2025 AfterBurn Report

December 1, 2025

Sideburn 2026 Chromatic Carnival

Flame Ontario Arts Collective Inc. held its 6th Ontario regional and Third Sideburn in 2025, with the theme “Chromatic Carnival”, bringing over 1040 participants to Stone Mills, Ontario. The effigy, “Big Top”, welcomed participants in a 20-foot-tall round wooden big top tent coloured in a multitude of food-grade colours on the outside. Our temple, “Sacred Grove”, featured a series of triangular columns that stood 20 ft tall, giving the illusion of a grove of trees.

Pre-event

Starting on May 10, essential volunteers from DPW and the board arrived on site, with gate operations beginning on Sunday, May 11. Effigy and Temple Crew arrived on site on Monday, May 10th, and Theme Camps’ arrival began on May 13, with construction beginning immediately following. The weather leading up to the event was beautiful, and all our teams managed to set up in record time.

The Event

After a beautiful start to the week, with record highs and blue skies, the event ended in colder weather, rain and wind. Resulting in a few stuck trucks, a no-driving-on-land policy was implemented on Sunday to keep the grounds good for pack out on Monday.

This year, we implemented numerous new systems, cross-departmental training, new committees, on-site Medical and a digital IMS system.

We sold out for the first time and very early in our season. A total of 1,046 people participated in Sideburn this year. We again sold more minor tickets than in any previous year, totalling 49

tickets, including 42 for those under 13 and 7 for 13-17 year olds. The Flame Ontario Arts Collective financed 100 low-cost tickets, and all other low-cost tickets were paid for by our Pay It Forward initiative, by our community, 81 tickets were purchased and we will be carrying forward 19 tickets to 2026.

The event was supported by over 388 volunteers, who took on 569 shifts across the various operational departments. Our volunteer check-in at HQ was a success, allowing us to track volunteer shifts and gain a better understanding of which shifts tend not to fill or have low attendance. This year, very few shifts were abandoned.

Rangers conducted online training, with over 50 trainees and new additions to the Ranger team, and almost all shifts (including graveyard) were covered across the entire weekend. We also trained and accepted five new Ranger Khaki candidates. A digital IMS was also launched and was very well received and used by all Khakis. We hosted BRC Ranger training at the event, which went well, although there was a smaller turnout due to reduced travel to the USA. First Response Ontario was a great partner for medical services; participants were impressed by their infrastructure and the kind medical care they received.

This year, the **Consent, Accountability, Resilience, and Equity (CARE) Team** was formed as a new initiative. This team joins the forces of Consent and Equity to look at the event from a wider wellness lens as the nature of these roles and the skill set in their execution overlap significantly. The effectiveness of this strategy is being evaluated, and it includes the following considerations: There are differences between the two positions. Still, it offers a second set of eyes for any issues that may arise and a backup should it be needed. This year, the team was able to articulate its core values, provide consultation in the creation and updating of relevant initiatives, and offer support in the execution of these roles, which can sometimes be isolating and emotionally labour-intensive. It seems there could be more that can be accomplished – some barriers may include time, growing pains, or perhaps even a bad fit for the Flame Ontario Art Collective's structure.

This year, the **Volunteer team** was consolidated into a new department called the H.I.V.E., encompassing HQ, Ice, Volunteer Coordination, and Engagement. The event saw strong

participation across all areas, with nearly every HQ shift covered and shift supervisors proving invaluable for smooth operations. Ice pre-orders were well received, though supply challenges highlighted areas for improvement. Volunteer engagement remained high, supported by consistent and well-received video communications. The newly formed Engagement team played a vital role in connecting with attendees—sharing updates, answering questions, and fostering a sense of community. Their efforts, including weather alerts and event information, were positively received and added a valuable layer of support to the overall Sideburn experience.

Theme Camps

- 45 placed theme camps on site, including effigy and temple camps
- 46 theme camp applications submitted.
- 44 camps participated in the theme camp-directed ticket sale. Allotted 340 tickets, 332 claimed by camps, 304 directed tickets were purchased during the ticket sale purchase window.
- 35 theme camp grant applications
- 35 theme camp grants awarded
- 34 grants claimed
- $20,000 in grant money initially awarded, after contract signing period- 19,500
- 25 theme camps with amplified sound

Art Grants

- 44 art grants awarded

  Breakdown of types of art grants awarded:
  - Creators Grant: **19**
  - Microgrants: **10**
  - Legacy Grant: **11**
  - Fire Arts Creators Grant: **4**

