



## EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION CALENDAR

**MAY – 2022**

### **MONTH LONG OBSERVANCES:**

➤ **Asia Pacific American Heritage Month**

The Senate of Canada passed a motion in December 2001, designating May as Asian Heritage month. Canadians take part in festivities commemorating the legacy of Asian Canadians and their many contributions that have helped Canada become the multicultural and diverse nation it is today.

➤ **Older Americans Month**

Established in 1963 in the United States to honor the legacies and contributions of older Americans and to support them as they enter their next stage of life. It seeks to raise the awareness concerning elder abuse and neglect.

➤ **Jewish American Heritage Month**

Recognizes the diverse contributions of the Jewish people to American culture. It provides an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the incredible contributions that Jewish people have made to the country and in communities across North America.

➤ **Mental Health Awareness Month**

Alternatively, Mental Health Month, aims to raise awareness, educate the public about mental illnesses, and reduce the stigma that surrounds mental illnesses. Celebrating Mental Health Awareness month helps to understand how stress affects your body, developing your support network and reaching out to friends or family members that you believe may be struggling.

➤ **Haitian Heritage Month**

A celebration in the United States of Haitian heritage and culture. It was first celebrated in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1998.

➤ **Better Hearing and Speech Month**

Each May, Better Hearing & Speech Month, provides an opportunity to raise awareness about communication disorders and the role of the American Speech-

Language-Hearing Association members in providing life-altering treatment. For 2022, the theme is “Connecting People”.

**May 1: Beltane** (Wicca)

An ancient Celtic festival celebrated on May Day, signifying the beginning of summer. It takes its name from the Celtic God Bel who unites with the Earth Goddess on this day. It was a midsummer fertility festival in Celtic paganism. Maypole dances are held.

**May 1: Ridván**

On the first, ninth and twelfth days of Ridván, work and school should be suspended. "Ridvan" means paradise, and is named for the Garden of Ridván outside Baghdad, where Bahá'u'lláh stayed for twelve days after the Ottoman Empire exiled him from the city and before commencing his journey to Constantinople.

**May 1: International Workers Day**

International Workers' Day, also known as Labour Day in most countries and often referred to as May Day, is a celebration of laborers and the working classes that is promoted by the international labour movement and occurs every year on May Day.

**May 1: Santa Cruzan Day** (Philippines)

Filipinos consider this the first day of spring. It commemorates the corresponding day in the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. when St. Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine of Rome found the holy cross on which Jesus was crucified.

**May 1: Mid-Sha'ban Jashn** (Islam)

A Muslim holiday observed by Muslim communities on the night between 14 and 15 Sha'ban. The day marks the glory of the god of the Muslims. Lailat means night and Barat means Privilege. It is believed that in this night God himself blesses all human beings and accumulates all of us in his infinite mercy.

**May 2 – 3: (sundown to sundown) Eid ul-Fitr** (Islam)

This day marks the end of the Ramadan fast and is celebrated for three days. Date of observance may vary according to sighting of the new moon. The first day of the Islamic month of Shawwal, marking the end of Ramadan. Many Muslims attend communal prayers, listen to a khutuba (sermon), and give Zakat al-Fitr (charity in the form of food) during Eid ul-Fitr. This fast is the earlier of the two official holidays celebrated within Islam. The religious holiday is celebrated by Muslims worldwide because it marks the end of the month-long dawn-to-sunset fasting of Ramadan.

**May 2: Ridvan**

Naw-Ruz is the Bahá'í New Year. The first day of Ridvan (meaning “Paradis” in Arabic) – the most important of the Bahai holy days. It is the day on which Bahá'u'lláh declared His mission as a Messenger of God.

**May 3: Akshaya Tritiya (Jain)**

This day celebrates the day when Lord Rishabha broke his first yearlong fast by drinking sugar cane juice. To begin anything new is considered very auspicious on this day.

