

THE ANNUAL APPEAL FOR LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S ORCHARD HOUSE

399 Lexington Road PO Box 343 Concord, MA 01742 USA www.louisamayalcott.org

Dear Friend:

Joyful wishes from our House to yours!

The little girl at right exudes what we see every day thanks to friends like you who keep us going! Whether holiday crafts (as pictured), educational programs, special events, or guided tours, **the common denominator is powerful community engagement.**



For over 112 years, Orchard House has been an iconic historic site. As we approach the 250th anniversary of the battle at Concord's North Bridge, we are also proud to honor the fact that this was a "Witness House" to the 19 April 1775 Redcoat Line of March, and that father and son residents left our front door to join the revolutionary fight for independence.

Behind the scenes, this circa 1650 home needs constant preservation and programmatic creativity! A few of our current initiatives include:

- **Window Restoration** - Original panes of glass, which we are fortunate to have many of, require meticulous, painstaking, labor-intensive, and costly work to remove, repair, and maintain, but are priceless portals into what Orchard House has been part of through the centuries.
- **Structural Stability** - Recent discoveries of anomalies in the Nursery and May's Art Studio required preservation contractors to laboriously remove and hand-number each clapboard and sheathing board in impacted areas to provide access for our structural engineer to carefully examine the "innards" and prescribe a long-term remedy. With repairs made, everything was returned to its original state — although strengthened and seamlessly integrated to "show no trace" of the work.
- **Landscape Restoration** - Utilizing Mr. Alcott's meticulous planting records, Massachusetts Master Gardener volunteers continue to beautify our grounds and nurture heirloom apple trees which replace those lost when Alcott Road was first created in the 1930s.



~continued

- **Sharing Space** - A unique opportunity begun this year allows individuals to spend a private hour or two writing, reading, drawing, or meditating in Louisa May Alcott's Bedchamber before or after operating hours. Poems and book chapters have been created in the very room where Louisa wrote *Little Women*. Each participant thus far has told us how enriching the experience was — "When I entered into the quiet of her room, I felt I was absorbed into her moment — as if I entered her very thought pattern. As a writer, I couldn't ask for anything more inspiring!"
- **Collaboration** - We also continue to provide resources to researchers, museum colleagues, and playwrights such as Lauren Gunderson, who was commissioned to create a new *Little Women* script. In July, Lauren presented during our Summer Conversational Series and previewed a staged reading of Act I. Since then, I have answered questions and shared insights on the Alcotts with the cast over ZOOM, and portrayed "Miss Alcott" prior to the play's opening night in early December at a regional theatre in Illinois. Thunderous applause and a standing ovation capped a perfect experience!



As all this work goes on, our educational programs and public tours are thriving. *This year, over 60,000 visitors from all over the world have found community here as they listen, empathize, and reflect not only on the lives of the Alcotts, but their own as well.* One visitor remarked that Orchard House is **"an inspirational site with something for every member of the family,"** while another noted that, **"you can tell how much love and care is put into preserving this place for future generations."**

***Your generous gifts are the reason we are able to continue to preserve, educate, and inspire,
day after day, and year after year.***

With deep gratitude, we ask for your support, and send our best wishes for a wonderful new year!

Jan Turnquist
Executive Director

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The Annual Appeal for Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House

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All donations are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. Thank you!

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