

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Calendar February - 2023

Diversity Thunder Bay is committed to a respectful, equitable, accessible, diverse and inclusive society that is anti-racist and free from discrimination and harassment. We all play a role, one way is by building our awareness and understanding of key days of observances by members of our community and how we can show support - allyship. It is important to recognize we need to actively address Anti-Black, Anti-Indigenous, Anti-Asian, racialized racism and Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and LGBTQIA2S+ phobia.

While, in this digest, it is not possible to capture every observance that is celebrated - that does not diminish their importance.

Month-Long Observances:

Black History Month Canada In December of 1995, the Parliament of Canada recognized February as Black History Month following a motion introduced by the first African Canadian woman elected to Parliament, Jean Augustine. The presence of peoples of African descent in Canada dates back farther than Samuel de Champlain's first voyage down the St. Lawrence River.

Black History Month USA Black History Month, and more importantly, the study of black history, is greatly owed to Dr. Carter G. Woodson, who first launched "Negro History Week" in 1926. Woodson chose February because it marks the birthdays of two men who greatly impacted the American black population. