

participation in events such as the pan-Canadian Culture Days, the Finlandia Association makes available Finnish traditions and foods – *pulla* and *makkara* are perennial favourites – for the broader city's enjoyment. Thunder Bay is a regular host of the Finnish-Canadian Grand Festival, a multi-day cultural event that brings together Fennophiles from all over Canada and elsewhere.

Since 2004, the Hall has regularly introduced Finnish film and documentary to the city through the Bay Street Film Festival and it has even been the star of a film. The Finnish Labour Temple's history was featured in the popular 2011 docudrama *Under the Red Star*, directed by local film-maker and Finnish descendent Kelly Saxberg. The film was Saxberg's second to feature Thunder Bay's Finnish history, following the powerful 2005 documentary *Letters from Karelia*. Both were widely screened and praised in Finland, connecting Canadian and Finnish film-makers and enthusiasts.

The Finnish influence on Thunder Bay arts and culture, however, extends beyond the Labour Temple. For a decade, local community radio station, LU Radio, featured Finnish-language music, news, and interviews on the program *Ulkonaiset*, which was broadcast internationally. Additionally, Finnish heritage makes its mark on Thunder Bay's visual arts scene. For example, artists Lora Northway and Carol Kajorinne both explore themes relating to their families' and region's ties to Finland, both past and present.² Northway's painting *Nightless Night*, which draws inspiration from her family immigration history and Finnish textiles, was recently chosen as the cover art for Ontario's first Cultural Strategy.³ A metal-smith and mixed media artist, Kajorinne developed a Finnish "Knot of Fate" for use on city bike racks, in an effort to connect citizens with their past and community.

The Finnish-inspired "Fate" bike rack was a part of the City's plan to make local shopping even more attractive and green. Among Thunder Bay's vibrant local businesses, many Finnish stores, bakeries, and restaurants have made a lasting mark. In the Bay-Algoma neighbourhood, known as Thunder Bay's Finnish area, the Scandinavian Deli, Finnport, Harry Bakery, and the Hoito Restaurant join the city's

history with its present. Iittala glassware, Marimekko designs, Fazer chocolates, and *karjalanpiirakka* found in local Finnish shops have become standard Thunder Bay souvenirs, along with amethyst and Persian donuts. Harkening to years past, when public baths could be found across the city, Kangas Sauna is still a popular spot for private saunas and home-style meals, and a must-do for many visitors. As the years pass, it is remarkable to see the resiliency of these Thunder Bay businesses, which no longer serve only Finnish clientele. Instead, they now demonstrate a keen ability to balance Finnish heritage with the needs of current consumers, all while highlighting Finnish products and culture.

The motto of Thunder Bay's Canadian Suomi Foundation well sums up an important position of the local Finnish community: "Learning is an aid to the young and support and comfort to the aged." Finnish language and cultural education provides the community's younger generations with a link to their past and the future possibilities afforded by forging connections with Finland. For the elderly, the upkeep of Finnish cultural activities and language, indeed, offer better support services and the comfort that their traditions will not be forgotten. From kindergarten through university, Thunder Bay provides opportunities in Finnish educational engagement. Elementary school-aged children can – since 1965 – participate in the Thunder Bay Finnish Language School (Suomen Kielen Koulu), which offers free weekly cultural activities and basic language instruction with support from the Lakehead School Board's International Heritage Language Program, Suomi-Seura, Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture, and community fundraising. Once in public high school, Thunder Bay youth can take Finnish language courses for credit, with the possibility of continuing on to university-level language instruction at Lakehead University.

At the centre of many of these educational opportunities is the Canadian Suomi Foundation, which has been operating in Thunder Bay since 1977 as a charity that supports the study of Finnish language and culture.⁴ Based on individual and corporate donations, the organization has awarded more than \$500,000 in scholarships and grants,

² See the artists' work at <http://loranorthway.com/paintings/2014-2/> and <http://carolkajorinne.blogspot.fi/p/a-journey-towards-metal.html>.

³ Government of Ontario, *The Ontario Culture Strategy: Telling Our Stories, Growing Our Economy*, 2016, https://files.ontario.ca/ontarios_culture_strategy_en2_aoda_final-s.pdf.

⁴ <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/chairs/cfs/csf>