

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SHAW FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF INNOVATIVE POSITIVE AGING PROGRAMMING

*...programs shift 'decline management' aging framework to
new focus on preservation through creative expansion...*

Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON (April 1, 2026) — The Shaw Festival is advancing its bold movement for real human connection with the expansion of its innovative Positive Aging programming. New events and workshops will be developed over the next three years to shift the narrative around aging from 'decline management' to a powerful new focus on preservation through creativity.

“Positive Aging is not simply programming for older adults - it is a shift in how we understand aging itself. For too long, aging has been framed as a process of decline to be managed. At the Shaw Festival, we believe growing older is something else entirely,” said Pragna Desai, Shaw Festival’s Director of Community Engagement and Outreach. “We are proud to be at the forefront of advancing a new vision for aging – one defined by possibility, not by limitations, where older adults are active creators of culture, rediscovering their purpose, connections, and voices.”

Demonstrating the powerful role the arts can play in aging well, The Shaw’s new Positive Aging programming builds on the success of its innovative pilot programs developed for older adults over the past two years including classes in memorization techniques, theatre improv and dance and the acclaimed Defy Dementia™ event, developed by Baycrest and the Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation (CABHI).

The Shaw Festival’s expanded Positive Aging programming is made possible through a generous \$5 million gift from the Weston family as part of The Shaw’s All.Together.Now. campaign. This contribution, alongside the generosity of other visionary donors, is enabling the Shaw Festival to create and offer thousands more positive aging initiatives, empowering older adults to explore their creativity, strengthen cognitive vitality and build meaningful social connections through theatre and the performing arts.

Registration Open for New Positive Aging Programs

Positive Aging events, workshops, performances and community partnerships will be featured in The Shaw’s annual calendar of events. Registration for new Positive Aging workshops in improv, voice control, scene study, memorization and dance is now open at shawfest.com/positiveaging.

Delivered by Shaw Festival artists and professional coaches, these programs are designed to celebrate lifelong creativity, build skills and strengthen social connections. With the expansion of its facilities, starting with the Shaw Artists’ Village this summer, and the new Royal George Theatre rebuild in the future, The Shaw will be able to offer more workshops and programming to more people, amplifying the impact of this critical work.

“At the Shaw Festival, positive aging isn't about staying young; it's about growing whole,” added Desai. “When older adults engage their creativity, we have witnessed them strengthen their emotional resilience and reconnect with their sense of identity, agency and purpose. The Shaw is proud to create spaces where imagination remains limitless, and where creativity continues to flourish in every chapter of life.”

These programming advancements demonstrate how the Shaw Festival is applying performing arts expertise in new ways to connect and uplift people of all interests and ages. Last year, the Shaw Festival offered more than 5,000 interactive experiences in addition to its exceptional theatre performances – piloting new events, programs, and educational initiatives designed to inspire and create belonging.

For more information about Shaw's All.Together.Now. campaign for real human connection, visit shawfest.com/alltogethernow.

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The Shaw Festival wishes to acknowledge and honour the land upon which its patrons and company members gather as the historic and traditional territory of First Nations peoples. Recognition and thanks are extended to the Neutral Nation, the Mississauga and the Haudenosaunee for their stewardship of these lands over millennia.

About the Shaw Festival

One of the largest charitable theatre companies in North America, The Shaw's mission is to enrich and connect people's lives through theatre. Based in beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake, Shaw's 2026 productions include ***Funny Girl, One for the Pot, Amadeus, Sleuth, Jeeves & Wooster in Perfect Nonsense, A New Work in Progress, The Wind in the Willows, Heartbreak House*** and ***Ohio State Murders***. Through its All.Together.Now. campaign, The Shaw is creating new spaces and programs where people can build real human connections and rediscover their creativity. For more information, visit shawfest.com. *We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.* ~ George Bernard Shaw

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Media Contacts

Ash Belmer
Publicist, B-Rebel PR
Mobile: 416-617-8934
ash@b-rebelpr.com

Jenniffer Anand
Senior Manager, Communications
Shaw Festival
1-800-657-1106 x 2222
Mobile: 905-941-0018
janand@shawfest.com

Matthew Bickerton
Communications Co-ordinator
Shaw Festival
1-800-657-1106 x 2224
Mobile: 905-941-0377
mattbickerton@shawfest.com