



2025 Deputation January 22, 2025 North York Civic Centre 1:30-4:30pm

Kern Carter / Christina Giannelia, North York Arts

Good afternoon, Councillors. My name is Christina Giannelia and I am the Executive Director of North York Arts, one of the City's six Local Arts Service Organisations. Throughout these deputations I am joined by my esteemed colleagues from across the arts sector, advocating for Toronto to be a leader when it comes to its investment in the arts. With me today is Kern Carter, who this morning gave a talk to grade 7 and 8s at Crescent School in North York, about his book "A Boy Like Me". I will now hand the mic over to Kern!

Good afternoon, members of the Budget Committee. My name is Kern Carter and I am (author, educator and volunteer board member of one of the LASOs) who grew up in (North York area Weston neighbourhood). I am proud to be speaking today on behalf of the six **Local Arts Service Organizations (LASOs) of Toronto:**

**Arts Etobicoke,
East End Arts,
Lakeshore Arts,
North York Arts,
Scarborough Arts, and
UrbanArts**

The LASOs are community arts organizations with a shared mission to provide free, accessible and quality programming to the communities we serve, every day.

They play a significant role in the new 10-year Toronto culture plan. Culture Connects: An Action Plan for Culture in Toronto, adopted by City Council in November 2024, sets out a bold new vision for culture in Toronto – a vision for a city where everyone, everywhere, can discover, create and experience culture.

The LASOs want to ensure that the promised investment of \$35 million to the arts - over ten years - and specifically \$380,000, is assigned to support the LASOs in the first year of this plan.

This is especially important to me because:

While I grew up as a shy, young boy, it was sharing my story through writing that gave me confidence to exist in the real world. It was going to summer camps and connecting with other creative young people where I first saw the power of art to bring people together and give them a purpose. Early in my writing career, it was connecting with different writing groups at community centres that honed my writing skills. Today, writing

has become my life and taken me all over the world, from Norway to Hong, B.C. to California. As a full-time writer, I now speak to young artists every day. I'm in the schools and at the art organizations helping to shape the next generation of artists who will no doubt shape the world. Because it is the artists that dictate culture, and they can't do that without support.

Investments in the arts is an investment in the economy, an investment in education, and an investment in the future of this city.

On behalf of the LASOs, we thank the city for its exciting new Culture Plan. And thank you for your attention today. We trust that our combined efforts will enhance the arts and cultural landscape in Toronto for generations to come.