



OGNIWO POLISH MUSEUM SOCIETY INC.
1417 Main Street, Winnipeg, MB R2W 3V3

2024 Annual Report

2024 was a year of dreaming and planning. We sprang into the new year invigorated by the news of a large private donation from our generous donors, Mavis and Will Tishinski, to support a museum expansion project. The donation, totalling over \$844,000, was officially received in March 2024, facilitated by The Winnipeg Foundation.



We have been very resourceful and creative in making the most of our space, but our artefact and archives holdings are growing, and we are limited in the number of visitors we can host for lectures, workshops, and community events. The Tishinskis' donation will elevate our facility and programming, give us the space we need to foster deeper connections with community, and help us in our mandate to enrich Winnipeg's cultural landscape.

Ogniwo's Board of Directors approved the formation of an Expansion Project Committee with Technical and Fundraising Subcommittees. The first order of business was to commission local firm MMP Architects Inc. to undertake a feasibility study to show us what it would look like to expand on our current location at 1417 Main Street. The second order of business was to engage a commercial real estate agent to assess the value of our building and to scope potential sites for relocation.

Work in both areas continued through Spring and Summer 2024. In an effort to stretch the donation, we submitted applications for grant funding to The Winnipeg Foundation and the Republic of Poland. We also met with Consul General of the Republic of Poland, Magdalena Pszczolkowska, shared with her all the work we do to support our mandate, and gave her a behind-the-scenes tour of our artefact and archives collections.

Events and Exhibits



Throughout the year, we continued to display our exhibit on local Polonia changemakers, “They Left a Legacy,” featuring stories of some of the remarkable individuals who helped build and shape the Polish community in Manitoba.

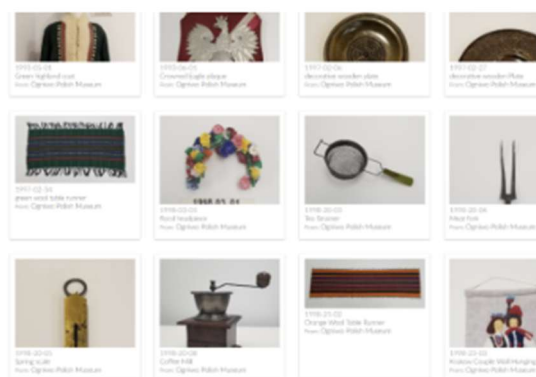
In March, we delivered our annual Pisanki workshop to 25 eager participants who each left with some beautifully decorated Easter eggs. We also delivered a special pisanki workshop to the students of the Polish Saturday School.



In August, we were happy to share our culture with Winnipeggers and visitors from near and far at the Folklorama Polish Pavilion at the RBC Convention Centre. This year, our travelling exhibit was titled “Threads: Weaving and Embroidery,” and featured examples from our textiles collection.

Museum Collections Development

The Museum continued its efforts to catalogue, describe, and make available its artefact and archival collections. Archives volunteers continued to work on the digitization of the SPK Polish Combatants’ Association records.



Our Collections Management volunteers continued work on our accessions catalogue using the new public-facing collections database, [Musetoba](#). More artefacts are added to the database every day. Ogniwo Polish Museum is proud to be a part of the joint working group, along with other Manitoba museums, that developed this powerful resource. The initiative was coordinated by the [Association of Manitoba Museums](#).

In the Community

We were able to host another beginner Polish language course. Thank you to our instructor Katarzyna Rdzanek-Hodor. As always, the class was well received, and participants were enthusiastic about continuing their journey of learning the Polish language.

Ogniwo volunteers represented the Museum at the annual Cook's Creek Heritage Day at Cook's Creek, Manitoba.

To celebrate International Women's Day 2024, a group of our volunteers and members attended the *Lunch in Paris* event organized by the Canadian Women's Federation Branch No. 7, with proceeds from the event going to support ovarian cancer research.

In May, in celebration of Polish Heritage Month, we temporarily transformed the museum into a classroom for the students of the Polish Saturday School. The students learned about Ognivo's roots and the types of knowledge and exhibits that can be found in a community museum. They received a special tour of our exhibit, learned about our archives and artefacts, and shared their own stories about the role of museums in our community.



Ogniwo also participated in a community Christmas Open House event, sponsored by Pollock's Hardware and other North-End merchants on November 30th. The museum was decorated with Christmas trees displaying hand-made ornaments, a set of Christmas crèches called *Szopki*, some arts and crafts tables with gift ideas, along with coffee, tea and dainties. All those who dropped by were charmed by the displays, gifts, and comfortable atmosphere.



In late December we were pleased to host the Pacific Prairie Jazz Quintet for their performance of *Homecoming*, an intimate and jazzy night of music inspired by the performers' time out West.

Giving and Receiving: Grants, Endowment Fund

Other than the singular donation mentioned above from the Tishinski family, Ognio received a Community Museums (Level II) grant from the Province of Manitoba (Historic Resources Branch), that helped offset some of our operating expenses. The Ognio Endowment Fund, held by The Winnipeg Foundation, continues to grow and supports our programming. The fund currently stands at \$205,613.60. We did not have any applicants for the Ognio Bursary for students who volunteer at the museum in 2024.

Building Improvements

This year, our volunteers worked on further streamlining and organizing our collections storage areas. Our new hanging system for textiles allowed us to save on space while ensuring professional-grade preservation storage that received praise from visiting museum conservation specialist Heather Beerling. Our volunteers continued to assemble custom-made boxes for the safe storage and preservation of some of the garments in our collection.

Thank You

The museum is a non-profit charitable organization, and we could not have done any of these things without the hard work of our volunteers and the continued support of the community around us. We thank you for your continued support and look forward to bringing you more community programming in 2025.

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Ogniwo Polish Museum Expansion Project Advisory Committee

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