**May 3: Feasts of Saints Philip and James**

A Roman rite feast day held on the anniversary of the dedication of the Church to Saints Phillip and James in Rome. James, Son of Alphaeus: We know nothing of this man except his name, and, of course, the fact that Jesus chose him to be one of the 12 pillars of the New Israel, his Church. He is not the James of Acts, son of Clopas, "brother" of Jesus and later bishop of Jerusalem and the traditional author of the Letter of James. James, son of Alphaeus, is also known as James the Lesser to avoid confusing him with James the son of Zebedee, also an apostle and known as James the Greater. Philip came from the same town as Peter and Andrew, Bethsaida in Galilee. Jesus called him directly, whereupon he sought out Nathanael and told him of the "one about whom Moses wrote"

**May 3: World Press Freedom Day**

The United Nations General Assembly declared May 3 to be World Press Freedom Day or just World Press Day, observed to raise awareness of the importance of freedom of the press and remind governments of their duty to respect and uphold the right to freedom of expression enshrined under Article 19 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and marking the anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration, a statement of free press principles put together by African newspaper journalists in Windhoek in 1991. World Press Freedom Day is a date, which celebrates the fundamental principles of press freedom, to evaluate press freedom around the world, to defend the media from attacks on their independence and to pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession.

**May 3: Rohini Vrat (Jain)**

Rohini Vrat is an important fast of the people of Jain community; the people of Jain community observe this fast. This fast is observed on the day of Rohini Nakshatra. Hence, this fast is called Rohini Vrat. At the end of Rohini Nakshatra, Rohini fast is broken. Margashirsha Nakshatra comes after the end of Rohini Nakshatra. Rohini Vrat is 12 in a year, that is, it comes in every month. Falahar is done before sunset as no food is eaten at night. It is believed that this fast is observed continuously for 3, 5 or 7 years. If we talk about the proper duration then it is 5 years and 5 months. Udyapan ends this fast. This fast can be done by both men and women. However, this fast is considered obligatory for women. It is believed in the Jain community that this fast gives special results and helps in getting rid of the bondage of karma.

**May 4: Yom HaZikaron (Memorial Day) (Israel)**

Memorial Day honouring soldiers who died fighting for their country.

**May 5: Cinco de Mayo (Mexico)**

A Mexican holiday commemorating the Mexican Army's 1862 victory over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War (1861–1867). This day celebrates

Mexican culture and heritage with a variety of festivities, including parades and mariachi music performances.

### **May 5: National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

In 2017, a resolution recognizing May 5 as a National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls was introduced. It was in response to the murder of Hanna Harris on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation and other abductions and killings of Native women across the United States. Since 2017, action on May 5 to honour MMIW at the local, regional and national level continue to grow across the United States and internationally. These efforts are as varied as the Indian Nations, where they are being organized. The silence of tolerance and inaction is being challenged.

### **May 4 and 5: Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Judaism)**

Israeli Independence Day a great celebration held every year on the day, which in 1948 Israel declared its independence. Across Israel, events and celebrations take place to mark independence – both on a national scale and on a local scale, with almost every city, town and village, having some sort of celebration. In 2022, Yom Haatzmaut takes place from sundown on May 4 to sundown on May 5. The major state ceremony for Yom Haatzmaut takes place on the eve of Yom Haatzmaut at Mount Herzl, Israel's National Ceremony in Jerusalem. This event marks the end of Yom Hazikaron Israel's memorial day, which falls immediately beginning of the celebration for Yom Haatzmaut. The ceremony involves performances, speeches, and a ceremonial lighting of twelve torches, which symbolizes the Twelve Tribes of Israel by twelve citizens who have made a great impact on the country. At the same time, towns and cities across the country have parties and firework displays.

### **May 5 – 6: (sundown-to-sundown) National Day of Prayer**

A day of observance in the United States when people are asked to “turn to God in prayer and meditation”

### **May 7: National Youth and Child Mental Health Day**

This special week gives us the opportunity to take mental health discussions a step further by cultivating resilience and self-assurance in students and helping them to recognize and appreciate that it is okay to talk to someone about how they are feeling. This is a wonderful opportunity to help children and youth demonstrate compassion, empathy and understanding in a world that is experiencing so much isolation, fear and loneliness.

