

Ways to Welcome Saskatchewan Multicultural Week November 21-28, 2010

Why Celebrate Saskatchewan Multicultural Week?

In 1974, Saskatchewan became the first province to enact Multicultural legislation. We celebrate Saskatchewan Multicultural Week every year in November to commemorate this progressive act. We can be proud that it recognizes the right of every community to its identity, language, traditional arts and sciences for the benefit of all. We enhanced it with the revision in 1997 to preserve, strengthen and promote Aboriginal cultures and acknowledge their historic and current contribution to Saskatchewan. You can find the act at www.qp.gov.sk.ca/documents/English/Statutes/Statutes/M23-01.pdf. The Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan (MCoS) has been instrumental in the development and promotion of these multicultural values.

Canada has never been a Unicultural Nation. We have seen *Waves of Immigration* and settlement in Saskatchewan. Political events have resulted in mainstream language and culture closest to our British roots and our proximity to the United States. People have continued cultural practices, languages, traditions, faiths, etc. sometimes despite discrimination and public policy and sometimes with the support of mainstream institutions. The following is a rough sketch of patterns. We encourage you to talk about these and other significant migrations. What is your family's history and experience?

- ~ First Nations (with great diversity between each nation)
- ~ Viking Visitors?
- ~ French
- ~ British
- ~ Métis: A new culture was born of the interaction between ethnic groups
- ~ 1872: *Dominion Lands Act* attracts Poles, Ukrainians, Jews, Romanians, Germans (mostly from other European countries), Sweden and other Europeans, African Americans
- ~ Gold Rush/CPR (late 19th Century): Chinese
- ~ Opposition to Asian Immigration approximately 1910-45
- ~ Post WWII Many Dutch, Greeks, Poles, Italians and others
- ~ 1950s to present (seeking peace, security and economic prospects)- Filipinos (mostly health professionals), Ugandans (many professionals)...
- ~ Post-Soviet era Poles, Slovaks and others from Eastern Europe
- ~ Late 20th and early 21st century refugees: Vietnamese (late 1970s), Iranians (post 1978), Ethiopians, Kosovars, Bosnians, Somalis, Afghans, Iraqis, Sudanese, Karen (from Burma/Myanmar)...
- ~ SINP (responding to labour shortages): Germans and Ukrainians, esp. trades such as truck drivers and welders; Filipinos, mostly health professionals

What can I do to foster Intercultural Connections?

1. Say Hello and smile. Talk to people you don't know.
2. Learn to say Hello or "thank you" in another language. Learn a language.
3. Think of no one as "them".
4. Learn about your own ethnic, cultural or religious heritage. Share it, so others understand you.
5. Play games from other cultures. Find out the origins of favourite board games.
6. Have a pen/email pal
7. Ask questions with respect. Choose curiosity over certainty.
8. Seek to understand. Listen before you react.
9. Catch yourself making assumptions. We all do it, so when we are aware of it, we can be open to real people.
10. Learn from new and uncomfortable angles. Go to a place in which you are the minority. Listen to music you don't understand. Dance to it. Imagine other cultures through their art, poetry and novels. Eat adventurously.
11. Notice the workings of power & privilege in your community. Notice who is represented in places of power, media, occupations.
12. Know that no one is silent though many are not heard. Work to change this.
13. Honor everyone's holidays.
14. Practice Saskatchewan's motto: *From Many Peoples Strength*



For even more ideas, or more information, please contact the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan at:

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Don't forget to order your **2011 Multifaith Calendar**. These make excellent gifts and prizes that promote multicultural values. MCoS also has greeting cards, lapel pins and bows. Order from the office or the website.

Anti-Racism Youth Leadership Workshop: February 17, 2011 in Regina. MCoS is offering an opportunity for high school students to participate in an anti-racism leadership workshop. Students will engage with peers from throughout the province as they participate in activities to explore identity, intercultural relationships, power, privilege, racism and discrimination. They will learn to facilitate these activities for use in the local school and community. Lunch Included.

Watch for **Multicultural Education Initiative** grants available to schools every October with a special edition in January 2011.