- $27,500 art grants funding, plus $5,500 each for Temple and Effigy = $38,500 in grant funds
- 7 grant projects had a fire art or flame effect component
- 5 additional “Independent Art” projects were submitted and received placement (self-funded, non-grant projects)
- 78 total applications received (not including effigy and temple)

  Breakdown of applications received:
  - Creators Grant: **38**
  - Microgrants: **16**
  - Legacy Grant: **17**
  - Fire Arts Creators Grant: **7**
  - Effigy: **1**
  - Temple: **2**

Consent, Accountability, Resilience, and Equity (CARE)

CARE Initiatives

- Creation of the CARE Committee
- Put out a statement on consent and the meaning of radical inclusion. This statement has been posted on the website, Facebook group, Discord group, and is included in the survival guide.
- Added an inclusivity statement to SideBurn's mission statement

Consent Initiatives

- Updated Incident Report Form with statement of Informed Consent
- Created Mental Health and Wellness resource guide - promoted on website

- Replaced Restorative Justice with Radical Accountability as a foundational concept in co-creating healthy communities

Equity Initiatives

- Included indications of what volunteer shifts are family-friendly and the physical requirements of the position, with the assistance of HIVE.
- Accessibility Perimeter
- Accessible Vehicles on Haya policy
- Increased the number of accessible porta-potties to 4 units strategically placed around the event.
- Accessibility & Inclusivity Information on the website, Facebook page & in the newsletter
    - Low-cost tickets
    - Equity Assist tickets: Guaranteed second ticket for those who need assistance with activities of daily living
    - Service animals
    - Accessible toilets
    - Support in English & French
    - Charging medical devices
    - Quiet space

2025 Changes and Challenges

The New Land

This year, we expanded into a new section of land to create more space for the event. While the intention was positive, we encountered several unexpected challenges. Sound tends to bounce in this area, which led to noise complaints from nearby neighbors. As a result, we had to pivot and reduce sound levels to stay compliant.

Additionally, after a few days of rain, the land flooded, forcing us to relocate vehicles to higher ground.

Overall, this new area has proven to be less than ideal for our event needs. Moving forward, we'll need to reconsider how we use this space and explore alternative solutions for space.

Rethinking Sanctuary

We need to move away from an invite-only model and create a more accessible, low-stimulation space for individuals who are experiencing challenges and need a quieter environment to take refuge in. This space would complement our existing quiet area with cots, offering an additional option for decompression and support.

Leads should continue to play a key role in determining when someone escalates into the designated Sanctuary space, ensuring that it remains a supportive and intentional environment for those who need deeper care.

Improving Gate Payment Systems

To streamline purchases such as parking passes, we should implement a proper digital payment system at the gate—ideally using a platform like Stripe. This would simplify transactions compared to our current reliance on cash or e-transfers, making the process more efficient and secure for both attendees and staff.

This system could also be extended to other on-site purchases, such as ice sales, providing a unified and reliable payment experience across the event

Website Language Update for 2025

This year, we set out to better engage our French-speaking audience by offering all website content in both English and French. However, the extensive rewriting and copy editing required for the English site overhaul stretched our capacity, making it unfeasible to update the French version simultaneously. As a result, we decided to maintain an English-only website for the 2025

event, while continuing to support our bilingual community through French-English email campaigns and other targeted communications.

Art Grant Committee Review Challenges and Process Improvements

The Art Grant Committee struggled with the high volume of applications, underscoring the need for a more streamlined review process, improved anonymization methods, and clearer guidelines for submitting supporting documents.

Our Census Revealed

Fast Facts

- New Burners: **17%**
- New to SideBurn: **25%**
- Intend to Return to SideBurn: **99%**
- The majority of new participants heard about the event through word of mouth.
- **69%** of participants engaged with SideBurn through the website or Facebook group.
- **95%** of participants' preferred language is English.
- Identified as racialized: **9%** (compared to 26% of the total Canadian population[1]).
- Identified as 2SGLBTQIA+: **39%** (compared to 4.4% of the total Canadian population[2]).
- Participants aged 30-49: **71%**
- Average participant satisfaction score: **4.8**

[1] Statistics Canada. *Census of Population, 2021.*
[2] Statistics Canada. *Socioeconomic profile of the 2SLGBTQ+ population aged 15 years and older, 2019 to 2021.* **The Daily,** January 25, 2024.