### **May 8: Buddha Day (Hong Kong, Korea) (Buddhism)**

(Vesak or Visakha Puja), a Buddhist festival that marks Gautama Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death. It falls on the day of the full moon in May and is a gazette holiday in India. Buddhism is the fourth largest religion in the world, being exceeded in numbers only by Christianity, Islam and Hinduism.

**May 8: Mother's Day**

In 1914, President Wilson officially declared the 2nd Sunday in May Mother's Day. Anna Jarvis of Philadelphia first suggested a day on which to honour mothers and motherhood.

**May 8 – May 9: The Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for Those Who Lost Their Lives during the Second World War**

An annual international day of remembrance designated by Resolution 59/26 of the United Nations General Assembly on November 22, 2004. The resolution urges 'Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and individuals' to pay tribute to the victims of World War II. It begins on May 8, the anniversary of the date when the World War II Allies accepted the unconditional surrender of the armed forces of Nazi Germany and the end of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich. In Ukraine (since 2015), May 8 is designated as a day of remembrance and reconciliation, but it is not a public holiday.<sup>[2]</sup>

**May 9: Victory Day (Russia)**

Commemorates the 1945 surrender of German forces in Eastern Europe and honours the 20 million Soviet people who died in World War II.

**May 10: Dia de las Madres**

Mother's Day observed on this date in Mexico and other Latin-American countries. The first official Mother's Day celebration in Mexico was held on May 10, 1922.

**May 12: Canada Health Day:**

Highlighting the importance of healthy living. Canada Health Day is the perfect time to talk about the importance of an active lifestyle.

**May 12: Mohini Ekadashi**

During this day, people observe fast and remain without food the whole day. The Lord Vishnu is worshipped on this vrat. People start preparing for this vrat on the previous day i.e. on Dashami. Mohini Ekadashi is observed in the Hindu month of Baishakh and is one of the most powerful of the 24 Ekadashi vrats in a year. Bhagwan Vishnu was named 'Mohini' when he appeared in disguise on this Ekadashi tithi. Since then, this auspicious day came to be known as Mohini Ekadashi.

**May 13: Our Lady of Fatima (Portugal)**

On May 13, 1917 in Portugal, three shepherd children saw and conversed with the Virgin Mary in a vision. This event occurred on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the month for six months in a row.

**May 14: Indigenous Nurses Day**

Highlights the achievements of Canada's First Nations, Inuit and Métis nurses and recognizes their invaluable work improving the health and well-being of Canadians.

**May 15: International Day of Families**

The Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993 with resolution A/RES/47/237 and reflects the importance the international community attaches to families. International Day of Families is celebrated to promote the importance of a well-balanced and healthy family.

**May 16: Wesak (Buddhist)**

The most important Buddhist festival. Wesak celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death of Buddha as one event. Different cultures observe this day with different customs, for example, Sri Lankans light lanterns, Vietnamese purchase captive animals and release them and Koreans host a lantern parade.

**May 16: International Day of Living Together in Peace**

Living together in peace is all about accepting differences and having the ability to listen to, recognize, respect and appreciate others, as well as living in a peaceful and united way. The UN General-Assembly, in its resolution 72/130(link is external), declared 16 May the International Day of Living Together in Peace, as a means of regularly mobilizing the efforts of the international community to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding and solidarity. The Day aims to uphold the desire to live and act together, united in differences and diversity, in order to build a sustainable world of peace, solidarity and harmony. The Day invites countries to further promote reconciliation to help to ensure peace and sustainable development, including by working with communities, faith leaders and other relevant actors, through reconciliatory measures and acts of service and by encouraging forgiveness and compassion among individuals.

**May 17: International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia**

A global celebration of sexual orientation and gender diversities

**May 18 – 19: (sundown-to-sundown) Lag BaOmer**

A Jewish holiday marking the day of hillula of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. Lag BaOmer is an annual Jewish festival observed during the Hebrew month of Iyar. It is celebrated on the 33rd day of the Omer, the 49-day period between Passover and Shavuot. Lag BaOmer is the only day during the 49-day period when celebration is permitted.

