

**THE ANNUAL APPEAL FOR LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S ORCHARD HOUSE**  
399 Lexington Road PO Box 343 Concord, MA 01742 USA [www.louisamayalcott.org](http://www.louisamayalcott.org)

November 2020

We send heartfelt wishes for health and prosperity to you and your family, and so appreciate you taking time to read our story.

**"We can do this!"** Those were our watchwords as 2020 began with the promise of being *the best year ever* for Orchard House. Although Admission and Store revenues typically fund only a portion of our expenses, and Orchard House does not receive movie royalties as *Little Women* is in the public domain, the Christmas Day 2019 release of SONY Pictures' *Little Women* would greatly increase attendance and provide much-needed income for our educational programs and preservation work! We hired new guides, created innovative touring strategies, and stocked our Museum Store plentifully. Visitation began to soar in the new year -- **up 350% on many days**. It was a huge challenge, but being well prepared, we met it with resilience and joy. This was to be our moment to shine!



During the first weeks of 2020, visitors and staff alike also told us that Orchard House never felt so alive -- as if the Alcotts had just stepped out. Delight and awe were palpable, and the ambiance was undeniably celebratory! *We were so thankful for this rare opportunity.*

Sadly, "our moment" was snatched away in the blink of an eye on Friday, March 13th, after we became increasingly aware of the dangers of COVID-19 and made the difficult decision to close. Soon, the wisdom of our proactive response was confirmed by Governor Baker's restrictions for small indoor spaces like ours. We knew that many non-profits and businesses would suffer, too; however, *our loss carried an extra sting because we had worked so hard to prepare for a completely different outcome.*

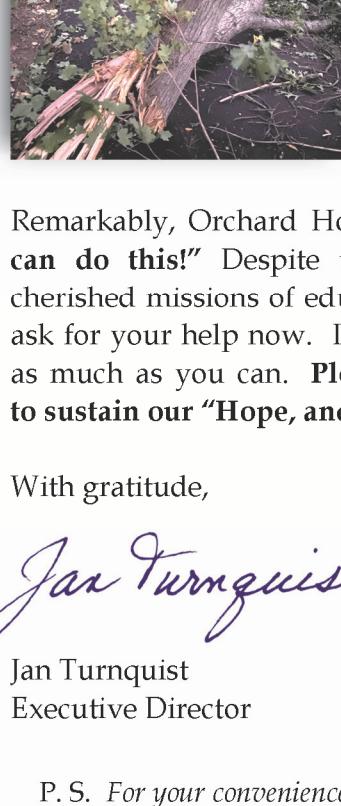


Undaunted, and thankful for the creativity and resourcefulness of our staff in designing opportunities to share Orchard House virtually, I began weekly Facebook Live events in April. Inspired by the Alcotts' own words of wisdom, I affectionately named the program my "Hope, and Keep Busy" (HKB) Broadcast." Thousands tune in on Sundays at 2:00 pm EST as we explore historical themes, with a few surprises along the way. Mini-tours of Orchard House, our beautiful gardens and accessible pathways, as well as occasional virtual guest interviews, have become popular components of these broadcasts. As we endeavor to uplift our audiences, we continue to hear of their enduring connections to this home, its remarkable authenticity, touching stories, and of the vital portal we offer to one of the most important chapters in American history.

Over the past several months, we adapted many of our in-person programs and events to a virtual format, including the annual Benefit Walk/Run, summer youth workshops, and adult education presentations. Our website resources have also been augmented to include more digital artifact discoveries and educational materials, a living history tour, and a revitalized online Museum Store (now featuring "Hope, and Keep Busy" merchandise and other unique items). As I write this, all Concord second graders are experiencing a "virtual field trip" to Orchard House and dynamic interaction with our living history portrayers, continuing our decades-long partnership with the public school local history curriculum. **While these efforts are vital to engaging our visitors, we continue to lose significant revenue daily, as nearly all of these offerings are free.**



Uta Pippig – Walk/Run Chair  
& Two-time Olympian



Concurrently, unexpected financial expenditures have beleaguered us as well. Recently, we experienced the destructive fury of a rare, massive Derecho (straight-line wind event), with damage akin to a mini-tornado. Having already spent thousands of dollars to remove several huge uprooted trees, we must now address others so irreparably damaged they have become hazardous. A utility pole that snapped like a toothpick during the storm must also be replaced; its challenging location on the steep hillside of our adjacent Education/Administrative facility making for a costly repair we must cover. Compounding our financial burden, a sewerage back-up contaminated the lower level of this same building, requiring it to be gutted and re-built -- an expensive task still in progress.

Remarkably, Orchard House stands strong against all odds, and we continue to believe that **"We can do this!"** Despite unprecedeted challenges, we are more determined than ever that our cherished missions of education and preservation will thrive. We cannot do this alone, however, and ask for your help now. If you are able to donate, there has never been a more important time to give as much as you can. Please respond by December 31, 2020 with the most generous gift possible to sustain our "Hope, and Keep Busy" spirit. With your support, we will do this -- and more!

With gratitude,

*Jan Turnquist*

Jan Turnquist  
Executive Director

P. S. For your convenience, donations may be made quickly and securely online at [louisamayalcott.org/donate](http://louisamayalcott.org/donate).  
Gifts of Appreciated Securities can be arranged by contacting Rob O'Neil at 617.502.8302 or  
[RONEil@bhboston.com](mailto:RONEil@bhboston.com).

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