

MEMORANDUM

April 16, 2012

TO: Health and Human Services Committee
FROM: Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst *VY*
SUBJECT: **Worksession: FY13 Operating Budget**
Non-Departmental Account-Montgomery County Historical Society

Those expected for this worksession include:

Thomas Kuehhas, Executive Director, Montgomery County Historical Society
Jennifer Bryant, Office of Management and Budget

For FY13, the Executive has recommended level funding of \$32,250 for the Montgomery County Historical Society (MCHS), which is included in the Historical Activities NDA (©1).

The Historical Activities NDA includes a total of \$287,090. The remaining balance of \$254,840, after subtracting the amount allocated for MCHS, is recommended for the Historic Preservation Commission, which is scheduled for review by the PHED Committee on April 18.

	FY10 Approved	FY11 Approved	FY12 Approved	FY13 CE Rec	% Change FY12-FY13
Expenditures					
General Fund	\$64,500	\$32,250	\$32,250	\$32,250	0.0%
TOTAL Expenditures	\$64,500	\$32,250	\$32,250	\$32,250	0.0%

For FY11, the County reduced funding for the Historical Society by 50% from the \$64,500 level that MCHS had received for many years. The County supports MCHS in the form of a grant.

Attached at ©5-10 is a summary of MCHS activities during FY10, FY11, and FY12.

A letter from MCHS to Executive staff at ©2-4 reports that the organization's efforts "remain focused on a core educational mission encompassing collecting, preserving, and

interpreting the history Montgomery County." The letter requests FY13 funding at the restored level of \$64,500 and explains how the funding would be used to support the organization's education program, outreach efforts, staffing to support the library and the Montgomery County Archives, historical research projects, quarterly newsletter and bi-annual journal, and other programs.

The letter notes that the 50% reduction in funding in FY11 and FY12 forced the permanent closing of the Waters House in Germantown; elimination of the staff Archivist positions; a 35% reduction in public hours at the Jane S. Sween Library; and a 25% reduction in public hours at the Beall-Dawson Historic Park and the Stonestreet Museum of 19th Century Medicine. The 30% reduction of staffing levels within the organization has "affected every aspect of the society's ability to conduct business." Moreover, the letter emphasizes that funding at the current level would necessitate further staffing reductions, reductions in public hours, and continued massive restructuring of the organization. **The Committee may be interested in understanding what additional staffing and public hours reductions would result.**

Funding under the Executive's recommended level would be allocated as follows:

Education and Outreach	\$10,500
Library and Publications, and Museum	\$13,750
<u>History Day & History Conference</u>	<u>\$ 8,000</u>
TOTAL	\$32,250

Council staff recommendation:

Although Council staff does not recommend changes to the Executive's proposed recommended funding for MCHS at this time, the Committee should consider reinstating funding in the future under when resources are at a sustainable level.

Montgomery County Archives Update

As a result of FY11 budget reductions, MCHS was not able to maintain operations of the Montgomery County Archives, the permanent repository of County Government records of enduring value. Prior to FY11, MCHS operated the archives through a contract with the County and received \$10,000 annually to support a part time archivist for about 10 hours per week to make the archives available to the public.

Since FY11, the archives have been stored at the Broome School. The records were transferred to Broome initially because of construction being completed on the Red Brick Courthouse, and have not been returned to the building because it is currently being occupied by the future tenants of the new Judicial Center Annex. The archives will remain at Broome for another 14-18 months during the completion of the Annex unless funding is made available to construct an adequate facility at the County Records Center to house the collection.

Council staff notes that the environmental conditions in the Red Brick Courthouse are likely to be better than the conditions prior to construction, but may not meet COMAR's temperature and humidity standards for archival records.¹ Moreover, the current FY12 and proposed FY13 budget for MCHS does not provide funding for recataloguing the documents currently in storage and making them accessible to the public.

Council staff notes that the Archives has not functioned adequately as a historical archives for a significant period of time. Because of the lack of storage space and funding for staff support, the Archives has not received records from the County since FY2000 and has a substantial backlog of unprocessed records. The contents of the unprocessed records are generally unknown. Moreover, no funding was provided in the FY11 or FY12 budgets to make any Archives documents stored at the Broome School available to the public.

