



2023

EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

CALENDAR

All of A Flutter; Windy Day at Mill Lake | Shannon Thiesen (she/her), UFV alumna (Teacher Ed '11)

"This painting nearly flew away from me on several occasions as I was painting on location at Mill Lake in central Abbotsford," says Shannon. "I was sheltering in the trees to prevent the canvas from flying away. Several curious insects sacrificed their lives in the drying acrylic. Originally, the view was just of the lake, but a very vain tree just had to blow its branches into the scene and compete for attention."



OUR MISSION

*yoystexw ye totilthet,
ayeqet kw'e shxwaylexws,
thayt kw'e st'elt'elawtexw*

Engaging learners,
transforming lives,
building community.

OUR VALUES

letse o sqwelewel | Integrity

We act honestly and ethically, upholding these values and ensuring our mission is delivered consistently.

lexwsq'eq'ostexw | Inclusivity

We welcome everyone, showing consideration and respect for all experiences and ideas.

st'elt'elawtexw | Community

We cultivate strong relationships, acting as a hub where all kinds of communities — educational, scholarly, local, global, and cultural — connect and grow.

ey shxweli | Excellence

We pursue our highest standard in everything we do, with determination and heart.

Learn more at ufv.ca/vision

Éy Swayel Si:yam Siya:ye.

Since well before Canada was formed, the Stó:lō, the Halq'éméylem-speaking people of the river, have lived here as stewards of this land. The Stó:lō have an intrinsic relationship with what they refer to as S'olh Temexw, "Our Sacred Land". The University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) is situated on the territory of the Stó:lō peoples. We express our gratitude and respect for the honour of living and working on this territory.

Since 2021, UFV has created an EDI wall calendar, and it has become a catalyst for discussion, reflection, action, and collaboration. The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion office is pleased to share with you the 2023 edition.

This ongoing self-reflection, self-learning, and unlearning are critical components for building an accessible, welcoming, supportive, and safe environment for our students, staff, faculty, and community. The recurrent themes of the art and initiatives highlighted inside are of belonging, welcoming, and access. There is hope for the future and there is determined effort to make space for joy amidst the ongoing transformation.

A sincere thank you to the students, alumni, faculty, and staff who have generously shared their art and stories with the UFV community — this calendar would not be possible without you. Thank you also to UFV's Marketing team for designing the calendar, and the UFV Print Services team for printing and assembling the final version you are reading today.

This calendar highlights significant dates and events throughout the year. Included here are secular and religious public and statutory holidays, as well as cultural and creed-based commemorative or celebratory observances and holidays. At the back of the calendar, a brief history and significance is provided for each date.

Due to diverse calendar systems observed by various faith groups (sometimes with differing ecclesiastical declarations between different denominations), creed groups, and cultural groups, as well as diversity within each respective group, and different family and individual observances, some variances in these dates do occur.

It is important to remember that this is not an exhaustive list nor is the calendar a static document. Some of these dates are subject to change and will be updated in the digital version. Also, we have endeavored to be thorough and mindful in terms of accuracy of the content. Should you have requests for updates or revisions, if you discover any errors, or if you have any questions, please connect with Sundeep Hans, UFV Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at Sundeep.Hans@ufv.ca. If you would like to showcase your art or initiative in the 2024 calendar, please email UFV Marketing at MarCom@ufv.ca.



DETAIL FROM

The Hummingbird

Acrylic, 2014

Lisa McMartin (she/her),
Executive Assistant,
Office of the President
and Vice Chancellor

The hummingbird is one of the most fascinating birds because of its ability to move its body swiftly, change direction quickly and smoothly, seemingly gliding from one place to another. The hummingbird is symbolically significant in a variety of cultures and regions, often associated with joy, healing, beauty, resilience, love, and communication. So, as you head into this new year, call on the hummingbird to help bring a positive outlook during challenging times and find ways to face these challenges with optimism and a sense of connection with the world around you.

JANUARY 2023

*International Decade for People of African Descent 2015–2024;
Tamil Heritage Month*

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY				
Japanese New Year begins New Year's Day	1	2	Japanese New Year ends World Braille Day	3	Twelfth Night	4	5	6	Feast of the Nativity Christmas Day (Eastern Christianity and Rastafarianism)	7
	8	Gurpurab; Birth of Guru Gobind Singh Ji	9	10	11	12	13	Lohri	14	
Thai Pongal starts World Religion Day	15	16	Martin Luther King Day	17	Thai Pongal ends	18	18	20	21	
	22	23	International Day of Education World Day for African and Afrodescendant Culture	24	25	Bell Let's Talk Day	26	Family Literacy Day International Holocaust Remembrance Day	27	28
National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia	29	30	31							

Together Empowered

Mural, 2020

Avery Dow-Kenny (she/her),
UFV Student, Bachelor of
Fine Arts



This mural is a symbolic representation of the scales of justice and the non-binary lens through which we must see our world. The statue-like figure holds the words “together” and “empowered” in its hands, necessarily connected by the figure while at the same time separated and elusive. In order to work in solidarity to abolish any and all forms of discrimination and oppression, we must join together to empower and lift each other up. The mural is painted with heavy-body acrylic paint and the illustration style is similar to that of graffiti and street art — both utilized to emphasize the imperfect nature of our journey toward social justice. The artist’s hope is that people will see this piece through a window of Room B164 on the Abbotsford campus and feel compelled to come inside and learn more about what the Community Health and Social Innovation (CHASI) Hub stands for and how they can help in the movement for change.

FEBRUARY 2023

Black History Month; Heritage Week in BC (20–26)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY						
			World Interfaith Harmony Week begins Lunar New Year Imbolc	1	Indian Control of Indian Education	2	Setsunbun-Sai	3		4		
	5	6	7	8	9	10		11				
	12	13	St. Valentine's Day	14	Nirvana Day	15		16	Random Act of Kindness Day	17	Isra'a and Mi'raj Mahashivaratri	18
	19	World Day of Social Justice Family Day	20	Hobiye International Mother Language Day	21	Ash Wednesday Beginning of Lent (Western Christianity) Pink Shirt Day	22	23	24	25		
	26	Beginning of Lent (Eastern Christianity) Clean Monday	27	28								



Holi Hai

Holi is a popular ancient Hindu festival, also known as the Indian “festival of spring”, the “festival of colours”, or the “festival of love”. Holi signifies the victory of good over evil. It originated and is predominantly celebrated in India but has also spread to other regions of Asia and parts of the Western world through the diaspora from the Indian subcontinent.

Sarah Gabor-Martinez of UFV International, with the support of student leaders, led the Holi Hai event on campus on March 18, 2022.

MARCH 2023

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

			Disability Day of Mourning Zero Discrimination Day Ala 19-Day Fast begins	1		2		3		4		
	5	Magha Puja Day Purim begins	6	Purim ends Holi begins	7	Holi ends Hola Mohalla begins International Women's Day	8	9	Hola Mohalla ends	10	11	
	12		13		14		15	16	St. Patrick's Day	17	18	
	19	Ostara/Spring Equinox	20	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Nowruz (Persian New Year) World Down Syndrome Day	21	Ramadan begins	22	23		24	International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery	25
Purple Day (Epilepsy Awareness)	26		27		28		29	30	National Aboriginal Languages Day International Transgender Day of Visibility	31		

Out of the Shadows

Indigenous Art
Unveiling, 2022

**Una-Ann Moyer,
Tahltan Artist, from
stories told by Naxaxalhts'i
Dr. Albert (Sonny) McHalsie**



The Indigenous Art Unveiling began with a desire to bring Indigenous art into UFV Library locations that would reflect the Stó:lō community and Stó:lō Téméxw, where UFV is located. University Librarian Camille Callison interviewed Naxaxalhts'i Dr. Albert (Sonny) McHalsie about infusing Stó:lō knowledge and wisdom into UFV's Library locations through the use of Indigenous art. These discussions led to collaborative work between learning transformers located on Stó:lō Téméxw and UFV Indigenous Affairs, with support from the Provost and VP Academic. The UFV Library then commissioned Una-Ann Moyer to create some original artwork based on the knowledge given and confirmed by Naxaxalhts'i that reflects the history of the Stó:lō peoples. Other influences from Coast Salish and Northwest Coast art, and the future of the UFV communities are also represented in the artwork as families traveling in unison towards a shared vision.

