

THE ANNUAL APPEAL FOR LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S ORCHARD HOUSE

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

November 2021

Dear Friends:

"Dear Orchard House," a recent letter began, "Thank you so much for the joy and memories I will never forget. **Thank you for showing me that there is always light behind the clouds.** With love and gratitude, Rose."



The young woman who wrote this came to Orchard House as a visitor, became a volunteer, and now, inspired by the Alcotts' perseverance in the face of struggle, has realized her dream of attending Yale. Hers is only one of literally thousands of stories we hear from visitors who draw inspiration from the remarkable Alcott family and feel the power of being in the real house surrounded by their actual belongings.

Now that we have re-opened, it feels like a celebration at Orchard House every day! At the same time, **our struggle continues. Expenses do not stop when income disappears due to a pandemic. Even in the best of times, admissions and store sales meet just over half of our expenses. The rest comes from generous gifts from people who believe in our mission of preserving Orchard House and educating visitors and students.**



During the pandemic, we had to close our doors for 17 months, but quickly learned to "pivot" into the virtual realm. From weekly Facebook Live broadcasts viewed by thousands world-wide (still available at www.facebook.com/louisamayalcottsorcharthouse/videos), to youth theater and writing workshops on Zoom, and even a virtual benefit event with Academy Award-winning actor Chris Cooper, who portrayed "Mr. Laurence" in the 2019 *Little Women* movie, **we did everything we could to remain connected to our audience as we lovingly maintained our new orchard, accessible pathways, and Little Women Garden, while tending to the physical needs of the House as well.**

Currently, the House is suffering water damage from a large roof leak, which threatens both delicate interior plaster and framing timbers. It is a situation that needs constant attention.



Large tarps must be used to prevent further damage while we await roofing supplies delayed and made more costly by COVID-related supply chain issues. In addition to these emergent expenses, we invested in a truly safe re-opening by installing enhanced air handlers and “scrubbers” to kill bacteria, viruses, and other pollutants. We also implemented new touring strategies to more safely accommodate visitors, which required a complete re-training of our Staff. All this took incredible effort, time, and financial resources.

Nevertheless, recalling our August 1st re-opening day -- with spectacular weather and presentations by Alcott scholar and Pulitzer Prize-winning author John Matteson -- we rejoice! I am so proud of our Staff, who share the vision of this joyful House as they uplift visitors with stories of the Alcotts' kindness, perseverance, and creativity in the face of adversity. **You can help us keep this vision strong by giving as generously as you can to our Annual Appeal.**

As we strive daily to practice the Alcotts' **“Hope, and Keep Busy”** philosophy, we humbly acknowledge that **YOU are our biggest hope!** Your gifts provide absolutely essential financial support to keep this amazing place open and vibrant. We truly could not continue without your help. **Please make a donation today that will be for us the “light behind the clouds.”**

With deep gratitude,

Jan Turnquist
Executive Director



P.S. Here's a way to reduce your taxes and provide essential support to our 501(c)(3) non-profit: Donate stock whose cost basis is lower than its current value (which, if sold, would generate a taxable capital gain). **If donated to us before December 31st, the entire value becomes a tax deduction!** To make this type of gift, contact Birch Hill Investment Advisor Rob O'Neil at (617) 502-8302 or RONeil@bhboston.com. Please also keep in mind that you can visit the Donate page of our website to securely and swiftly make a cash gift 24/7: <https://louisamayalcott.org/donate>.

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