In order to provide a functional historic archival program, the Council would need to increase its investment in the Montgomery County Archives to provide the following:

- **Adequate Storage Facilities:** Facilities should have appropriate temperature and humidity controls, be free from flooding, and be large enough to accommodate additional County records of historical significance.
- **Access to Public:** Records should be accessible to the public.
- **Archival Program:** There should be defined processes for identifying records of historical value and transferring them from the County Records Center to the historical archives.
- **Adequate Staffing:** There should be enough staff time to ensure that the Archival program is carried out, backlogs are processed, and records are made available to the public.

If the Committee is interested in supporting a functional historic archival program in FY13, it should request information from MCHS and DGS on what options exist for housing the Archives; what staffing and processes would be needed to manage the collection; and what costs would be required to do these things.

¹ MCHS has previously discussed problems regarding the archives with the Committee. MCHS alerted the Committee to the poor condition of the archives, having been stored in the basement of the Red Brick Courthouse, which lacked appropriate temperature and humidity controls and was subject to flooding.

retirement. The cost sharing election process has been completed.

The budget does not include employer contributions from participating outside agencies.

FY13 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY12 Approved	32,462,450	0.00
FY13 CE Recommended	32,462,450	0.00

Historical Activities

This NDA contains a General Fund appropriation of \$287,090 and provides funding for the following agencies and programs:

- **Historic Preservation Commission:** The Historic Preservation Commission's main responsibility is to administer the historic preservation ordinance including recommending Montgomery County sites of potential historical significance. These efforts are administered by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC).
- **Historical Society:** Funding for the Montgomery County Historical Society provides support for the Society's Education Program staff, educational and outreach programs for County residents, and to maintain the Historical Society's research library and museums.

FY13 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY12 Approved	287,090	0.00
FY13 CE Recommended	287,090	0.00

Homeowners' Association Road Maintenance Reimburse.

This NDA provides a partial reimbursement to homeowners' associations (HOAs) for their maintenance of certain privately-owned roadways. The payment is currently restricted to through roadways, accessible to the public, which are one-quarter mile or longer and which provide vehicular access to more than four dwelling units. In FY97, an Executive Regulation was enacted allowing homeowners' associations to request that their roadways be deemed "private maintenance roads." This designation qualifies the HOAs for State reimbursement of their roadway maintenance costs. The County annually submits to the State its estimate of reimbursable miles, including those accepted as private maintenance roads. The State then reimburses the County and, subsequently, the County forwards the funds to HOAs.

FY13 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY12 Approved	25,600	0.00
FY13 CE Recommended	25,600	0.00

Housing Opportunities Commission

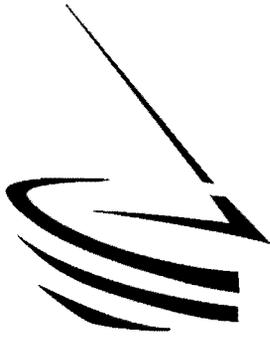
The Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County (HOC) is a public body corporate and politic duly organized under Division II of the Housing Community Development Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended, known as the Housing Authorities Law. As such, the Commission act as a builder, developer, financier, owner, and manager of housing for people of low- and moderate- (eligible) income. The Commission also provides eligible families and individuals with affordable housing and supportive services.

FY13 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY12 Approved	5,513,840	0.00
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY12 Personnel Costs	69,390	0.00
FY13 CE Recommended	5,583,230	0.00

Inauguration & Transition

The Montgomery County Charter provides for the quadrennial election of a County Executive and County Council. This NDA provides for a ceremony and smooth transition of the County Executive and County Council every four years.