APRIL 2023

Sikh Heritage Month; First Salmon; Global Youth Service Days (April 29–May 1)

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

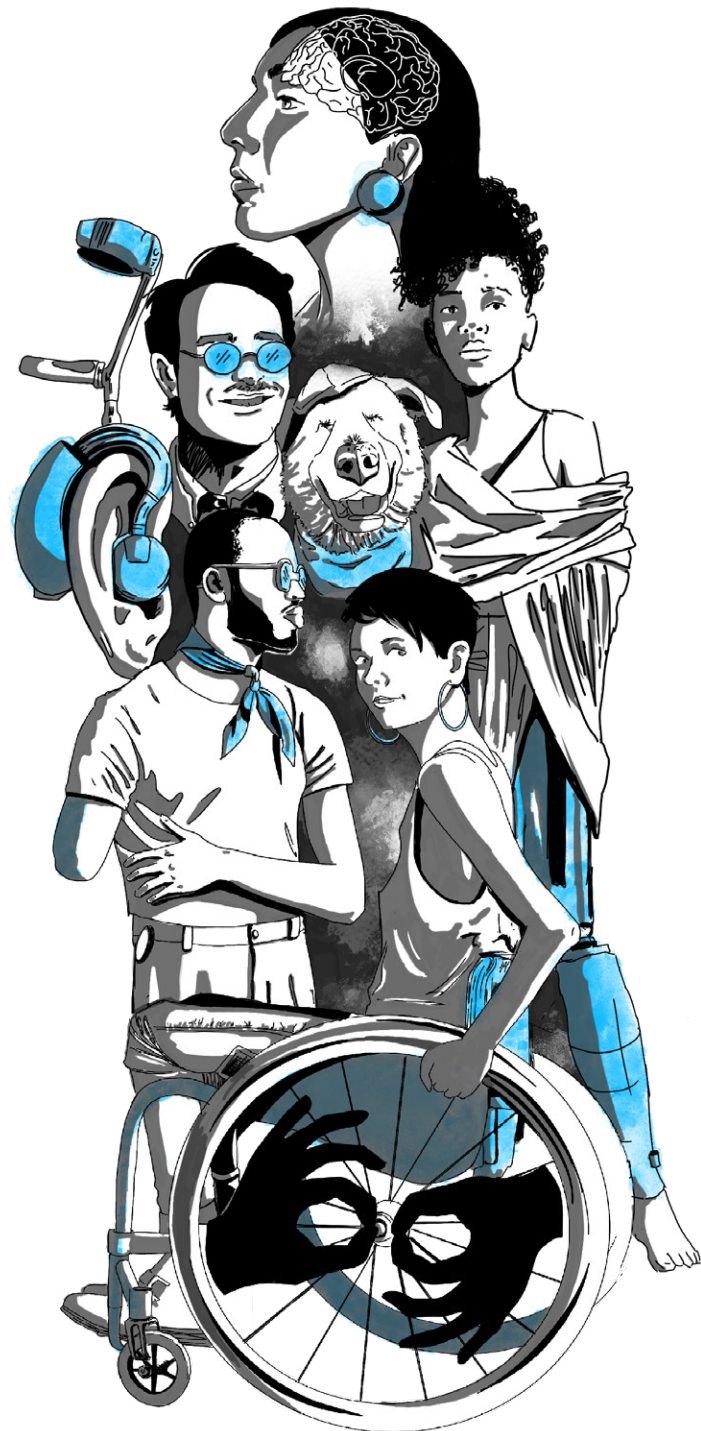
WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
World Autism Awareness Day 2	3	4	Pesach/Passover begins 5	Lent ends (Western Christianity) 6	World Health Day Good Friday 7	8
Easter Sunday 9	Easter Monday 10	11	Pesach/Passover ends 12	International Day of Pink Lent ends (Eastern Christianity) 13	Vaisakhi/Baisakhi 14	15
16	17	18	Laylat-al-Qadr 19	Ramadan ends 20	First Day of Ridvan Eid al-Fitr 21	Earth Day 22
23	24	25	Lesbian Visibility Day 26	27	28	Ninth Day of Ridvan 29
30						



Deconstructing Disability

Digital, 2022

Gabriela Gonzalez
(she/her), UFV Student,
Graphic and Digital Design;
Illustrator, *The Cascade*

This illustration was created for the first article of a new column for *The Cascade*, intended to open a conversation about disabilities. Gabriela recalls: "I started thinking of how I could show the importance of this topic in one image. I knew I wanted to illustrate something different from what I saw on the internet, something... more real. I wanted to show different disabilities, from the body to the mind. How it can affect anyone, showing a mixture of cultures and genders, even including a visually impaired dog. I knew creating that this piece was a big responsibility. My intent was to show beauty and hopefully display the diversity within those living with disabilities."

MAY 2023

*Asian Heritage Month; Speech and Hearing Awareness Month;
Jewish Heritage Month; National Elizabeth Fry Week (7-14)*

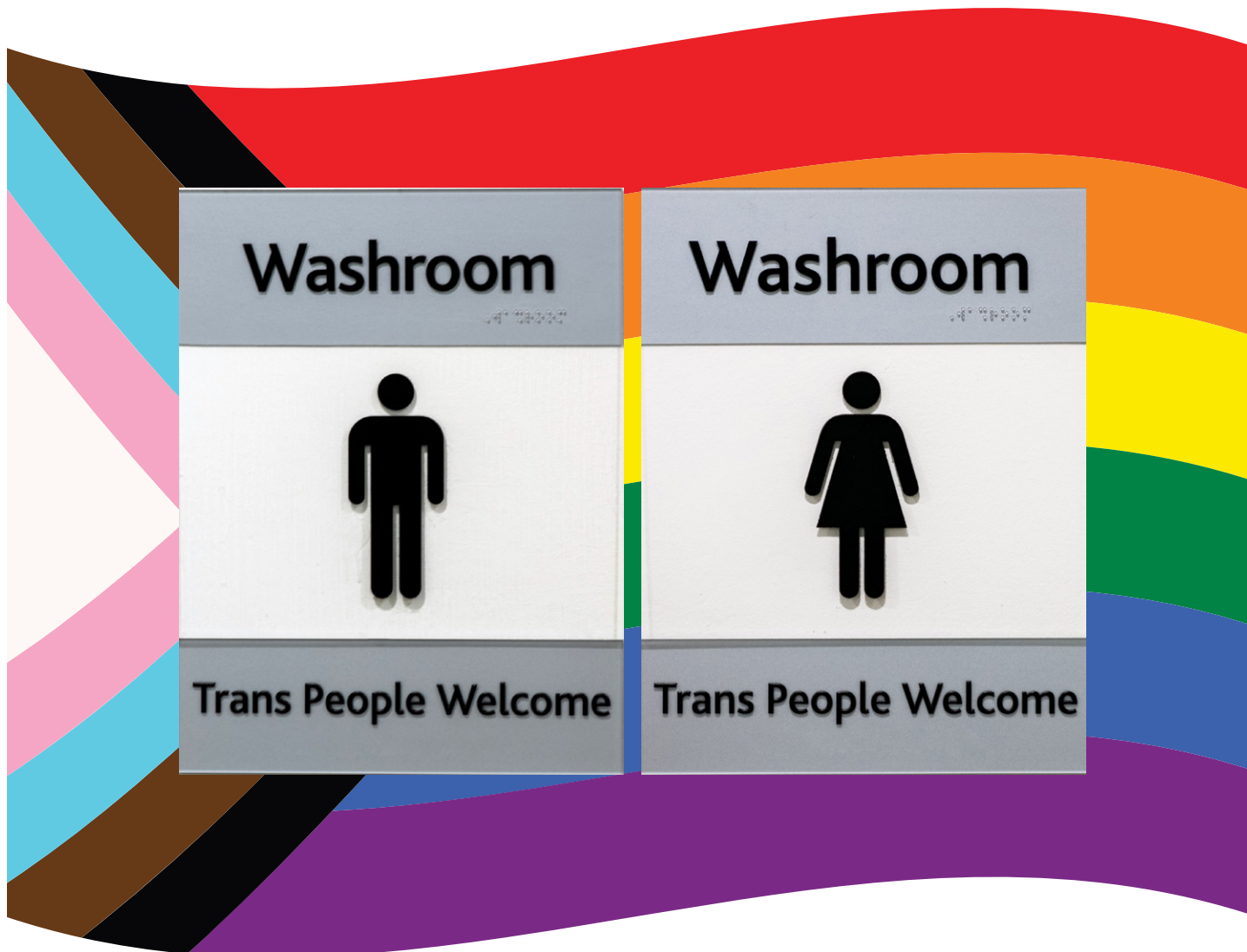
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Beltane 1	Twelfth Day of Ridvan 2	3		National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 4	5
	7	8	9	10	Moose Hide Campaign 11	12
Mother's Day 14	15	16	International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia 17	Ascension Day 18	19	20
Eid al-Fitr World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development 21	Victoria Day 22	Komagata Maru Remembrance Day (Vancouver) Declaration of the Bab 23	Pansexual Visibility Day 24	25	26	27
National Accessibility Week begins 28	Ascension of Baha'u'llah 29	30	31			

Trans People Welcome

Creating safer, more welcoming spaces for diverse people creates richer learning environments for all members of the UFV community. Ensuring safe, equitable access to washroom facilities is part of creating a campus culture that allows for gender-diverse students, faculty, and staff to be more fully integrated and to access basic facilities with the visible support of the university.

Trans People Welcome is a campus-wide initiative supported by the Strategic Initiatives Fund that has two key elements: education, and facility signage for gendered washrooms reading "Trans People Welcome". A UFV community-wide educational session was offered as part of the Provost's Lunch and Learn series to educate the university community and launch the project. This was followed by signage installation at Abbotsford, Chilliwack, and Clearbrook locations.

Ensuring equitable access to washroom space, particularly for those who are most vulnerable and excluded, needs to be a priority in the design of facility spaces, designation, and signage.



JUNE 2023

*Pride Month; National Indigenous History Month; Italian Heritage Month;
Filipino Heritage Month; Portuguese Heritage Month;
Seniors Week (June 4 – 10); Stonewall Riots (June 23–July 3)*

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
	4	5	6	7	8	10
	11	12	13	14	15	17
Father's Day	18	19	20	21	22	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30

Juneteenth/
Emancipation Day

World Refugee
Day

Summer Solstice
Litha
National
Indigenous
Peoples Day

Canadian
Multiculturalism
Day

Eid al Adha begins

St. Mary's Indian
Residential School
closed (1984)
Coqualeetza
Indian Residential
School closed
(1940)



Photo: Bethany Zimmerman, Living Learning Community Media Ambassador

Advocates for Change

The Advocates for Change Living Learning Community (LLC) is a Student Affairs program designed for students living in Lá:lem te Baker who are passionate about social advocacy and community building. The LLC is an intentional community where students come together around a common interest and challenge their current perceptions of privilege and race. There are five main components to the program: community meals, circle discussions, partner presentations, on- and off-campus events, and service projects. These programming components provide an opportunity to share lived experiences and educational perspective with the LLC and the university community through service projects.