What Participants Would Like to See In the Future

- Can recycling program: **46%**
- Adult-only section: **34%**
- Paid garbage disposal: **27%**
- Mobility shuttle on Haya: **19%**
- Shuttle to Kingston: **13%**

2025 Finances

After two years of healthy profits to the event, the Flame ON board set out specifically in 2025 to have a year of no profits and looked to fine tune the expenses to ensure strong infrastructure and event support for the participants. Additional investments were greenlighted for infrastructure (lighting, tents, rentals) and we brought on a contracted first aid supplier that significantly increased the event costs. However, with a healthy reserve due to the prior years, this year's financial outcome is not a concern for SideBurns to come.

Financial Summary

TOTAL INCOME	TOTAL EXPENSES	NET RESULT
$179,285.50	$182,296.33	−$3,010.83

The event closed with a net deficit of −$3,010.83, or 1.7% of income, in line with the board's plan for a break-even year. The two largest cost areas were core event expenses ($73,977.90) and grants to art, temple, effigy and theme camp projects ($58,365.25). Full income and expense details follow.

2025 Income and Expenses

Income

Source	Amount	% of income
Ticket Sales	$149,287.50	83.3%
Vehicle Passes	$14,350.00	8.0%
RV Passes	$7,000.00	3.9%
Donations	$3,450.00	1.9%
At Event Ice & vehicle pass sales	$5,198.00	2.9%
Total income	**$179,285.50**	**100.0%**

Expenses by Category

Category	Amount	% of expenses
Core Event Expense	$73,977.90	40.6%
Grants	$58,365.25	32.0%
Volunteers	$10,812.34	5.9%
Infrastructure	$10,329.80	5.7%
Other	$8,614.31	4.7%
DPW Supplies	$8,258.91	4.5%
HIVE	$4,120.60	2.3%
FAST Department Supplies	$2,635.53	1.4%
Fuel	$1,891.60	1.0%
Safety Team Supplies	$1,440.42	0.8%
Printing	$1,104.88	0.6%
City Dept Supplies	$744.79	0.4%
Total expenses	**$182,296.33**	**100.0%**

Detailed Expenses

Item	Amount
Core Event Expense	**$73,977.90**
Permitting - Township of Stone Mills	$10,100.00
Security	$12,644.70
Bob's Portables	$10,940.66
Insurance	$629.06
First Aid Contractor	$22,852.33
Vehicle Rentals	$8,195.99
Other Rentals (Tents, UTV, Lighting, Dumpster)	$6,320.01
Wristbands	$859.03
Gate and BODOC Phones	$822.55
Wood	$400.00
Internet	$213.57
City Dept Supplies	**$744.79**
Sound Meters	$176.89
Sound Dept Supplies	$96.24
Map Printing	$471.66
DPW Supplies	**$8,258.91**
Lumber	$2,077.79
Tools	$1,247.28
Flags	$1,357.72
Hardware	$2,827.30
Other Misc	$748.82
FAST Department Supplies	**$2,635.53**
Safety Lights and other supplies	$557.81
Fire Extinguishers	$807.95
FAST Training	$1,269.77
Printing	**$1,104.88**
Printing	$1,104.88
Fuel	**$1,891.60**
Gas, Diesel + Propane	$1,891.60
Infrastructure	**$10,329.80**
FAST Water Tender System	$790.59
Temple Signage	$324.31
Computers	$904.79

Item	Amount
Tents	$2,097.75
Lighting and Signage	$4,480.59
Chairs and Tables	$935.58
Misc	$796.19
Safety Team Supplies	**$1,440.42**
Sanctuary care items	$359.69
Ranger Armbands, Notepads	$493.53
Misc	$587.20
Volunteers	**$10,812.34**
Perimeter Scarves	$678.11
Tshirts	$3,415.29
FAST Team	$958.71
Stickers	$714.96
Safety Team	$2,109.67
Meals, Transportation, Support	$1,900.89
Volunteer Gift	$1,034.71
HIVE	**$4,120.60**
Centre Camp Decor	$114.80
General Supplies	$669.56
Radios	$237.32
Ice	$3,098.92
Other	**$8,614.31**
Website & Comms	$1,506.14
Fees	$40.29
Storage	$5,424.00
Insurance (Board + Consent Lead)	$1,643.88
Grants	**$58,365.25**
Art Grant	$28,115.25
Temple	$5,500.00
Effigy	$5,500.00
Theme Camps	$19,250.00
Total expenses	**$182,296.33**

Figures are from the 2025 AfterBurn accounting workbook. Category subtotals are shown on the shaded rows.