November 15, 2011

MCHS

MONTGOMERY
C O U N T Y
H I S T O R I C A L
S O C I E T Y

Timothy Goetzinger, Budget and Finance Manager
Department of Housing and Community Development
100 Maryland Avenue, 4th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Goetzinger,

The Montgomery County Historical Society (MCHS) requests \$64,500 for FY13 in support of historical services that benefit Montgomery County and its citizens. Funding from the County helps to:

- support educational programs for children and adults
- provide history and heritage outreach programs throughout the County
- provide research and historical resources to the public through the Jane Sween Library and Archives, the only accessible archives reflecting County history
- support Montgomery County History Day and the Montgomery County History Conference
- promote development efforts by providing funding matches

Efforts of the Montgomery County Historical Society remain focused on a core educational mission encompassing collecting, preserving, and interpreting the history of Montgomery County. As the only organization addressing the entire scope of County history, MCHS serves a unique role in creating a shared sense of place, a critical element to building and maintaining community. We *are* the County's historical society!

The Society requests a return to the full funding appropriation of \$64,500, allocated as:

Education	\$10,500
Outreach	\$10,000
Library/Archives	\$16,250
Pubs/Museums/Programs	\$27,750
TOTAL	\$64,500

1. **The education grant of \$10,500** partially pays the salary of the Education Coordinator who oversees education and outreach programs designed to encourage all County residents -- from preschool to senior citizen -- to more actively appreciate County history. Programs include exhibits, lectures, workshops, tours, speaker's bureau presentations, docent training, museum activities, history camps, school programs, and more.

2. **The Outreach portion of funding for \$10,000** creates a source of funding to assist individuals and organizations throughout the County that conduct programs and collect critical historical capital to benefit their local communities. These groups typically function with little or no staffing and few resources. They benefit from the annual Montgomery County History Conference, a professional development opportunity for the general public as well as all County history and heritage groups, and from other shared opportunities for these groups to grow and thrive. In addition, this outreach funding will allow MCHS to continue the program initiated in 2008 through the federally funded multi-lingual grant project "Montgomery Connections," which provides education and context in Chinese and Spanish to a previously underserved audience of new residents to the County.
3. **The Library and Archives \$16,250** will partially support the salary of a staff librarian and allow the Society to re-establish a part time position for a staff Archivist to continue processing of important County records. The future disposition of the Montgomery County Archives remains in question and the Montgomery County Historical Society remains the only voice for this collection, which by law requires public access not currently available. In addition, this funding provides partial support for "Paths to the Present," a valued, excellent program of County Cable Montgomery, and for storage of our artifact collection on the County's heritage, which includes two-dimensional papers and images as well as large three-dimensional items.
4. **Publications/Museums/Programs \$27,750** The Society intends to continue its historical research and projects to inform and educate the public of the unique and vibrant history of Montgomery County. MCHS plans, as specified in the FY11-14 Strategic Plan, to create exhibits and programs to provide broader perspective on County history and its impact on today's residents. This category also supports expenses related to public access to the Rockville headquarters home to the Beall-Dawson Historic Park and the Stonestreet Museum of 19th Century Medicine.

The Society produces a quarterly newsletter and bi-annual journal distributed by mail and email, and frequently publishes books and brochures related to County history. Communication through a vibrant website provides online resources for the public including accessible research aids about the collections, archives, and library.

The Montgomery County Historical Society manages all aspects of the popular annual Montgomery County History Day for hundreds of middle and high school students supporting the National History Day event. Participants present history projects in school level competitions; winners progress to the County level competition, then state and finally national competition. Without these funds the Society will likely be forced to further curtail operation of the museums and libraries.

History provides a foundation on which we build our lives. The long and beneficial relationship between the Montgomery County Historical Society and Montgomery County government demonstrates a public-private partnership that is practical in both fiscal and philosophical terms. County funding support indicates an appreciation for the important work of the Montgomery County Historical Society to create a sense of community through outreach, the operation of the library and archives, the increasing scope of our education and school programs, and the growing quality of the collection, which shows in a tangible way, our growth and maturity as a County. As MCHS actively collects, preserves, interprets, and promotes the history of Montgomery County for all County residents, we trust the County will continue its commitment by meeting our total funding request of \$64,500.

