Foundation (lcf.on.ca)

Business, corporate and community organizations wishing to make a contribution are encouraged to contact Dawn Miskelly, Executive Director of Fanshawe Pioneer Village to learn more.

For more information contact:
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