



## **EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION CALENDAR**

**APRIL – 2022**

### **MONTH LONG OBSERVANCES:**

➤ **Diversity Month**

A celebration that was initiated in 2004 to recognize and honor the diversity surrounding us all. By celebrating differences and similarities during this month, organizers hope that people will gain a deeper understanding of each other.

➤ **Arab American Heritage Month**

The month is a time to reflect on the history of Arab Americans and to commemorate the numerous contributions this diverse population has made to the United States. Arab Americans have ancestry in one of the 22 Arab nations around the world, from northern Africa through western Asia.

**April 1: Farvardin (Iran)**

It is the 13<sup>th</sup> day after Nowruz or New Year. The number 13 is considered an unlucky number for the Persians and therefore everyone leaves home for the day to go on picnics or trips.

**April 2: World Autism Awareness Day (People with Disabilities)**

A day that seeks to improve the lives of those who suffer from autism. This day is observed to raise awareness about the people on the Autism spectrum.

**April 2 – May 2: Ramadan (Islamic)**

An Islamic holiday marked by fasting, praise, prayer and devotion to Islam. The first day of Islam's sacred month in which Muslims abstain from eating and drinking from dusk until dawn. This day is the beginning of one of the holiest Islamic months. It begins with the sighting of the new moon. It commemorates the period during which Prophet Mohammad received divine revelations. Observing Muslims fast between the hours of sunrise and sunset during the entire month read the Qu'ran and worship in the mosque or at home.

**April 4: Tomb Sweeping Day (China)**

The Qingming festival or Ching Ming Festival, also known as Tomb-Sweeping Day in English, is a traditional Chinese festival observed by the Han Chinese of mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and by the ethnic Chinese of Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnamese. Tomb Sweeping Day is celebrated with families reuniting and traveling to their ancestors' gravesites to pay their respects. First, weeds are removed from the gravesite and the tombstone is cleaned and swept. Any necessary repairs to the gravesite are also made.

**April 4: Refugee Rights Day**

The day celebrates the day that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was interpreted to guarantee refugees the same basic rights as anyone in Canada – to life, liberty, and security of person.

**April 5: Ch'ing Ming Festival (China, Taiwan)**

A national holiday when family graves are visited to ask for the blessings of the departed spirits.

**April 6 – National Tartan Day (Scottish)**

This day commemorates the Scottish Declaration of Independence, which was signed in 1320.

**April 6: Chakri Day (Thailand)**

A national holiday to honour King Rama I who founded the Chakri Dynasty in 1782 and the founder of Bangkok as the capital of Thailand.

**April 9: Valor Day (Philippines)**

The Day of Valor, officially known as Araw ng Kagitingan, is a national observance in the Philippines, which commemorates the fall of Bataan to Japanese troops during World War II. It falls every April 9, although in 2009, its celebration was moved to April 6 to avoid it from coinciding with Maundy Thursday. The Day of Valor, also known as Araw ng Kagitingan, commemorates the heroism of Filipinos and American Soldiers when the Japanese occupied the Philippines during World War II.

**April 10: Palm Sunday**

A Christian holiday commemorating the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. He rode on a donkey and was cheered by crowds who strew palm branches in his path. It takes place on the last Sunday of Lent, at the beginning of the Holy Week. It is observed by worship services and parades using palm branches.

**April 10: Ram Navami (Hindu)**

A Hindu day of worship and celebration of the seventh avatar of Vishnu (Lord Rama). Devotees typically wear red and place extravagant flowers on the shrine of the god. Rama Navami is a Hindu spring festival that celebrates the birthday of Rama, the seventh avatar of Vishnu. Rama is particularly important in the Vaishnavite tradition of Hinduism. The

festival celebrates the descent of Vishnu as the Rama avatar, through his birth to King Dasharatha and Queen Kausalya in Ayodhya.

**April 12: Equal Pay Day**

An attempt to raise awareness about the raw wage gap, a figure that shows that women, on average, earn about 80 cents for every dollar men earn. The date moves earlier each year as the wage gap closes. Equal Pay Day was initiated in 1996 by the National Committee on Pay Equity as a public awareness event to illustrate the gender pay gap. Women in Ontario do not just face a staggering pay gap – their employment rates have fallen to levels not seen since 1994, while frontline workers continue to face significant hazards on the job.

**April 13: Songkran/New Year** (Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand)

Recognized as the New Year for Buddhists. For Thais, it is a three-day religious festival in which homes are routinely cleaned, and water is sprinkled on monks paying visits and on statues of Buddha.