The 50% funding cuts to the Montgomery County Historical Society in FY11 and FY12 forced the permanent closing of the Waters House in Germantown, elimination of the staff Archivist position, a 35% reduction in public hours at the Jane C. Sween Library and a 25% reduction in public hours at the Beall-Dawson Historic Park and the Stonestreet Museum of 19th Century Medicine. Staffing levels at the historical society have been reduced overall by more than 30%. These reductions have affected every aspect of the society's ability to conduct business.

The continued 50% reduction in County funding for FY13 would necessitate further staffing reductions, reductions in public hours, and continued massive restructuring of the organization. Below is the distribution that would occur in this scenario.

Education and Outreach	\$10,500
Library, Publications, Museum	\$13,750
History Day & History Conference	\$ 8,000
TOTAL	\$32,250

Sincerely yours,

Eileen McGuckian
Interim Executive Director

cc: Isiah Leggett, County Executive
George Leventhal, County Council, HHS Committee Chair
Phil Andrews, President Montgomery County Council
Roger Berliner, Montgomery County Council
Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Council
Valerie Ervin, Montgomery County Council
Nancy Floreen, Montgomery County Council
Nancy Navarro, Montgomery County Council
Craig Rice, Montgomery County Council
Hans Riemer, Montgomery County Council

111 West Montgomery Avenue, Rockville, Maryland
20850/301.340.2825/www.montgomeryhistory.org

**Report on MCHS activities, July 1, 2009-June 30, 2012
Covering Fiscal Years 2010, 2011, and 2012**

General Information

The Montgomery County Historical Society was founded in 1944 as an all-volunteer non-profit organization to preserve and present the entire scope of Montgomery County history for current and future generations. Over the past 68 years, MCHS has collected documents and artifacts of value to the community, established a museum at the c.1815 Beall-Dawson House as the centerpiece of educational and interpretive programs, and opened its research and reference library to scholars and the public. Today, the Society claims five professional staff, a membership of 1,282, and a volunteer cadre of 70 individuals. Additional programs include a second museum, an active Genealogy Club and Speakers Bureau, recurring and new educational programs for students and adults, and a variety of publications.

The mission of the MCHS is to collect, interpret and promote the history, heritage and culture of Montgomery County, Maryland. The organization aims to reflect the diversity of the County's population through its collections, presentation of exhibits and educational programs, and the acquisition and maintenance of accessible resources intended to create, strengthen, and inspire pride in the history of the community.

Educational and Outreach Programs

Research Library

The Jane C. Sween Research Library is a unique resource for Montgomery County history topics. It is a non-circulating library and archives that contains documents, publications, genealogy information, maps and atlases, original documents, records on microfilm, vertical files, and numerous other items. Research assistance and other services are available to scholars, MCHS members, and the public, with assistance to library patrons most often accomplished on a one-on-one basis. Maintained by professional staff and volunteers, the library is open Wednesday through Saturday, and select Sundays.

Speakers Bureau

The MCHS Speakers Bureau provides lectures and presentations on local history topics to professional groups, neighborhood associations, senior centers, assisted living communities, civic clubs, etc. Since 2007, Clarence Hickey has coordinated requesting groups and volunteers. Over the past three years this program has added more expert speakers and topics to become more visible, and is now the most requested service offered by MCHS. During FY10 through FY12, the Speakers Bureau made 350 presentations throughout Montgomery County to audiences totaling almost 12,000 people. This translates to more than two presentations per week, many of them by authors on local and national history topics. Requesting groups frequently make a donation for this community service, which across the board results in MCHS offering a quality community service at a very reasonable cost.

History Day

The Montgomery County History Day is an annual event that attracts hundreds of local middle and high school students to compete. As the Montgomery County District Coordinator for History Day, MCHS assists participating schools and students, recruits 100+ volunteer judges, and administers the County competition. An average of over 2000 students from about 30 public, private, and home schools compete at the school level. The County event draws between 200-350 students, who compete in the categories of research papers, documentaries, exhibits, websites, or performances. In addition to winning advancement to the state competition, students can win special prizes donated by historical and educational groups.

