

A Place to Reflect and Heal

Alexandra Park is located within the traditional territory of the Mississauga (Michi Saagiig) and Chippewa Nations, collectively known as the Williams Treaties First Nations. In 1923, the Chippewa of Lake Simcoe (communities of Beausoleil, Georgina Island, and Rama), and the Mississauga (Michi Saagiig) of the north shore of Lake Ontario (Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Scugog Island), signed separate treaties with the governments of Ontario and Canada, known today as the “Williams Treaties”.



We encourage visitors who wish to learn more about the Indigenous history of this region to visit oshawa.ca/TruthAndReconciliation.



Kathy Beaver MacLeod presents a song during a Big Drum Social at Alexandra Park in 2026. The event was presented through a partnership between Alderville First Nation, the Lakeridge Health Indigenous Navigators Team and the City of Oshawa. Source: Oshawa Museum and Lakeridge Health.

A Place of Gathering, Past and Present

The land now known as Alexandra Park is situated within a region rooted in rich Indigenous history.

Today, the Park has become a contemporary site for Indigenous connection, community and cultural events. Events held in Alexandra Park, including those offered for Indigenous History Month and for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, have created a space for contemporary reflection and healing.



This School of Nursing badge symbolized a nurse's commitment to training, service and care for the Oshawa community. Source: Oshawa Museum, archival collection.

A Place for Learning and Care

Just beyond Alexandra Park stands Lakeridge Health Oshawa, an institution that is integral to the community, providing healthcare services and supporting education for medical professionals.

Did you know that Lakeridge Health was once home to the Oshawa General Hospital School of Nursing? From 1910 to 1973 the school trained generations of nurses through a three-year program. During its 60+ years of operation, 1,198 graduates completed their training and went on to provide care throughout Oshawa, Durham Region and beyond.

The dedication and skill of these nurses helped shape healthcare in the community. While hospital-based nursing education ended in 1973, its legacy continues today through nursing programs offered at Durham College.



Student nurses and their evening supervisor enjoy a break between classes in Alexandra Park, circa 1920. Source: Oshawa Museum, archival collection.

From Attic Rooms to McLaughlin Hall

For the young students who trained at the Oshawa General Hospital School of Nursing, the hospital was more than a place to learn, it was also their home.



This image, circa 1960, shows McLaughlin Hall, the new nurses' residence. The building still stands today and is used as administration offices by Lakeridge Health Oshawa. While operating as a nurses' residence, McLaughlin Hall contained 50 single bedrooms for nursing students, a reception parlour, a lounge, a large basement recreation room and various service rooms Source: Oshawa Public Libraries, Local History Collection.

In the school's early years, nursing students lived in a handful of rooms tucked into the hospital attic. As enrolment grew so did the need for dedicated living space. In 1914 construction began on a nurses' residence at 47 Alexandra Street, near the southwest corner of Alexandra Park. When the new residence, Alexandra House, opened in 1915 it provided accommodation for up to 40 students.

By the 1940s, the growing popularity of the program meant that a larger home for nursing students was needed. A donation from R.S. and Adelaide McLaughlin made it possible to build a larger residence that could support the program's continued growth. In November 1947, McLaughlin Hall officially opened its doors. Built by Oshawa firm Bathe & McLellan, the residence was celebrated as one of the finest nurses' homes in Canada.

For generations of student nurses, these residences were places of study, friendship and support. They were places where memories were made while preparing for careers dedicated to caring for others.



View from Alexandra Park of the Alexandra House nurses' residence, circa 1920. The wood fence marks the edge of Alexandra Park. The tower to the left of the house was a municipal water tower, which can be seen in other photos across these panels. Source: Thomas Bouckley Collection, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery.



Bathe & McLellan, builders of McLaughlin Hall, promoted their business and the new nurses' residence with a full-page ad in the Oshawa Daily Times-Gazette. Source: Archives at Whitby Public Library.

Historical information and images provided by the Oshawa Museum



For more information and an accessible PDF, please visit oshawa.ca/Exhibitions.