**April 13: International Day of Pink**

The International Day of Pink is the International Day against Bullying, Discrimination, Homophobia, Transphobia, and Transmisogyny across the world. People celebrate diversity by wearing a pink shirt and by organizing activities in workplaces, schools, and communities.

**April 13: Ugadi** (India, Mauritius, Nepal)

Marks the beginning of the new Hindu lunar calendar. Celebrated mainly in the southern states of India, people awake before the break of day, bathe and decorate the entrance of their homes with mango leaves.

**April 14: Holy Thursday** (Maundy Thursday)

The Christian holiday commemorating the Last Supper, at which Jesus and the Apostles were together for the last time before the crucifixion. It is celebrated on the Thursday before Easter. Maundy Thursday is part of the Christian celebration of Easter and marks the night of the Last Supper as told in the Bible. At the Last Supper, Jesus commanded that people should love one another; he then washed the feet of his disciples as an act of kindness.

**April 14: Mahavir Jayanti**

A holiday celebrated by the Jains commemorating the birth of Lord Mahavira. It is one of the most important religious festivals for Jains.

**April 14: Vaisakhi** (Bangladesh, Sikh, Hindu)

Also known as Baisakhi. The celebration of the founding of the Sikh community as the Khalsa (community of the initiated) and the birth of the Khalsa. The first day of the solar year, this is an agricultural festival celebrating the harvest, especially in North India. Tamils and Sri Lankans celebrate their New Year on this day. In Kerala, South India this

day is called Vishu, Especially important to the Sikhs; it marks this day in 1699 when the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, established the order of Khalsa.

**April 14: Bikarami Samvat**

Hindus celebrate the new year on April 14 in Cambodia and Laos, and in Thailand begins on April 13 (Songkran Festival). Those following the Sikh religion (Vaisakhi) also celebrate on April 14.

**April 14: Mahavir Jayanti (Jainism)**

The holiday is celebrated on the 13th day of the waxing (rising) half of Hindu month of Caitra, which usually occurs in either late March or early April in the Gregorian calendar. Mahavir Jayanti celebrates the birth of Mahavira, a contemporary of the Buddha, and the 24th and last Tirthankara (great sages).

**April 15: Good Friday**

A day celebrated by Christians to commemorate the execution of Jesus by crucifixion. It is recognized on the Friday before Easter. This day commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus on the Friday before Easter.

**April 15: Pongol (India)**

A three-day rice harvest festival in South India is celebrated with a cultural evening of song and dance.

**April 15: Adam's Peak Pilgrimage (Sri Lanka)**

It is an ancient pilgrimage site to the sacred mountain, Sri Pada. According to legend, when Buddha visited Sri Lanka, he planted one foot on the north of the royal city and the other foot on Sumana-Kuta (Adam's Peak) about a hundred miles distance.

**April 15: Lord's Evening Meal**

Celebrated by Jehovah's Witnesses in commemoration of an event believed to have occurred on the first night of Passover in approximately 33 CE, i.e., the Last Supper.

**April 15 – April 23: Passover**

An eight-day Jewish holiday in commemoration of the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt. Passover (Jewish): start of Jewish holiday honoring the freeing of Israeli slaves.

**April 16: Lazarus Saturday**

A day celebrated by the Eastern Orthodox Church and Oriental Orthodoxy to commemorate the raising from the dead of Lazarus of Bethany.

**April 17: Easter**

A holiday celebrated by Christians to recognize Jesus' return from death after the crucifixion. Easter (Christian): most important holy day in the Christian faith, celebrates the resurrection of Jesus following his death. This festival and holiday celebrate the

resurrection of Jesus from the dead as described in the Old Testament. As always, 2022 Easter will be celebrated on a Sunday.

**April 18: Easter Monday**

Commemorates the meeting of the women at Jesus tomb with an angel who assured them that Jesus had been resurrected from death. It is observed as a holiday in some countries.

**April 20 – May 2: Feast of Ridvan (Baha'i)**

A holiday celebrated by those of the Bahá'í faith, commemorating the twelve days when Bahá'u'lláh, the prophet-founder, resided in a garden called Ridvan (paradise) and publicly proclaimed his mission as God's messenger for this age.

**April 21: Maundy Thursday (Christian – Coptic and Eastern Orthodox/**

On this day, Jesus ate the Last Supper and washed the feet of his disciples prior to his arrest and crucifixion.

**April 21 – 23: Gathering of Nations (Native American)**

More than 500 Native tribes meet and celebrate various traditions and cultures.

**April 22: Earth Day**

Promotes world peace and sustainability of the planet. Events are held globally in support of environmental protection of the Earth. Earth Day (International): celebrates the planet we live on, observed internationally in more than 192 countries. This day is an international event celebrated around the world to pledge support for environmental protection.

**April 22: Holy Friday (Christian – Coptic and Eastern Orthodox)**

This day commemorates the passion and death by crucifixion of Jesus and is a solemn day. Eastern Orthodox members fast on this day. Macedonians make a plashtanitsa or picture of the dead Jesus on a large cloth to be carried in a procession.

**April 23: St. George's Day**

The feast day of St. George celebrated by various Christian churches.

**April 23: The Day of Silence**

During which students take a daylong vow of silence to protest the actual silencing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) students and their straight allies due to bias and harassment. National Day of Silence (LGBTQIAA+) People take a vow of silence to protest the harmful effects of harassment and discrimination of LGBTQ people in schools.

**April 23: Matsu Festival (China, Taiwan)**

Matsu saved her brother from drowning and at the age of 28 and ascended into heaven. She earned the title of Goddess of the Sea and is the patron of fishermen. There are ties and processions at Matsu temples.

**April 24: Armenian Martyrs' Day**

Recognizes the genocide of approximately 1.5 million Armenians between 1915 and 1923 in Turkey.

**April 24: Pasha Easter** (Christian – Coptic and Eastern Orthodox)

This day celebrates the resurrection of Jesus from his grave. Most Christians welcome Easter Sunday with a sunrise services.

**April 25: East Monday** (Christina – Coptic and Eastern Orthodox)

Easter Monday commemorates the meeting of the women at Jesus tomb with an angel who assured them that Jesus had been resurrected from death. It is observed as a holiday in some countries.

**April 27: Freedom Day** (South Africa)

Freedom Day is the commemoration of the first democratic elections held in South Africa on 27 April 1994. These were the first post-apartheid national elections to be held in South African where anyone could vote regardless of race. Freedom Day is a public holiday in South Africa. It celebrates freedom and commemorates the first post-apartheid elections held on that day in 1994

**April 27 – 28: Yom HaShoah**

Israel's day of remembrance for the approximately six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust. Yom Hashoah is a day set aside for Jews to remember the Holocaust. The name comes from the Hebrew word 'shoah', which means 'whirlwind'. Yom Hashoah was established in Israel in 1959 by law. It falls on the 27th of the Jewish month of Nissan, a date chosen because it is the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising

**April 28: Laylat al-Qadr** (Islam)

Night of Power commemorates the revelation of the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad in 610 CE. It begins the previous evening. The holiest night of the year for Muslims, is traditionally celebrated on the twenty-seventh day of Ramadan. It is known as the Night of Power and commemorates the night that the Quran was first revealed to the prophet Muhammad.

**April 28 – 30: Gathering of Nations Pow Wow** (Indigenous, USA)

Albuquerque New Mexico is the venue of over 700 tribes and nations participating in a three-day event where over 3,000 participants share, teach and exchange traditions.

**April 29: Ninth Day of Ridvan**

A festival of joy and unity in the Bahá'í faith to commemorate the reunification of Bahá'u'lláh's family and by extension the unity of the entire human family the Bahá'í faith calls for. It permeates the symbolic meaning of the Ninth Day of Ridvan.

**April 29: Showa no hi** (Japan)

An annual holiday. It honours the birthday of Emperor Showa (Hirohito) the reigning Emperor before during and after World War II from 1926 to 1989.

**April 29 – May 5: Golden Week** (Japan)

In Japan, the Golden Week is a series of four national holidays that take place within one week at the end of April to the beginning of May each year. It is often considered a time of vacation for the Japanese people, and many people receive time off from their secular employment on these bank holidays.

**April 30: Walpurgis Night** (Sweden)

Sweden's annual feast of the witches. Huge bonfires are lit all over the country to scare them away as they fly overhead, headed for their annual Sabbath in Brocken in the Harz Mountains in Germany.

**April 30 – Ramadan ends** (Muslim)

Maswood Ahmed, a member of the Muslim Council of Britain, says that "Eid is a time of celebration after accomplishing one of the most important religious duties: fasting during the month of Ramadan". Many people celebrate this by spending time exchanging gifts and visiting friends and family.

**April 30: El Dia de los Ninos** (Mexico)

Since 1925, Día del Niño, or the Day of the Child, has grown as an annual celebration throughout Mexico. This day recognizes children, pays homage to their importance in society, and endorses their well-being.

**April 30 – May 4: Gahambar Maidyozarem** (Zoroastrian)

This day celebrates the creation of the sky.