National History Day, the nationwide program, promotes more than learning historical themes and facts. Participating students learn to research a topic, organize and analyze the facts, and present the facts and their conclusions in a persuasive manner. Although History Day involves a large amount of work, MCHS is rewarded by the enthusiasm of the students and the high quality of their entries. Several alumni of the Montgomery County History Day competition have said that it was the most enjoyable and useful part of their school experience.

History Conference

The Montgomery County History Conference is a popular day-long winter event with general and concurrent sessions of interest to heritage professionals, volunteers, history lovers, community leaders, and the general public. As it has become known as the only conference to focus on the entire scope of Montgomery County history, attendance at the event has increased each year. The 4th, 5th, and 6th annual conferences featured speakers on topics such as suburban development, archaeology, marketing for small organizations, conducting research on runaway slaves, historic preservation, writing and publishing community history, and the histories of communities in the County.

Montgomery Connections

Montgomery Connections is a multi-lingual history education project designed to reach non-traditional audiences in innovative ways. A diverse audience of residents, commuters, and visitors are introduced to local history outside of the museum and its connection to their lives today through historical images on banners, bus ads, advertising in local ethnic papers, cell phone downloads, print flyers, and website materials. A federal IMLS grant enabled MCHS to foster relationships and build community partnerships frequently overlooked by local history organizations.

Initiated in 2008, Montgomery Connections brings twelve themes in County history to life in English, Spanish, and Chinese. Each historical theme is presented from the perspective of a local individual who lived through the era or event and addresses a major topic that is timely and cross-cultural – agricultural heritage, freedom, transportation, immigration, suburbanization, religious discrimination, preserving family history, early special education, rural childhood, civil war, communities. To date, seven themes are in place, and the final five are nearing completion. In May 2012, the Montgomery County Circuit Court Law Library will host a talk and reception that will serve to reinforce the timeless themes of this project.

Other Educational Programs

For decades, MCHS has organized and mounted a variety of educational programs and activities. History Explorers, a field trip camp which is a popular summer option, introduces County youngsters to the history all around them. The MCHS Genealogy Club offers workshops and programs such as First Friday help sessions in the library. Other public programs include lectures and presentations that connect with local people and places, changing museum exhibits, themed walking tours, etc.

Festival-type, free programs are popular with the public. Family Fun Days provide opportunities for adults and children to try out historic crafts. Happy Birthday Montgomery County has a 20-year tradition of bringing a showcase of local history to the Beall-Dawson grounds each September to celebrate the creation of Montgomery County in 1776.

Montgomery County school children and their teachers enjoy local history through MCHS programs. MCHS museums hosted field trips, on average, of 50 groups of fourth and fifth graders, totaling over 2,000 students annually. Costumed MCHS volunteers and staff go directly to the schools with "A Visit from the Past," an in-classroom program for grades K-2 that explores the past through clothing, activities, and games. As school budgets tightened, off-site school programs grew exponentially, with increased scheduling.

Publications

Publications on County history topics are a specialty of the Historical Society. *The Montgomery County Story* is a bi-annual research journal that for 50 years has published original articles. *Send for the Doctor* (published in 2009) is a biography of Dr. Edward E. Stonestreet, and the Sesquicentennial edition of *Civil War Guide to Montgomery County, Maryland* (2011) updates this classic resource text by Charles Jacobs.

Programs and services are developed to meet the mission of MCHS, with the goal of making County history engaging for children and adults. Always concerned with scholarly content, staff regularly draws upon extensive resources available in the MCHS library, archives, and artifact collections to ensure historic accuracy, relevance, and accessibility. Input is welcomed and programs are reviewed in various ways. This information is used to evaluate existing programming and inform the development of new initiatives.

Museums, Interpretation, and Exhibits

During these three years, budget concerns forced MCHS to reduce museum and library hours, staff positions, and its presence at the Waters House, a County-owned facility in Germantown which MCHS had operated since 2001. In Rockville, MCHS continued high-quality interpretation and visitation at the Beall-Dawson House, a museum with exhibits/furnishings interpreting 1815-1940s, and at the Stonestreet Museum of 19th Century Medicine, a c.1850 doctor's office featuring exhibits on the life of Dr. Edward Stonestreet, 19th century medicine, and changing medical care. County residents, heritage tourists, school tours, scouts, and other special groups visit to take docent-led tours, curriculum-based programs, or individual self-guided tours.

