



Ways to Welcome Saskatchewan Multicultural Week November 18-25, 2012

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 [The Multiculturalism Act](#). Responsibility for the Act resides with the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport. The Act states broadly the provincial multiculturalism policy and provides the Minister power to carry out the purposes of the Act. The Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan (MCoS) has been instrumental in the development and promotion of these multicultural values.

There are four interrelated types of work in multiculturalism. Although often used in conjunction with one another, each has its own distinct goals and meanings. You can participate in all four **during Multicultural Week and every day.**

- **Multiculturalism**, while inclusive of all four areas of activity is most often understood as cultural retention and celebration of differences (and similarities) and the right to maintain distinctive cultural practices in the Canadian context.

This message from Haida Gwaii Traditional Circle of Elders highlights one perspective on cultural retention "Men and women have an equal responsibility to restore the strength of the family, which is the foundation of all cultures." The family is the heartbeat of strength of the culture. The grandfathers and grandmothers taught their children; they in turn had children who taught their children. If the family isn't taught the culture, then the children become adults, and the adults become the grandfathers and grandmothers, and the result is the culture becomes lost. This is how language is lost; this is how dances are lost; this is how knowledge is lost.

Learn about your own ethnic, cultural or religious heritage.

Share it, so others understand you.

Honor everyone's holidays.

Play games from other cultures. Find out the origins of favourite board games.

Participate in celebrations.

Ask questions.

- **Anti-racism** work looks at issues of power and privilege and how they impact individual and systemic discrimination; it usually includes active dialogue to build equity and justice in our institutions and communities.

Notice the workings of power & privilege in your community. Notice who is represented in places of power, media, occupations

Know that no one is silent though many are not heard. Work to change this.

Consider Peggy McIntosh's work on privilege:

<http://www.amptoons.com/blog/files/mcintosh.html>

Try some of the activities available through Regina Public Schools' ACT! (Anti-racism Cross-cultural Team development) program at <http://iss.rbe.sk.ca/act>

- **Intercultural relations** entails different cultural groups coming together over time to build bridges i.e. exchanges, pen pals, cooperative work, creating safe spaces.

Learn to say Hello or "thank you" in another language. Learn a language.

Ask questions with respect. Choose curiosity over certainty.

Seek to understand. Listen before you react.

Have a pen/email pal

Catch yourself making assumptions. We all do it, so when we are aware of it, we can be open to real people.

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.

- **Settlement and integration** work is focussed on facilitating the process immigrants and refugees experience to become part of their new Canadian communities.

Say Hello and smile. Talk to people you don't know.

Host a Newcomer family.

Practice Saskatchewan's motto: *From Many Peoples Strength*



"Canada is not a melting pot in which the individuality of each element is destroyed in order to produce a new and totally different element. It is rather a garden into which have been transplanted the hardiest and brightest flowers from many lands, each retaining in its new environment the best of the qualities for which it was loved and prized in its native land."
— John Diefenbaker, Prime Minister of Canada 1957-63



For even more ideas, or more information, please contact the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan at: 452 Albert Street North; Regina SK S4R 3C1; Phone: 721-6267 (MCoS); Fax: 721-3342 mcos@mcos.ca; www.mcos.ca <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Multicultural-Council-of-Saskatchewan/127515747302489>

Don't forget to order your **2013 Multifaith Calendar**. The theme for 2013 is *The Nature of Spirit*. Holiday Greeting Cards also available. Excellent gifts and prizes that promote multicultural values.

Watch for **Multicultural Education Initiative** grants available to schools every October.