**May 20: Asian Gold Ribbon Day**

Participants join the visibility campaign by posting a selfie and tagging @asiangoldribbon along with using the hashtag #asiangoldribbon while wearing AGR memorabilia. Historically, the Government of Canada and the United States systematically legislated acts of racism against Asians through internment of Japanese Canadians in World War II and the Chinese Immigration Act that separated labourers from their families. In Canada, this came with a head tax increase from \$50 to \$500, totaling \$23 million collected over 32 years from 82,000 Chinese immigrants. Chinese immigrants in the 19th century were also referred to as the 'Yellow Peril'- a race who brings disease and virus into countries.

**May 21: World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development**

A day set aside by the United Nations as an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to learn to live together in harmony

**May 23: Victoria Day (Canada)**

Queen Victoria's birthday (May 24, 1837 – 1901) was declared a holiday by the Legislature of the Province of Canada in 1845. The United Kingdom celebrates her birthday in June.

**May 23: Day of the Patriots-Quebec (Canada)**

Commemorates the French patriots of 1837 – 1838 for their contribution to freedom and national recognition.

**May 23 – 29: Anti-Racism Awareness Week**

Join in solidarity for the annual anti-racism awareness week. People come together to raise awareness about issues of inequality, oppression and marginalization. The uncomfortable conversations about racism, intersectionality, religion, stigmas, decolonization, cultural and structural barriers continue. Embrace the discomfort once again in brave, safe spaces and let us allow you, the panelists, students, staff, audience members contribute to tackling head on the issues of discrimination. This year we also move beyond the conversations: We will engage in change behavior, develop policies together and we will grow in unity.

**May 23 – 24: (sundown to sundown) Declaration of Báb (Bahá'í)**

The day of declaration of the Báb, the forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í faith. The Bahá'í faith began in Persia (now Iran) on this day in 1844 but the prophet Bab who announced his mission as the founder. The event is celebrated about two hours after sunset.

**May 24: Indigenous Awareness Week (Indigenous Canada)**

First introduced in 1992, this week is held on the four days that follow the Victoria Day long weekend. It was designed to increase awareness of Indigenous peoples among federal public service employees.

**May 24: Orthodox Easter (also called Pascha)**

A later Easter date than what is observed by many Western churches

**May 25: Africa Day**

The annual commemoration of the foundation of the Organization of African Unity on 25 May 1963. It is celebrated in various countries on the African continent, as well as around the world.

**May 26: Ascension of Jesus or Ascension Day (Christian)**

Celebrated as the ascension of Christ from Earth in the presence of God within most of the Christian faith

**May 28: Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh (Bahá'í)**

The prophet-founder of the Bahá'í Faith passed away near Haifa, Israel. The event is observed at the actual time of his passing at 3 am. Commemorates the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í faith

**May 29: Yom Yerushalayim (Israel)**

This day marks the anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem.

**May 29 – June 4: National Access Ability Week**

National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) is an opportunity to celebrate the valuable contributions of Canadians with disabilities. Every year, starting on the last Sunday in May, Canadians celebrate National AccessAbility Week (NAAW). Founded as 'National Access Awareness Week' in 1988 and inspired by Rick Hansen's Man In Motion World Tour, this week is an opportunity to celebrate Canadians with disabilities and raise awareness of the critical need for accessibility and inclusion for all in our communities and workplaces. We still have a lot of work to do; daily, people with disabilities continue to face barriers. Let us change that.

**May 30: Memorial Day (United States)**

A federal holiday established to honor military veterans who died in wars fought by US forces. The 3<sup>rd</sup> U.S. Infantry place small American flags at about 260,000 gravestones at Arlington National Cemetery.

**May 30: Joan of Arc Day (France)**

St. Joan of Arc is the patron of soldiers and of France. A peasant girl who, believing that she was acting under divine guidance, led the French army in a momentous victory at Orleans.

**May 31: National Sorry Day (Australia)**

Also known as Journey of Healing Day commemorates the history of forcible removal of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander children from their families and the painful repercussions of that action. In 1998 over half a million Australian people responded, signing Sorry Books and taking part in ceremonies on Sorry Day.