Both museums maintain permanent exhibitions, with temporary exhibits filling in here and at off-site venues. Recent topics researched, designed, and fabricated by MCHS staff include land use and suburban development, Christmas in the 1920s and 1960s, fashionable hats, fences, and an expanded look at the residents of the Beall-Dawson House. Reinterpretation of the Stonestreet Museum in FY12 produced new permanent exhibits on Dr. Stonestreet based on recently completed research that resulted in a book (published by MCHS in 2009), as well as changing exhibits on various aspects of 19th and early 20th century medicine using MCHS' extensive (but rarely seen) medical collection. In FY11, MCHS was selected as a host site for the Smithsonian Institution's Traveling Exhibition Service "Between Fences," for which the Historical Society created a companion exhibit and programs that looked at barriers and borders in local history. MCHS also offered training sessions and workshops for its docents and guides, with topics ranging from museum interpretation to decorative arts. In April 2012, MCHS Director of Collections Joanna Church presented a lecture on deaccessioning at the annual conference of the American Association of Museums in Minneapolis.

A Student Advisory Council, comprised of local high school students, began meeting in FY11 to act as a bridge between MCHS and the young adult community. In FY12 the Student Council curated its first exhibit as the second in "The Year of the Hat" series, entitled "Another Look: The Student Perspective," with a special reception on February 26.

Staff developed four online exhibits on the topics of the C&O Canal, African-American education, suburban development along the B&O Railroad, and the mill industry in Montgomery County. In addition to showing on the MCHS website, these are also available as traveling displays on loan to organizations and libraries.

Management and Administration

MCHS experienced three management transitions in as many years. MCHS is fortunate that almost all members of its governing Board of Directors have maintained their commitment to the organization, allowing for continuity during these difficult times.

As of April 2012, the MCHS staff consists of two full-time and five part-time paid employees. Key Staff includes an Executive Director, Director of Collections, Education and Volunteer Coordinator, Librarian, Office Manager, and two Weekend Museum staffers.

MCHS experienced transition during much of the report period. As cost-saving measures became necessary, MCHS eliminated certain positions (Archivist, School Program Coordinator, Assistant Director, Waters House Director, and Project Assistant) as staff retired, resigned, or were let go. Responsibilities encompassed by these positions were picked up by other staff or delegated to trusted volunteers. Debbie Rankin resigned as Executive Director in January 2011 and was replaced by Beth Hickey for eight months. Beth departed in August 2011 and the gap from October through February 2012 was filled by Interim Executive Director Eileen McGuckian. At the end of February 2012, Thomas Kuehhas was selected by the Board of Directors for the permanent position.

Volunteers play an active and vital role in the success of MCHS. Volunteers assist at all levels of the organization, from behind-the-scenes administrative support to interacting with the public.

They serve as museum docents and guides, collections care specialists, event planners, researchers, transcribers, writers and editors, librarians, and Speakers' Bureau members. Volunteers are supervised by staff in the areas in which they work. MCHS volunteers contributed approximately 10,000 hours of service over the three years covered by this report. Approximately 70 volunteers are listed in our active volunteer directory.

The Board of Directors is the governing authority of MCHS. As such, the Board is the legal custodian of the collections, supervises the Executive Director, sets policy, provides evaluation, trains new Board members and has fiduciary and fund-raising responsibilities. Currently there are twelve members of the Board of Directors. The full Board meets at least four times a year; over the past year it has met more frequently to assist in the transitions.

