



Young Artist Grant

Villa Charities Announces Winners of Inaugural Young Artist Grant Program

Italian Canadians from across Canada awarded grants in music, literature and film

Toronto, ON – January 9, 2024 – Toronto’s registered charity and non-profit organization Villa Charities is excited to announce the winners of their inaugural **Young Artist Grant**, a national grant program established to support young Italian Canadian artists in their creative endeavours in the fields of fictional literature, music and film. The Young Artist Grant was launched in September 2023 with the aim of providing financial support to emerging artists, while ensuring that young Italian Canadians are engaged with Villa Charities, and the Italian Canadian community at large.

“Each of the three inaugural Young Artist Grant recipients submitted proposals that demonstrated outstanding originality, excellence and a passion for their chosen creative genre,” said Marco DeVuono, President and CEO, Villa Charities Inc. “I am thrilled that Villa Charities can support these exceptional young Italian Canadian artists as they pursue a career in the arts while proudly representing their Italian heritage.”

The Young Artist Grant awards three grants of \$5,000 each to three (3) talented young artists between 18 and 30 years of age, who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada, and of Italian heritage. This new biennial fund is an integral component of the organization’s Italian Canadian Youth Initiative (ICYI), a suite of programs and activities strategically created with the long-term objective of engaging and supporting the youth in the community, established in 2021 as part of Villa Charities’ 50th Anniversary celebrations.

Villa Charities announced the three grant recipients along with an Honourable Mention today.

Category: Fictional Literature

Winner: **Claire Tatangelo, Halifax, NS**

Creative Project: “Roller Barbie and Her Magic 8” (Graphic Novel)

A coming-of-age story about an Italian Canadian woman who leaves her family and moves to a new city alone. She learns to love herself through roller blading and reconnects with lessons she learned playing Italian cards from her *nonna* as she figures out the direction of her life. Set in Halifax, Nova Scotia, this graphic novel is based on real natural disasters that took place in the post-pandemic years and follows the characters as they learn to accept and cope with the aftermath. The imagery on Italian cards is revisited and redesigned throughout the story.

On Winning the 2023 Young Artist Grant: “I am very grateful to be able to carry out my idea for a graphic novel – this will allow me to explore my creative vision in-depth for the story I imagine. As an artist of Italian descent, I chose to create a story from my own experiences that are specific to my family and our culture. I am very excited to have the support of Villa Charities and the Italian Canadian community, and I am looking forward to embarking on the journey of creating a graphic novel!”

Category: Music

Winner: **Daniele Monticelli, Woodbridge, ON**

Creative Project: “Now Part II” (Album)

This project explores life situations, interpersonal relationships, and the universal quest for identity. The song "Same Song" emphasizes the interconnectedness of music and culture, showcasing a fusion of traditional Italian instruments like tamburello and zampogna with a Scottish-inspired violin line. This blend symbolizes the unity among diverse backgrounds, reflecting a shared love for musical expression.

On Winning the 2023 Young Artist Grant: “Securing the Young Artist Grant as a young Italian Canadian artist is not only a validation of my artistic voice but also a heartfelt recognition of the harmonious blend of my Italian heritage and Canadian identity. This empowering opportunity propels me into a richer exploration of my art, fostering a narrative that gracefully weaves together diverse cultural influences.”

Category: Film

Winner: **Ruggero Romano, Vancouver, BC**

Creative Project: “Vinum” (Short Film)

The project is dedicated to the preservation of the age-old tradition of grape harvesting in Venice, Italy, through the production of a high-quality cinematic short film. This venerable practice in Venice is at risk of fading into obscurity as the city's population dwindles due to the overwhelming impacts of mass tourism. Our cinematic endeavor will capture and present every facet of the grape harvesting process in collaboration with the local most renowned grape harvesting organization, Laguna nel Bicchiere. With an immersive and

authentic approach, the film will explore the entire journey, crafting a narrative that unfolds with a curated synergy between images and soundscape. Through a cinematic lens, we will highlight the enduring traditions that form the heart and soul of Italian and Venetian winemaking culture.

On Winning the 2023 Young Artist Grant: “Winning the Young Artist Grant by Villa Charities marks a meaningful moment in my artistic journey, symbolizing both recognition and encouragement for my dedication to the arts. As a young Italo-Canadian artist and filmmaker, this grant not only acknowledges my cultural heritage and its influence on my work but also provides invaluable support in my creative endeavors. The financial assistance and exposure that come with this award will greatly enhance my ability to explore, experiment, and expand my artistic skills and vision.”

Category: Film

Honourable Mention: **Madeleine Fiore, Woodbridge, ON**

Creative Project: **“Road Trippin” (Short Film)**

“Road Trippin” is a short film written, directed and produced by Madeline Rose Fiore. After graduating college, two girls go on a road trip with their brother's 1979 camper van. Through this journey, they uncover their love for one another that they've been hiding from, which runs parallel to their brother's secret relationship.”

The selection and adjudication process were conducted by a Selection Committee for each grant category. The grants will support specific original creative projects that were submitted as works in progress for the application process, and funds were disbursed to the three winners in December 2023.

For more information about the 2023 Young Artist Grant winners and the program, please visit villacharities.com/grant or contact execs@villacharities.com.

About Villa Charities Inc.

Villa Charities Inc. (VCI) is a registered charity and non-profit organization that enriches lives through experiences and services that honour Italian culture and heritage. For more than 50 years across the GTA, Villa Charities has provided cultural and educational programs and supported culturally sensitive long-term care and independent living apartments for seniors. VCI fulfills their mandate through a broad range of activities, services and facilities, both directly and in conjunction with its affiliates and independent organizations. Affiliates include Columbus Centre and Joseph D. Carrier Art Gallery; Villa Colombo Homes for the Aged Inc. in Toronto; Villa Colombo Seniors Centre (Vaughan) Inc. Di Poce Centre; and Italian Canadian Benevolent Seniors Apartments Corporation/Casa Abruzzo Benevolent Corporation with apartments for independent seniors (Caboto Terrace,

Casa Del Zotto and Casa Abruzzo). Each of these organizations is an integral part of the Villa Charities family with separate legal status and its own governance Board. Villa Charities has been certified as a Great Place to Work[®], which recognizes the organization's commitment to creating an inclusive, positive and engaging workplace. For more information visit villacharities.com.

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