The curriculum was designed by infusing strengths-based education with education for reconciliation. It is largely based on the Circle of Courage Model by Larry K Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern, which includes four central values for empowerment: mastery, belonging, generosity, and independence. The aim is to expand students' worldviews by inviting members of the IBPOC community to share their knowledge and lived experience, and to foster a sense of belonging and confidence so students can continue to create change at UFV and in the wider community.

JULY 2023

Fraser Valley Pride (8-15)

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						Canada Day 1
Eid al Adha ends 2	St. Thomas Day Dharma Day 3	4	5	6	7	8
Non-Binary Awareness Week begins 9	10	St. Benedict Day 11	12	13	International Non-Binary People's Day 14	15
16	International Justice Day 17	Nelson Mandela International Day 18	19	Civil Marriage Act (2005) 20	21	22
23 Birth of Emperor Haile Selassie	24 Pioneer Day					
30	31	25	Tisha B'av begins 26	Tisha B'av ends Ashura begins 27	Ashura ends 28	29



Anne Russell, BA, Media and Communications Manager, Community Engagement

CityStudio

International Youth Day (August 12) was adopted by the United Nations in 1999 to bring attention to youth issues and celebrate the potential of youth as partners in today's global society. As the challenges impacting our world seem to accelerate, youth are increasingly shouldering responsibility for creating the change they want to see.

CityStudio Abbotsford, established in 2018 as a partnership between the University of the Fraser Valley and the City of Abbotsford, leverages the passion and insight of youth to develop creative solutions to tough civic problems. Since that original partnership, CityStudio Chilliwack has joined the initiative, and the collaboration continues in such fields as cultural diversity and connectivity, inclusive community planning, and sustainable use of resources, among other pressing issues of today.



AUGUST 2023

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

		Emancipation Day	1	2	3	4	5			
Feast of the Transfiguration	6	BC Day	7	8	International Day of the World's Indigenous People	9	10	11	International Youth Day	12
	13		14	15	16	17	18	19		
	20		21	22	23	24	25	26		
	27		28	29	30	31				



Chowiyes- Xwithet/Rise Up-Wake Up!

On September 29, 2022, at UFV's Chilliwack campus, the Good Medicine Songs team presented a special song, stories, and basket ceremony, Chowiyes-Xwithet/Rise Up-Wake Up! The event honoured the spirit of children lost to residential schools, survivors, and families and continued the integral work of reconciliation and Halq'eméylem (traditional language of the Stó:lō people) revitalization.

The Good Medicine Songs family creates bilingual songs in Halq'eméylem and English for people of all backgrounds to sing together. This fosters positive relationships and creatively advances cross-cultural understanding, respect, and reconciliation through the power of song and storytelling.

SEPTEMBER 2023

*Mennonite Heritage Week (3–9);
Bisexual Awareness Week (17–24);
Culture Days (September 22–October 15)*

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					Accessible British Columbia Act takes effect	
	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Labour Day		Arba'een			
	10	11	12	13	14	15
		Ethiopian New Year			Rosh Hashanah begins	
Rosh Hashanah ends	17	18	19	20	21	22
				International Day of Peace		Fall Equinox International Day of Sign Language Bisexual Visibility Day
Yom Kippur begins	24	25	26	27	28	29
	Yom Kippur ends				Mid Autumn Festival/ Mooncake Festival	Orange Shirt Day/National Day for Truth & Reconciliation
						30



Photo: Dr. Candace Couse (she/her), Assistant Professor, School of Creative Arts

Projections

Projections is the culmination of a collaborative creative research project exploring school children's perceptions of aging and dementia. The *Projections* art exhibition grew out of this research. Led by Dr. Shelley Canning and staged by Dr. Candace Couse with support from the School of Creative Arts and the Centre for Education and Research on Aging, *Projections* involved research participants, artists, researchers, community partners, and UFV students, all of whom are necessary authors of this work.

Dr. Canning explains: "Our research project responded to the problem of stigma and discrimination against older adults and people living with dementia by asking: what perceptions do children have and when do they develop them? Our work operated under the premise that stigma related to aging and dementia begins early, as children are influenced by familial, cultural, and broader societal beliefs and values. In addressing these questions, we partnered with public elementary schools located on the territory of the Stó:lō people, the Semá:th and Mathxwí First Nation. In the process, we gathered hundreds of drawings, writings and musings from our student participants forming the basis for *Projections*. In turn, *Projections* invites you in to activate your own role in meaning-making around the questions it poses, and in doing so, it also implicates you in the web of social perceptions around dementia and aging."

OCTOBER 2023

LGBTQ2S+ History Month; National Disability Employment Awareness Month; Learning Disabilities Awareness Month; Islamic History Month; Women's History Month; Mental Health Awareness Month; Latin American Heritage Month; Stó:lō New Year

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY						
International Day for Older Persons	1	2	National Day of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Sisters in Spirit Vigil	3	4	International World Teacher Day	5	6	7			
International Lesbian Day	8	Thanksgiving	9	World Mental Health Day	10	National Coming Out Day International Day of the Girl Child	11	12	World Sight Day	13	14	
Navaratri begins International Day of Rural Women	15	Birth of the Bab	16	Birth of Baha'u'llah	17	Persons Day	18	International Pronoun Day	19	Spirit Day (Anti-Bullying) Installation of Scriptures as Guru Granth Sahib Ji	20	21
22	Navatri ends	23	24	25	26	27	28					
29	30	Samhain	31									



Ghosting of Sumas Lake

The first production of the 2022–23 Theatre season at UFV was an innovative workshop performance, *Ghosting of Sumas Lake*, directed by Dr. Michelle La Flamme. This was devised theatre in which La Flamme developed the script based on the actors' lived experiences of the catastrophic November 2021 Sumas Prairie floods. The final script spoke of the numerous and diverse communities affected by the flooding from farmers to animals, to the plants, to the Indigenous communities, students, staff, and community members alike.

In addition, Dr. LaFlamme, with the support of her research assistant Kai Pollock, created a vital overview on the historical and cultural context of the Fraser Valley floods to help actors understand the context in preparation for the performance.

This turned into a much larger project documenting communities affected by flooding in the region, Indigenous perspectives on the Sumas Lake and surrounding area, the historical context for the draining of the lake, and images of the original flora and fauna in the area with their Indigenous names featured wherever possible. Panels from the book were featured in the S'eliyemetaxwtexw Gallery on the Abbotsford campus. Associate Professor Parjad Sharifi edited a video featuring photos from the book for a looped video installation and guests were invited to write their reflections in a guest book. This gallery installation supported the performance of the play which had a two-week run of sold-out shows.



Images of Newcoming

Green trees picture = Nature and exclusion

Participant commentary: "I grew up in small places. So, whenever I go out and I see this, it's a huge place for me. If I'm alone, I think I'll be crying, because I will know it's too big. I feel like I'm the only person in that place and I have no one. I don't belong to big spaces. I belong more in the small places."

Snow trees picture = Nature and belonging

Participant commentary: "I feel like I can do my daily activities as a Canadian. I'm not scared. I thought I would be stuck and could not live in cold or ice. When I saw that there was snow outside, I used to say, 'how I can go outside'? [But now] I feel free when I go outside, and I can go anywhere."

Over 2021–22, researchers from the University of the Fraser Valley used photovoice to learn from the experiences of newcomer women. By adopting a feminist, arts- and community-based research approach, we asked participants — migrant women including immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers — to take digital photos that expressed their perceptions and experiences of belonging and exclusion while settling in Canada. The images taken and shared by participants (approximately 40) stimulated thought-provoking dialogue and conversation about the needs of newcomer women within local settlement programming. One unique finding was the importance of being in nature and the feeling of safety while outdoors, which conjured up a sense of belonging. Understanding of exclusion emerged in photos highlighting experiences of isolation rooted in exploring unfamiliar land and the lack of connection to place. Participatory photography can enhance our collective understanding of belonging and exclusion for marginalized populations and the project hopes to raise awareness around the settlement experience for women in the Lower Mainland.

Co-researchers are Dr. Brianna Strumm (Social Work and Human Services), Dr. Anea Wilbur (Adult Education), and Dr. Tanis Sawkins (Adult Education).

Participant photos are anonymous.



DECEMBER 2023

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

						1	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery	2		
International Day of Disabled Persons	3	4	5	National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women	6	Hanukkah begins	7	Bodhi Day	8	9
Human Rights Day	10	11	12		13		14	Hanukkah ends	15	16
	17	International Migrants Day	18	19	20	Winter Solstice Yule begins (ends Jan 1, 2024)	21	22	23	
24 Christmas Eve			Zarathosht Diso Kwanzaa begins (ends Jan 1, 2024)	26	27	28	29	30		
New Year's Eve	31	Christmas Day	25	Boxing Day						

History and Significance of Dates

For a complete list of references used, please visit ufv.ca/edi.

Decade of Peoples of African

Descent: The United Nations declared 2015 to 2024 the Decade of Peoples of African Descent, with the goal to strengthen actions and measures for the full realization of the economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights of people of African descent, and their full and equal participation in society. The operational framework themed "Recognition, Justice and Development" encourages states to eradicate social injustices, fight against racism, and the racial discrimination to which peoples of African descent are still subjected to.

JANUARY

Tamil Heritage Month: Since 2016, this month celebrates Tamil heritage and culture, as well as the contributions of Tamil-Canadians to Canada. Canada is home to one of the largest Tamil diasporas in the world.

Oshogatsu (Japanese New Year): Rooted in the Shinto (Indigenous or nature religion of Japan) tradition, this day is marked by visits to shrines and is the most popular shared national event in Japan. The essence of Shinto is the Japanese devotion to invisible spiritual beings and powers called kami, to shrines, and to various rituals.

World Braille Day: This day is observed to raise awareness of the importance of Braille as a means of communication in the full realization of the human rights for blind and partially sighted people.

Twelfth Night: This day is observed by some Christians and is a festival marking the coming of Epiphany. It concludes the twelfth day of Christmas.

Feast of the Nativity: Celebrated as one of the most joyful days of the Orthodox Church. The Feast of the Nativity of Jesus is also known as the "Incarnation of Christ" and is observed as the day that Jesus became a man and came into the world as the saviour.

Christmas Day (Eastern Christianity and Rastafarianism): On this day, some Eastern Orthodox Christians and Rastafarians (who observe the bible and traditions of the Ethiopian Orthodox church) celebrate the birth of Jesus according to the old Julian calendar, which is currently 13 days behind the Gregorian or Western calendar. It's observed as Ethiopian Christmas by those of the Rastafarian faith and is marked by a large vegetarian or vegan feast.

Gurpurab of Guru Gobind Singh Ji: Sikhs celebrate the birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Sikh Guru through prayers at home or at the Gurdwara, which take place in the month of December or January every year, as per the Gregorian calendar.

Lohri: A traditional winter Punjabi folk festival, celebrated primarily by Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims from the Punjab and surrounding regions to mark the harvest season in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent.

Thai Pongal: Following the solar calendar, this traditional harvest festival is observed by all Tamils in India, Sri Lanka, and other countries with a Tamil diaspora.

World Religion Day: This day, started by the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'í Faith, is an annual celebration of the teachings of unity found in all religions. The Bahá'í faith emphasizes universal equality and unity, and the value of all religions. It is celebrated every January on the third Sunday of the month.

Martin Luther King Day: This day commemorates the important civil rights activist. He was a leader in the movement to end racial segregation in the United States. He was an advocate of non-violent protest and became the youngest man to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Shortly after his assassination in 1968, a campaign was started for his birthday to become a holiday to honor him.

International Day of Education: This day celebrates the role of education for peace and development.

World Day for African and Afrodescendant Culture: Established by UNESCO in 2019, this day aims to celebrate the many vibrant cultures of the African continent and African Diasporas around the world and promotes them as an effective lever for sustainable development, dialogue, and peace.

Family Literacy Day: This day promotes the importance of reading and learning together as a family. Family Literacy Day originated with the ABC Canada Literacy Foundation and founding Family Literacy Day sponsor, Honda Canada.

Bell Let's Talk Day: This campaign was created in 2010 by the Canadian telecommunications company, Bell Canada, to raise awareness and combat stigma surrounding mental illness in Canada. Millions of Canadians engage in an open discussion about mental illness, offering new ideas and hope for those who struggle.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day: Designated on November 1, 2005, by the United Nations General Assembly. The UN urges member states to honour the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and millions of other victims of Nazism and to develop educational programs to prevent future genocides. Coinciding with the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, a Nazi Concentration and Extermination camp, by Soviet troops in 1945, this day is a time to reaffirm commitments to counter antisemitism, racism, and other forms of intolerance that may lead to group-targeted violence.

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia: On January 28, 2021, the federal government announced that January 29 will become a national day of remembrance for the 2017 Quebec City terror attack on a mosque. The day honours the six victims and expresses solidarity with the nineteen survivors of the attack and the Muslim communities across Canada and the world. This day promotes action against Islamophobia and recognizes that hatred, radicalization, and the denial of these realities were at the root of this attack, and that everybody has a responsibility to combat discrimination and continue to build a more inclusive Canada.

FEBRUARY

Black History Month: This month was designated as a time to learn about the many important contributions of Black Canadians to the settlement, growth, and development of Canada, and about the diversity of Black communities in Canada and their importance to the history of this country.

Heritage Week in BC: Every year Heritage BC marks this week with a poster that is sent throughout the province to libraries, schools, municipal offices, and politicians.

World Interfaith Harmony Week: This week celebrates the principles of tolerance and respect for others that are deeply rooted in the world's major religions. The day also calls for solidarity in the face of those who spread misunderstanding and mistrust.

Lunar New Year: This day is a celebration of the beginning of a new year on the traditional Chinese calendar. Marking the end of winter and the beginning of the spring season, observances traditionally take place from New Year's Eve, the evening preceding the first day of the year, to the Lantern Festival, held on the 15th day of the year.

Imbolc: As one of the four ancient Celtic Fire festivals, this day celebrates the Earth's regeneration and the increasing strength of God. Historically, it has been observed throughout Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man.

Indian Control of Indian Education: In February 1973, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development gave official recognition to the policy statement of the National Indian Brotherhood entitled Indian Control of Indian Education. This national policy is based on statements of provincial/territorial Indian organizations encompassing all areas of concern in Indian education. It had its origin in the concern of parents for the academic failure experienced by their children in federal and provincial schools over the past many years. The policy is based on two education principles recognized in Canadian society: parental responsibility and local control. It recognizes that Indian parents must enjoy the same fundamental decision-making rights about their children's education as other parents across Canada. It promotes the fundamental concept of local control which distinguishes the free political system of democratic governments from those of a totalitarian nature.

Setsunbun-Sai: This day, also called Rissshun, is known as the bean-throwing festival and marks the day before the official calendar beginning of spring and the end of winter. When this day is celebrated at home, a male member of the family will scatter roasted beans, saying "demons out, good luck in", and when celebrated at shrines, lucky beans are thrown into the congregation, and they attempt to catch them.

St. Valentine's Day: This day originated as a Christian feast day honouring an early Christian martyr named Saint Valentine. Through later folk traditions it has become a significant cultural, religious, and commercial celebration of romance and love in many regions of the world.

Nirvana Day: This day, also known as Parinirvana in Mahayana Buddhism, is the celebration of Buddha's death when he reached total Nirvana at the age of 80. Local or regional customs may use a variation of this date. To mark this day, passages from the recitations of Nibbana Sutta or Nirvana Sutra describing Buddha's last days of life are often read, or meditation and visits to Buddhist temples and monasteries take place.

Random Acts of Kindness Day: Founded by The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, whose mission is to make kindness the norm™ in our schools, workplaces, homes, and communities. They work towards the goal by creating free content that promotes kindness toward others and teaches important social emotional learning skills to kids.

Isra'a and Mi'raj: This day, also known as the Night Journey, commemorates the Prophet Muhammad's journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, then his ascent into to heaven. Muslims consider it both a physical and spiritual journey that was assisted by Allah.

Mahashivaratri: This day is a major festival in Hinduism dedicated to Lord Shiva, one of the major deities to whom Hindus direct their devotion. It is celebrated annually, and the name also refers to the night when Lord Shiva performs the heavenly dance. The festival is solemn and marks a remembrance of "overcoming darkness and ignorance" in life and the world. It is observed by remembering through chanting prayers, fasting, and meditating on ethics and virtues such as honesty, charity, and forgiveness.

World Day of Social Justice: This day focuses on the plight of social injustice throughout the world and presses for improvements and solutions. Promoting human rights, removing artificial social barriers based on race, gender, or religion, and standing up for the rights of migrants, the disabled, and the elderly are among the observance's themes on any given year.

Hobiyee: The Nisga'a new year signifies the emergence of the first crescent moon and begins the month Buxw-laks. Celebrations of Hobiyee are done by Nisga'a wherever they are located, but the largest celebrations are in Nisga'a itself and in areas with a large Nisga'a presence like Vancouver.

International Mother Language Day: This day promotes the preservation and protection of all languages used by peoples of the world, and promotes unity in diversity and international understanding, through multilingualism and multiculturalism.

Ash Wednesday: This Christian holy day marks the first day of the season of Lent, a 40-day period observed by Western Christians, of prayer, repentance, and self-denial that precedes Easter. It derives its name from the practice of repentance ashes that are placed on the foreheads of participants on this day.

Lent Begins (Western Christianity – March 2, Eastern Christianity – March 7): This solemn Christian observance commemorates the 40 days that Jesus Christ spent fasting in the desert according to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, where he was tempted by Satan. It is observed by most Christian groups, but the days that are enumerated differ between denominations. Lent is a season of grief that ends with a great celebration of Easter. During this time, many Christians commit to fasting, as well as giving up certain luxuries in imitation of Jesus Christ's sacrifice during his journey into the desert for 40 days.

Pink Shirt Day: Bullying is a major problem in our schools, workplaces, homes, and over the Internet. Each year, on Pink Shirt Day, people wear something pink to symbolize that we, as a society, will not tolerate bullying anywhere.

Clean Monday: In many of the Eastern Christianity traditions, Clean Monday is the Monday that occurs seven weeks before Easter and begins the season of Great Lent in Eastern Orthodox Churches.

MARCH

Disability Day of Mourning: The purpose of this day is to remember the victims of filicide — people with disabilities murdered by their family members. Vigils are held on this day in cities around the world.

Zero Discrimination Day: This day aims to promote equality before the law and in practice throughout all the member countries of the UN.

Ala: A 19-day fast observed by followers of the Bahá'í faith. Ala is the nineteenth and final month of the Bahá'í year, and the fast is observed in preparation for Nowruz. Those who are healthy and of age abstain from food and drink from sunrise to sunset.

Magha Puja Day: This day is one of the most important Buddhist festivals, particularly for followers of the Theravada Buddhist tradition that live in the South and Southeast Asian countries of Laos, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Thailand. It marks the day that Buddha addressed a gathering of 1,250 Arahants (enlightened saints).

Purim: In the Jewish tradition this day commemorates the victory over an oppressive ruler, as related in the Book of Esther. Observance begins at sunset of the previous day. It is celebrated through exchanging gifts of food and drink, donating to charity, sharing meals, and the public recitation of the Scroll of Esther.

Holi: A popular ancient Hindu festival, also known as the Indian "festival of spring", the "festival of colours", or the "festival of love". The festival signifies the victory of good over evil. It originated and is predominantly celebrated in India but has also spread to other regions of Asia and parts of the Western world through the diaspora from the Indian subcontinent.

Hola Mohalla: This three-day long Sikh festival commemorates and celebrates a martial tradition established by Guru Gobind Singh Ji (the tenth Guru of the Sikhs), and either follows the Hindu festival of Holi by one day or coincides with it; Hola is the masculine form of the feminine sounding Holi.

International Women's Day: This day celebrates the social, cultural, economic, and political achievements of women across the globe. Far from singling out women, the day focuses on unity, equality, and advocacy especially in a world where the differences and injustices between women and men are as great as ever.

St. Patrick's Day: This day is both a cultural and religious celebration of Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland and the arrival of Christianity

in Ireland. It is observed as a religious holy day, an official Christian feast day by the Catholic Church, Anglican Communion, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the Lutheran Church. This day is a public holiday in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and is widely celebrated across the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand and the Irish diaspora, as a celebration of the heritage and culture of the Irish. The day is often marked through public parades and festivals and the donning of green clothes and shamrocks.

Ostara/Spring Equinox: The word Ostara comes from the Anglo-Saxon goddess name, Eostre. Eostre represented spring, new beginnings, and the greening of the earth. Like many other spring celebrations in other cultures, Ostara symbolizes fertility, rebirth, and renewal, and also marks the beginning of the agricultural cycle when farmers plant seeds. This celebration of spring is present in many ancient customs and is observed by Wiccans and Pagans through meditating outdoors or by planting seeds.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: This day was proclaimed by the UN in 1966. On March 21, 1960, police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, against the apartheid "pass laws". This day is an opportunity for all people to renew their commitment to building a world of justice, equality, and dignity, where racial discrimination has no place.

Nowruz (Persian New Year): This day is celebrated by millions of people around the world in honour of spring and the new year. While its origins are Zoroastrian and Persian, it has been celebrated for over 3,000 years by people living in today's Iran, Afghanistan, other parts of Western

and Central Asia, including Turkey, the Balkans, the Caucasus regions, and by the Parsi (Zoroastrian) community in India. Nowruz is a secular holiday for many people and is enjoyed by people of several different faiths, but it remains a holy day for Zoroastrians, Bahá'ís, and some Muslim communities.

World Down Syndrome Day: This day is observed to raise public awareness about Down syndrome and those who have this condition. The date of March 21 was chosen to symbolise the fact that Down syndrome results from the triplication of the twenty-first chromosome. The focus of the day is not just on the situation and needs of those with Down syndrome worldwide but also on their valuable contributions to human society, respecting their rights, and ensuring their inclusion in all of human social life.

Ramadan/Ramzan: This day is the ninth and most sacred month in the Islamic calendar. A month-long period of prayer, fasting, and charitable giving is observed. Muslims observe this as a time of self-accountability, and observances involve family and community joining together in prayer. It begins the morning after the crescent moon is sighted. For the entire month of Ramadan (the 29 or 30 days) Muslims fast from dawn-to-sunset. Traditionally, the crescent of the new moon signifies the beginning and end of fasting during Ramadan, and while this continues, astronomical calculations are now sometimes used by some groups for more consistency.

International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade: For over 400 years, more than 15 million men, women, and children were the victims of the tragic transatlantic slave trade. In 2007, the UN designated March 25 as an international day to honour and remember those who suffered and died because of the transatlantic slave trade. The day also aims to raise

awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice today.

Purple Day: Started in 2008 by then nine-year-old Cassidy Megan of Nova Scotia as a grassroots campaign dedicated to increasing awareness of epilepsy worldwide. On this day, people from around the globe are asked to wear purple and spread the word about epilepsy. Diagnosed at age 7, Cassidy was motivated by her own struggles to create an international day for epilepsy awareness.

National Aboriginal Languages Day: This day was established by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Chiefs-in-Assembly in 1989 to create awareness across Canada of the languages of the First Peoples, to build support for their preservation, and to honour the strength and endurance of the languages and cultures. International

Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV): This day was founded by activist Rachel Crandall in 2009 as a day of celebrating trans peoples' contributions to society and recognizing the discrimination they face.

APRIL

Sikh Heritage Month: This day celebrates the contributions and aspirations of all Sikh-Canadians and helps to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of a rich, unique, and diverse heritage.

First Salmon Ceremony: Every year Stó:lō people along the Fraser River have a First Salmon ceremony to show honour and respect to the Salmon for giving its life to nourish them. The first one caught is cooked in the traditional way and shared with everyone present at the ceremony. The bones are then collected and placed back into the river with a prayer thanking Chichelh Siyá:m for the salmon. The purpose of the

ceremony is to ensure that there will be plenty of salmon for all Stó:lō families during the fishing season to provide for their nourishment in the winter months. The annual First Salmon ceremony shows respect toward Stó:lō ancestors. Continuing Stó:lō culture and tradition will prove the existence of Shxweli in all living things great and small.

Global Youth Service Days: The largest youth service and civic action event in the world and the only one that celebrates and builds the capacity of all youth ages 5-25 to help our communities and democracy thrive by working together for the common good.

World Autism Awareness Day: This day highlights the need to help improve the quality of life of those with autism so they can lead full and meaningful lives as an integral part of society.

Passover/Pesach: This day is an important Jewish holiday that celebrates the exodus and liberation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt. It falls in spring on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan and is traditionally celebrated in the Land of Israel for seven days and for eight days among many Jews in the diaspora. It begins with Seder, a ritual meal where no leavened bread is consumed, celebrated with prayers, and symbolic foods. Observance begins at sunset of the previous day.

World Health Day: This day marks the World Health Organization's (WHO) founding and is seen as an opportunity by the organization to draw worldwide attention to a subject of major importance to global health each year.

Easter/Pascha: This day is a Christian festival and cultural holiday that commemorates the resurrection of Jesus from the dead on the third day of his burial following his crucifixion. It is a joyous holiday because it represents the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament and the revelation of God's

plan for all of humankind, a defeat of death, and the hope of salvation.

International Day of Pink: This day is dedicated to the cause against bullying, discrimination, homophobia, transphobia, and transmisogyny around the world. You can celebrate diversity by wearing a pink t-shirt and participating in activities in your workplaces, schools, and communities.

Baisakhi, also known as Vaisakhi: This day, also known as Valsakhi, marks the Sikh new year and commemorates the formation of Khalsa panth of warriors under Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. Baisakhi is also an ancient festival in northern regions of India, marking the Solar New Year and celebrating the spring harvest.

Laylat-al-Qadr: This day is considered the holiest of nights in the year because it is the night on which the Qur'an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Laylat al Qadr is Arabic for "The Night of Power." Observances include praying, reflecting, and reciting verses from the Qur'an and giving to those in need.

First Day of Ridvan: Ridvan is a twelve-day festival, known as "the king of festivals" that commemorates the beginning of the Bahá'í faith and signifies the transformation of suffering and oppression into joy. The first, ninth, and the final day have special significance and are observed and celebrated through reflection, prayer, abstaining from work and taking part in gatherings, parties, and picnics.

Eid al-Fitr: This day marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting. Eid is an Arabic word meaning "festivity" and Fitr means "breaking the fast". It is the first of the Eids (feasts/festivals) in Islam. This holiday celebrates the conclusion of the dawn-to-sunset fasting for Muslims during the month of Ramadan. Observance begins at sunset of the previous day.

Earth Day: This day is an annual event to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First held on April 22, 1970, it now includes a wide range of events coordinated globally by EarthDay.org including 1 billion people in more than 193 countries. On Earth Day 2016, the landmark Paris Agreement was signed by the United States, the United Kingdom, China, and 120 other countries. This signing satisfied a key requirement for the entry into force of the historic draft climate protection treaty adopted by consensus of the 195 nations present at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris.

Lesbian Visibility Day: This day showcases women-loving-women, providing a platform for lesbian role models to speak out on the issues facing female-identified sexual minorities. This day, alongside all queer awareness days, is an integral part of moving towards an intersectional society where all are treated equally and fairly.

Ninth Day of Ridvan: This day commemorates a historic event in the Baha'í faith. On this day in April of 1863, Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Bahá'í faith, learned that he had been officially banished from the Ottoman Empire. Ridvan is a twelve-day festival that commemorates the beginning of the Bahá'í faith and signifies the transformation of suffering and oppression into joy. The first, ninth, and the final day have special significance and are observed and celebrated holidays through reflection, prayer, abstaining from work and taking part in gatherings, parties, and picnics.

MAY

Asian Heritage Month: This month is an opportunity for all Canadians to learn more about the many achievements and contributions of Canadians of Asian descent who,

throughout our history, have done so much to make Canada the amazing country we share today.

Jewish Heritage Month: This month is a time to celebrate Jewish culture, heritage, history, and contributions in Canada, which is home to the fourth largest Jewish community in the world.

Speech and Hearing Awareness Month: This month is dedicated to highlighting the importance of early detection and intervention in the treatment of communication disorders, and the role that our members and associates play in helping people to "Speak well. Hear well. Live well."

National Elizabeth Fry Week: The goal of this week is to enhance public awareness and education around the victimization and criminalization of women in Canada. The aim is to break down the negative stereotypes that exist around women who are imprisoned and institutionalized and encourages productive and responsible community responses to criminal justice matters from coast to coast.

Beltane: One of the four ancient Celtic Fire festivals, Beltane celebrates the conjoining of the infinite potential of the Goddess with the life-sparking energy of the God in a sacred marriage, the basis of all creation. Wiccan and Pagan observance begin at sunset of the previous day.

The Twelfth Day of Ridvan: This day commemorates the day that Baha'u'llah left the Ridvan Garden and began the long and arduous exile to Constantinople. This is an important holy day for the people of the Bahá'í faith as it concludes the 12 Days of Ridvan. Celebrations begin the evening before.

The National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: This day was declared as a national day of awareness

to raise concern for the crisis and to remind people on issues affecting Indigenous women. On this day and many other days, you will often see people wearing red in honor of these girls who have gone missing or have been murdered.

Moose Hide Campaign: An Indigenous man named Paul Lacerte and his daughter Raven were hunting moose near the infamous Highway of Tears, a section of highway between Prince George and Prince Rupert, BC, where dozens of women have gone missing or been found murdered. They had the idea to use moose hide to inspire Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys to become involved in the movement to end violence towards women and children. Together with family and friends they cut up the moose hide into small squares and started the Moose Hide campaign. Wearing moose hide signifies their commitment to honour, respect, and protect the women and children in their lives and to work together to end violence against women and children.

International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia: This day celebrates diversity and raises awareness of the human rights of LGBTQ2S+ people.

Ascension Day: This day is a Christian holiday that commemorates Jesus Christ's ascension into heaven according to Christian belief and is observed primarily in the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

The World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development: This day provides an opportunity for people to deepen their understanding of the values of cultural diversity.

Komagata Maru Remembrance Day: This day is observed to recognize the injustice of the Komagata Maru incident that began on May 23, 1914. The Komagata Maru steamship arrived

in Vancouver with 376 passengers onboard including 340 Sikhs, 24 Muslims, and 12 Hindus from the Punjab region of India. Despite being British subjects, they were denied entry into Canada based on discriminatory and racist laws and were forced to remain aboard without sufficient access to medical aid, food, and water. After two months the ship was ordered to return to India, where 19 passengers were killed, and others were injured or imprisoned.

The Declaration of the Bab: Declaration of the Bab commemorates the day in 1844 on which he announced his identity as the Bab, or Gate, the herald of the new age. This is an important day for people of the Bahá'í faith and observance begins at sunset of the previous day.

Pansexual Visibility Day: This day celebrates the pansexual and panromantic community and serves to educate others on the community.

National Access Ability Week: This week is an opportunity to celebrate the valuable contributions of Canadians with disabilities and to recognize the efforts of individuals, communities, and workplaces that are actively working to remove barriers to accessibility and inclusion.

Ascension of Baha'u'llah: This day marks the anniversary of the death of the founder of the Bahá'í faith. Bahá'í's suspend work on this day. Observance begins at sunset of the previous day.

JUNE

Pride Month: Evolved out of the Stonewall Riots that occurred in June 1969, Pride Month is a global month of action and celebration for LGBTQ2S+ people.

National Indigenous History Month: People across the country

mark the month in recognition of the rights, histories, and extraordinary achievements of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The unique cultures and perspectives of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities are celebrated nationally and locally.

BC Seniors Week: Seniors' Week celebrates seniors and their many contributions — providing an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the integral part seniors play in communities across British Columbia.

Italian Heritage Month: Canada is home to one of the largest Italian diasporas in the world with more than 1.5 million Canadians with Italian descent. This month is recognized by the government of Canada and British Columbia as a time to showcase the culture, heritage, and contributions of Italian Canadians.

Filipino Heritage Month: This month celebrates the culture, heritage, and contributions of the nearly one million Canadians of Filipino descent, one of the fastest growing communities in the country. It coincides with the Philippines Declaration of Independence from Spain on June 12, 1898.

Portuguese Heritage Month: This month celebrates the culture, heritage, and contributions to Canada of Portuguese Canadians. Canada is home to one of the biggest Portuguese diasporas in the world, with almost half a million people of Portuguese descent. It coincides with Portugal Day on June 10 in honour of the famous 16th century soldier-poet, Luis de Camoes and his famous epic poems.

The Stonewall Riots: A series of spontaneous demonstrations by members of the gay (LGBT) community in response to a police raid that began in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Manhattan, New York City. Patrons

of the Stonewall, other Village lesbian and gay bars, and neighborhood street people fought back when the police became violent. The riots are widely considered to constitute one of the most important events leading to the gay liberation movement and the twentieth century fight for LGBT rights in the United States.

Juneteenth/Emancipation Day (US): While it has been celebrated annually in various parts of the country, it was officially recognized as a federal holiday in the United States in 2005. It is also known as Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, and Black Independence Day, as it commemorates the anniversary of the June 19, 1865, emancipation of enslaved African Americans in Texas, which was the last state of the Confederacy with institutional slavery. Celebrations include singing traditional songs and the reading of works by noted African-American writers, street fairs, cookouts, and family reunions. Some Canadians observe this day as well with celebration and continued activism.

World Refugee Day: The purpose of this day is to draw the public's attention to the millions of refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide who have been forced to flee their homes due to war, conflict, and persecution.

Summer Solstice: This day is the longest day of the year. Over the centuries, the June solstice has inspired countless festivals, midsummer celebrations, and holidays.

Litha: On the longest day of the year, with gratitude, many Neopagans celebrate the sun's life-giving light and warmth. Wiccan and Pagan observance begin at sunset of the previous day.

National Indigenous Peoples Day: This day of celebration to recognize and honour the heritage, cultures, and valuable contributions to society by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

National Indigenous Peoples Day is the same day as the summer solstice and was chosen for its important symbolism to many Indigenous peoples.

Canadian Multiculturalism Day:

This day is an opportunity for all Canadians to celebrate and appreciate the contributions of the various multicultural groups and communities to Canadian society.

Eid al-Adha: This day is one of the two official holidays celebrated in Islam. It follows Eid al-Fitr by just over two months and is also known as the Feast of Sacrifice or Festival of Sacrifice as it commemorates Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son to God as an act of obedience to God. It is around this time that many Muslims perform the Hajj to Mecca.

Coqualeetza Indian Residential School Closed on June 30, 1940:

Methodist missionaries opened a day school at Coqualeetza, Sardis BC in 1886. The following year, they added a residence for boarding students. A new school, built in 1889, burned down in 1891. Starting in the 1920s, the school began teaching Aboriginal handicrafts. The principal, in an effort to decrease the institutional nature of the school, introduced cottages for younger students and semi-private rooms for older students in the 1930s. When the school closed in 1940, students were transferred to the Alberni school and the school building became the Coqualeetza Indian Hospital, a federally run tuberculosis hospital. The Coqualeetza Indian Hospital closed on Sept. 30, 1969.

St. Mary's Indian Residential School closed on June 30, 1984: Between the late 1800s and 1996, the Government of Canada and church organizations operated the Indian Residential School System. An estimated 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were removed from their families, homes,

languages, and lands. These schools were part of Canada's official policy, which aimed to eliminate Indigenous cultures and through assimilation cause Indigenous peoples to cease to exist. The first school opened in Mission, BC (St. Mary's) in 1867; it was the final school to close in BC in 1984.

JULY

St. Thomas Day: This day of feast for St. Thomas is observed on July 3 by most Christians across the world. St. Thomas was one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ according to the New Testament.

Dharma Day: This festival marks the beginning of the Buddha's teaching. It is a special day for Theravada Buddhists in many countries including Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. It is seen as an opportunity to express gratitude and is usually celebrated with readings from the Buddhist scriptures and is observed by donating offerings at temples and listening to sermons.

International Non-Binary Awareness Week: This awareness week is dedicated to people whose gender identity doesn't sit within the dominant gender binary of male or female. Non-Binary people may identify with neither or both genders, or vary between them. Terms such as gender neutral, pangender, gender fluid, and genderqueer are sometimes also used.

St. Benedict Day: This day is the feast day of Saint Benedict of Nursia, who was proclaimed patron saint of all of Europe by Pope Paul VI and is recognized as the father of Western monasticism. The 'Benedictine Rule' became the norm for monastic groups in Europe.

International Non-Binary People's Day: This day shines a light on those who identify as non-binary and celebrates the rich diversity of the community. The term "non-binary"

describes someone who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary folks may identify as being both a man and a woman or as falling completely outside these categories.

World Day for International Justice:

This day unites all those who wish to support justice, promote the rights of victims, and help prevent crimes that threaten the peace, security, and well-being of the world.

Nelson Mandela International Day: In recognition of the former South African President, this day commemorates Mandela's values and his dedication to the service of humanity in: conflict resolution; race relations; promotion and protection of human rights; reconciliation; gender equality and the rights of children and other vulnerable groups; the fight against poverty; and the promotion of social justice.

Civil Marriage Act: In 2003, Ontario and British Columbia became the first two provinces to legalize the licensing of same-sex marriage. In 2005, same-sex marriage became legal across Canada. This change required that definitions for husband and wife be amended to spouse.

Birth day of Emperor Haile Selassie:

This day is a Rastafarian celebration to mark the day of Emperor Haile Selassie I's birth in 1892. Rastafarian is derived from his name as he was also known as Ras (Prince) Tafari. Rastafarians believe that Haile Selassie was descended from King Solomon in the Bible, and they believe that he is the incarnation of God. Emperor Haile Selassie's birthday is seen as one of the holiest days of the year for Rastafarians.

Pioneer Day: This day commemorates the entry of Brigham Young and the first group of Mormon pioneers into the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847, where the Latter-day Saints community

settled after being forced from Nauvoo, Illinois, and other locations in the eastern United States where members were persecuted for their beliefs. This day is marked by parades, fireworks, picnics, and other festivities.

Tisha B'av: This annual fast day in Judaism commemorates a number of disasters that have occurred in Jewish history, but primarily it marks the destruction of both Solomon's Temple by the Neo-Babylonian Empire and the Second Temple by the Roman Empire in Jerusalem.

Ashura: This day is marked by Muslims as a whole, but for Shi'a Muslims it's an important and solemn day of mourning in commemoration of the martyrdom at Karbala of Hussein, a grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. It falls on the 10th day of Muharram, one of the four sacred months for Muslims, and is preceded by nine nights of mourning.

AUGUST

Emancipation Day: August 1 was officially designated Emancipation Day in Canada by the House of Commons on March 24, 2021. It commemorates the actual day in 1834 that the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 came into effect across most of the British Empire. However, this did not include the territories controlled at that time by the East India Company, Ceylon, what is modern-day Sri Lanka and St. Helen's, and slavery wasn't abolished in these regions until 1843. The history of the existence of slavery in Canada and the fact that Black and Indigenous peoples were enslaved on these lands has not been taught, and many Canadians are unaware of these truths. While Emancipation Day celebrates the strength and perseverance of Black communities in Canada, all Canadians are called to reflect, educate, and engage on this history to support the ongoing fight against anti-Black racism and discrimination.

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples: Indigenous peoples have sought recognition of their identities, their way of life and their right to traditional lands, territories, and natural resources for years. Yet, throughout history, their rights have been violated. The international community now recognizes that special measures are required to protect their rights and maintain their distinct cultures and way of life. This day is an opportunity to raise awareness of the needs of Indigenous peoples.

Feast of the Transfiguration:

This day is celebrated by various Christian communities in honour of the transfiguration of Jesus. This is a particularly important festival in Orthodox Christianity.

International Youth Day: This day is an opportunity to celebrate and mainstream young peoples' voices, actions, and initiatives, as well as their meaningful, universal, and equitable engagement. It brings youth issues to the attention of the international community and celebrates the potential of youth as partners in today's global society.

SEPTEMBER

Bisexual Awareness Week: This week was co-founded by GLAAD and BiNet USA to raise awareness of and celebrate the bisexual+ community.

Accessible British Columbia Act:

This legislation allows government to establish accessibility standards aimed at identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and inclusion in a range of areas such as employment, the delivery of services and the built environment. The provisions of the Act that apply to post-secondary institutions come into force on September 1, 2023.

Mennonite Heritage Week: Declared by the federal government on May 29, 2019, this week is an opportunity to celebrate the culture, heritage, and contributions of Mennonite Canadians. The presence of the Mennonite community in what is now known as Canada goes back to the late 1700s.

Arba'een: This day is observed by Shi'a Muslims and is a day that commemorates the martyrdom of Hussein Ibn Ali, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. It occurs 40 days after Ashura and is observed through religious gatherings, prayer, and one of the world's largest annual pilgrimages attended by Shias and non-Shias alike.

Ethiopian New Year: This day is the beginning of the New Year in Ethiopia and is celebrated by Rastafarians because Ethiopia is their spiritual homeland, and a place to which they want to return. During this time, the history of Ethiopia is remembered, and its importance acknowledged through Biblical passages and prayer. A Nyabingi session is also held to mark the occasion.

Rosh Hashanah: This day is considered one of the two High Holy Days in the Jewish religion, Yom Kippur is the other. Literally meaning "head [of] the year", it is the Jewish New Year and celebrates the creation of the world, marking the beginning of the Days of Awe, a 10-day period of introspection and repentance that culminates in the Yom Kippur holiday.

International Day of Peace: This day is observed to strengthen the ideals of peace, through observing 24 hours of non-violence and cease-fire.

Culture Days: These days seek to eliminate barriers to access and participation, and stimulate understanding, appreciation, and exploration of arts and culture — so that every person in the country has a deeper connection with themselves, their communities, and Canada.

Fall Equinox/Mabon: Celebrated by Wiccans and Pagans, this day is a time of giving of thanks for the fruits of the harvest and a time to share their good fortune with others. As a time when dark and light are once again briefly held in perfect balance it is seen as a time to reflect on matters of balance within their lives and within themselves. Observance begins at sunset of the previous day.

International Day of Sign Language: This day is a unique opportunity to support and protect the linguistic identity and cultural diversity of all deaf people and other sign language users.

Bisexuality Visibility Day: This day, also referred to as Bisexual Pride Day, recognizes and celebrates bisexual people, the bisexual community, and the history of bisexuality.

Yom Kippur: This is the year's holiest day and a day of fasting for Jewish people. Also known as the Day of Atonement because of the central themes of atonement and repentance. On this solemn day, Jews traditionally observe with a day-long fast, confession, and intensive prayer, often spending most of the day in synagogue services.

Mid–Autumn Festival, also known as Moon Festival or Mooncake Festival: This traditional festival is celebrated by many East and Southeast Asian people. It is the second-most important holiday after the Chinese New Year with a history dating back 3,000 years, when China's emperors worshipped the moon for bountiful harvests. The celebration is called Chuseok (autumn eve) in Korea and Tsukimi (moon-viewing) in Japan.

Orange Shirt Day/National Day for Truth & Reconciliation: September 30 opens the door to global conversation on all aspects of residential schools. It is an opportunity to create meaningful discussion about the effects of residential schools and a day for

survivors to be reaffirmed that they matter, and so do those that have been affected. It is an opportunity for First Nations, local governments, schools, and communities to come together in the spirit of reconciliation and hope for generations of children.

OCTOBER

Stó:lō New Year: This starts around the full moon in October, when the Sts'ailes salmon run comes. Sqwéxem is the Ts'a'í:les spring salmon, and it's the arrival of that spring salmon into the Ts'a'í:les River that begins the Stó:lō New Year.

Latin American Heritage Month: This month celebrates the culture, heritage, and contributions of Canadians of Latin American descent. Members of the Latin American community arrived here mostly in the late 20th century from all around Latin America.

LGBTQ2S+ History Month: Founded by history teacher Rodney Wilson in 1994. The month-long observation is intended to highlight the contributions of the LGBTQ2S+ community, their history, and struggle for civil rights in Canada and abroad.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month: Established to increase awareness of the positive outcomes of hiring persons with disabilities in Canada and the positive contributions that employees with disabilities make to Canadian workplaces.

Learning Disabilities Awareness Month: Draws attention to this widespread disability by generating grassroots activities that raise Canadian awareness of learning disabilities and the challenges faced by these individuals and their families.

Islamic History Month: This month recognizes the significant contributions

the Muslim community has made to Canadian society. Muslim-Canadians enrich our lives and contribute to the prosperity and heritage of our country through their outstanding achievements in many fields.

Women's History Month: This is an annual celebration of the outstanding achievements of women throughout Canada's history.

Mental Health Awareness Month: According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, in any given year, one in five Canadians will personally experience a mental health problem or illness.

International Day of Older Persons: Designated as a day to recognize aging population and its implications for nearly all sectors of society, including labour and financial markets, the demand for goods and services, such as housing, transportation, and social protection, as well as family structures and intergenerational ties.

National Day of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: This day recognizes and commemorates the missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people, and calls to honour them through taking concrete action against violence that disproportionately impacts their communities.

Sisters in Spirit Vigils: This day began as a research, education, and policy initiative led by Indigenous women. The goal was to conduct research and raise awareness surrounding the alarming rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in Canada. On this day, a vigil is organized to honour the memory of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

World Teachers' Day: This day has become the occasion to mark progress

and reflect on ways to counter the remaining challenges for the promotion of the teaching profession.

International Lesbian Day: This day celebrates women-loving-women. The day originated in New Zealand and is believed to have begun in 1980 when a group of forty lesbians marched through Wellington Park on International Women's Day. International Lesbian Day is celebrated on October 8 because it is exactly six months after International Women's Day.

World Mental Health Day: The purpose of this day is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and mobilizing efforts in support of mental health.

National Coming Out Day (NCOD): Started in 1988 by LGBT activists Robert Eichberg and Jean O'Leary, the day celebrates coming out for people from a variety of marginalized sexual and gender identities. October 11 was chosen as the day for NCOD as it was the anniversary for the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights in the United States.

International Day of the Girl Child: This day recognizes girls' rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world. It focuses attention on the need to address the challenges girls face and to promote girls' empowerment and the fulfilment of their human rights.

World Sight Day: The purpose of this day is to focus global attention on vision impairment and blindness. There is a different theme every year, with many taking the opportunity to both celebrate achievements to date and advocate for increasing attention towards eye care.

Navaratri: This festival spans nine nights and is celebrated every year in the autumn season. It celebrates divine feminine, the defeat of Mahishasura

by Goddess Durga, and signifies the victory of good over evil. In some parts of India, people observe fasting during Navaratri.

International Day of Rural Women:

This day recognizes the critical role and contribution of rural women, including Indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security, and eradicating rural poverty.

Birth of Bab: The birth anniversary of the Bab, which is heralded as the new age for Bahá'ís. The Bab's revelation, which lasted only six years until his execution by a fearful government, nevertheless paved the way for the coming of Baha'u'llah. Bahá'ís celebrate the births of both the Bab and Baha'u'llah, the two prophets associated with the Baha'i revelation one right after the other.

Birth of Baha'u'llah: One of the Bahá'í "twin holy days," this day celebrates the birth of Baha'u'llah. It is one of nine holy days in the Bahá'í calendar that is celebrated by adherents of the Bahá'í Faith on which work is suspended. While there is no established tradition, the day is marked by prayers and devotional readings, and in the spirit of the Bahá'í, is to be open to all.

Persons Day: Marked in 1929 when the historic decision to include women in the legal definition of "persons" was handed down by Canada's highest court of appeal. This gave some women the right to be appointed to the Senate of Canada and paved the way for women's increased participation in public and political life. Though this decision did not include all women, such as Indigenous women and women of Asian heritage and descent, it did mark critical progress in the advancement of gender equality in Canada.

International Pronoun Day: This day seeks to make respecting, sharing, and educating about personal pronouns

commonplace. Referring to people by the pronouns they determine for themselves is basic to human dignity. Being referred to by the wrong pronouns particularly affects transgender and gender nonconforming people. Together, we can transform society to celebrate people's multiple, intersecting identities.

Spirit Day: Each year, millions go purple to support LGBTQ2S+ youth in a united stand against bullying. Pledging to "go purple" on Spirit Day is a way for everyone — global and local brands and companies, world leaders, celebrities, neighbors, parents, classmates, and friends — to visibly show solidarity.

Installation of Scriptures as Guru Granth Sahib Ji: Sikhs across the world celebrate this day as the passing on of the Guruship to the Guru Granth Sahib Ji (Holy Scriptures) by the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The holy text is comprised of nearly 6,000 hymns of the Sikh Gurus and various early and medieval saints of different religions and castes.

Samhain: One of the four ancient Celtic Fire festivals, this day marks the beginning of winter and the dark half of the year. It is the also the Celtic New Year and is considered to be one of the most powerful times of the year by Wiccans and Pagans. Ancestors are honoured and loved ones who have died in the last year are mourned.

NOVEMBER

November: Originating in Australia in 2003, this men's health awareness movement has grown, inspiring support from all over the world. The movement engages men to accelerate change in mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer, and testicular cancer.

Multiculturalism Week: This week is recognized as a time to celebrate the contributions of our multicultural

communities and to appreciate the way diversity enriches British Columbia.

All Saints' Day: This day is observed by many Christians, including those following the Western and Eastern traditions. On this day, Christian Saints from across the ages, both known and unknown, are honoured through prayers.

Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead): This Mexican multi-day holiday involves family and friends gathering to pray for and to remember friends and family members who have died. It is commonly portrayed as a time of celebration rather than mourning.

Trans Parent Day: This day celebrates the life and the love between transgender parents and their children and transgender children and their parents.

Veterans Week: During this week, Canadians honour those who have served Canada in times of war, military conflict, and peace. It is recognized as the week leading up to Remembrance Day (November 11).

International Inuit Day: At the 2006 Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), an international non-governmental organization representing Arctic peoples (the Inuit, the Yupik, and the Chukchi) living in Canada, Greenland, United States and Russia, proclaimed November 7th as Inuit Day to honour the birth date of ICC visionary, Eben Hopson, Sr. This day celebrates the culture and identity of all these peoples.

National Indigenous Veterans Day: This day was designated in 1994 to acknowledge the many ways in which First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples contributed to Canada's war efforts and to our country's reputation as a peacekeeping nation. When these veterans returned home, many did not receive the same benefits and services as non-Indigenous veterans. In fact, it

is only since 1995 that they and their families have been allowed to lay wreaths at the National War Memorial in Ottawa to remember their fallen family and friends.

Diwali/Deepavali: An ancient Hindu tradition dating back for more than 2,500 years, Diwali has incredible historical and unique meaning and significance for many different communities within South Asia. Hindus, Jains, and Sikhs celebrate this festival. The word Diwali comes from the Sanskrit word deepavali, meaning "rows of lighted lamps" as a marker of change, hope, and a pathway from despair. Diwali is not homogenous, and each community celebrates with hope in mind, with celebration in mind, and with history in mind.

Bandi Chhor Divas: This day, also known as the "day of liberation" or the "day of the prisoners' release", is an important Sikh celebration commemorating the day of the return of the sixth Guru to the holy city of Amritsar after he negotiated the release of 52 Kings who had been held for political reasons. This day is celebrated by the lighting up of homes and Gurdwaras, celebratory processions, and langar (community kitchen).

World Kindness Day: This day highlights good deeds in the community focusing on the positive power and the common thread of kindness for good which binds us.

Transgender Awareness Week: People and organizations around the country participate to help raise visibility around transgender people and address issues members of the community face.

International Day of Tolerance: The purpose of this day is to strengthen tolerance by fostering mutual understanding among cultures and peoples. This imperative lies at the core of the United Nations Charter, as well

as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and is more important than ever in this era of rising and violent extremism and widening conflicts.

Louis Riel Day: On this day, the legacy of Louis Riel is commemorated by recognizing his advocacy for the protection of the rights and culture of the Métis Nation. Louis Riel made significant contributions to Canada by defending Métis rights and providing leadership and governance for the Métis. We must also acknowledge the persistence of the injustices he fought against in his advocacy of Métis rights. The actions of past repressive colonial governments and policies were driven by racism and fear — fear of a different culture and a unique way of life.

International Men's Day: This day celebrates the positive value men bring to the world, their families, and communities. It highlights positive role models and raises awareness of men's well-being.

World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse: This day was launched in 2000 by the Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF), a non-governmental organization, along with an international coalition of advocacy organizations for women's and children's issues, with the purpose of mobilizing governments and societies to take action and prevent child abuse.

International Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR): Founded in 1999 by Gwendolyn Ann Smith in memory of Rita Hester. TDOR is a day to honour the trans people who have died, most often from transphobic violence, and to confront systems of violence that are overwhelmingly faced by trans women of colour and trans sex workers.

Universal Children's Day: This day is devoted to promoting the ideals and objectives of the UN Charter and the welfare of the children of the world.

Constitution Express left Vancouver for Ottawa: The repatriation of the Constitution was a moment of crisis for Aboriginal people with the realization in 1980 that proposed versions to the “new” constitution would effectively end recognition of Aboriginal title and rights. The Constitution Express was a 3000-mile trek, led by George Manuel, then President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, to the seat of the federal government. The purpose of this journey was to tell Trudeau and his government that the Indian people have rights as the first inhabitants of this land, and that these rights have been guaranteed by treaty and historical agreement between Indian Nations and the British Government. This peaceful protest gathered over 1000 people nationwide along the way. As a result of this, and other actions, section 35, recognizing Aboriginal title and rights, was included in the constitution. The first Constitution Express left Vancouver on November 24, 1980.

Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji: This day commemorates the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, the ninth of the Ten Sikh Gurus. He is remembered not only for his defense of the Sikh Faith, but also for willingly giving up his life for religious liberty of all faiths.

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women: This day has been observed by women’s rights activists since 1981 as a day against gender-based violence. This date was selected to honour the Mirabal sisters, three political activists from the Dominican Republic who were brutally murdered in 1960 by order of the country’s ruler, Rafael Trujillo.

International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People: This day provides an opportunity for the international community to focus its attention on the fact that the question

of Palestine remains unresolved and that the Palestinian people have yet to attain their inalienable rights as defined by the General Assembly.

International Day of Consent: This is a day to focus on consent as a practice and a tool for changing lives. Consent is so much more than a simple yes or no. Consent is about how we connect, with ourselves, with each other, and with the world we make together. Consent is transformative.

DECEMBER

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery: This day focuses on the eradication of contemporary forms of slavery, such as trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, the worst forms of child labour, forced marriage, and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.

International Day of Disabled Persons: The purpose of this day is to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic, and cultural life.

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women: This day commemorates the tragic mass shooting that took place on December 6, 1989 at l’École Polytechnique de Montréal that saw the promising lives of 14 young women cut violently short.

Hanukkah: In the Jewish calendar, the first day of Hanukkah is on the 25th day of the month of Kislev. The festival is observed by lighting the candles of a candelabrum with nine branches, commonly called a menorah or hanukkah.

Bodhi Day: This day, also known as Awakening Day, is celebrated by Buddhists of the Mahayana tradition, including in China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, as the anniversary of enlightenment of Buddha. The appearance of the morning star on this day is said to have been the moment of the Buddha’s enlightenment.

Human Rights Day: This day is observed on the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The UDHR is a milestone document that proclaims the inalienable rights which everyone is entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status.

International Migrant Day: This day recognizes the important contribution of migrants while highlighting the challenges they face. (United Nations)

Winter Solstice: For many cultures around the world, this marks an important milestone. It’s the shortest day of the year and the longest night of the year. It celebrates the longest hours of darkness and the rebirth of the sun and is believed to hold a powerful energy for regeneration, renewal, and self-reflection.

Yule: This day is observed by Wiccans and Pagans as the longest night of the year, where a night vigil is held and then at dawn, welcome the turning of the wheel and the return of the light. It is a time for ritually shedding the impurities of the past year, and for contemplating avenues of spiritual development in the year ahead.

Christmas: On this day, many Christians around the world celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ over 2000 years ago. This day is observed in various ways across cultures but the gathering of family and community at

home and in churches, lighting candles, exchanging gifts, church celebrations, special meals, and the display of Christmas decorations are common.

Zarathosht Diso: An important day of remembrance in the Zoroastrian religion, this day is a commemoration of the death of the Prophet Zarathustra, the founder of the Zarathushti (Zoroastrian) faith.

Kwanzaa: This day celebrated by many North Americans of African descent in recognition of their heritage. Kwanzaa means first fruit in Swahili and is a harvest festival, and families exchange gifts and have African-style feasts. Seven-pronged candle holders are lit on each consecutive night for seven principles: unity, self-determination, responsibility, sharing, purpose, creativity, and faith.

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