In September 2010, a new four-year (FY11-14) Strategic Plan was approved by the Board. The plan was created by staff and Board members, with input from consultants and experts in the museum field. In 2009, MCHS participated in the G-MAP (Governance section of the Museum Assessment Program), which suggested improvements. Building on the G-MAP results, the Board and staff participated in a facilitator-led retreat in January 2010 to begin addressing some of the issues raised by the G-MAP process and to address the realities of the recent economic downturn. The results of both the G-MAP and Board/staff retreat were used in building the goals for the new Strategic Plan. From the Strategic Plan a first-year action plan with measurable goals was created by staff. Several actions have been accomplished, including the first stage in the development of a new comprehensive interpretation plan and the restructuring of the organization's membership levels and benefits.

Throughout the period, the economic downturn continued to affect MCHS, particularly with decreases in county and state funding. In FY10, MCHS reduced museum and library hours and chose not to refill three vacated part-time positions. In early FY11, budget concerns forced MCHS to exit a lease at the Waters House, a County-owned facility in Germantown which MCHS had operated since 2001 and which had provided rental income. Despite these challenges, MCHS continues to look toward the future by strengthening core programs, reaching out to the county's diverse community, and creating and improving strategic partnerships. Although MCHS still faces fiscal and resource challenges, the organization is poised to continue as a vital, stable heritage presence in the current environment and to increase its visibility throughout Montgomery County.

FINANCIAL

MCHS has several sound investment accounts which include endowment and Board-directed funds, considered a cash reserve. The Board's Endowment Policy maintains two funds: a General Operating Endowment which can draw down no more than 5% of the total assets annually, regardless of the amount of interest earned, and a Collections Fund which can only use interest income to support the museum and research collections. The General Operating Endowment was established after MCHS was named as one of the beneficiaries of a large personal estate. MCHS maintains a conservative investment strategy approved by the Board, which was only moderately affected by the recent economic crisis.

Every year MCHS undertakes several fundraising events and initiatives. These include a holiday fete, participation in the annual Strathmore Museum Shop Around (an event featuring gift shops from across the region), and successful end-of-year Annual Fund campaigns. The popular donor reception event was revived in Spring 2012. In addition, the Strategic Plan approved in FY11 places a renewed emphasis on establishing a diverse and sustainable development policy and improving Board-supported fundraising.

Service to the Community

Although it may seem static, history is actually in a constant state of reinterpretation as new perspectives are brought to bear and new information is brought to light. MCHS offers a host of programming for both children and adults that ask the community to participate in this process. Events like the Montgomery County History Conference and other adult programming aim not only to serve as educational settings for residents to learn about local history, but also as places for these types of discussions to occur. Curriculum-based school programs and family fun days at the museum ask children to imagine what it was like to live in the past by comparing it to their lives today. In this way, MCHS hopes to bring history to life and inspire children to look at their community in new ways.

MCHS is accessible on the internet (www.montgomeryhistory.org) through online exhibits, Montgomery Connections, a Facebook page, and a weekly blog featuring rarely seen items in the MCHS collections. MCHS also reaches the at-large community through partnerships with other organizations and through community festivals such as “World of Montgomery” and “Magical Montgomery.”

MCHS strives to serve the entire Montgomery County community, always creating new ways to make history accessible and to ensure that programming and collections reflect the growing diversity of the region. As the only history/heritage organization whose mission encompasses the entire scope of County history, MCHS develops programming and exhibits that reach a broad range of County residents.

The MCHS newsletter, which contains a calendar of events, is distributed to all County libraries, where it is made available to library patrons for free. In recent years, MCHS has invested in website development, an e-communications system, social networking, and blogging in order to facilitate interaction with the growing online Montgomery County community. The MCHS website consistently receives over 2,000 visits per month, with over 25,000 visits in 2011, and the collections blog was viewed 14,682 times in 2011. MCHS regularly participates in festivals and events throughout the County in order to interact with the community we serve.

MCHS also serves the community in other, less visible ways. MCHS is the largest repository for Montgomery County-related library and archival material, and three dimensional artifacts like furniture, paintings, clothing, and other objects. In this way, MCHS serves as the collective memory of the County. Effective collections management often occurs away from public view, but is essential to preserving the past for the future. Objects and archival material help bring the past to life, offering a framework in which to discuss larger aspects of social history that remain relevant in today’s changing cultural landscape.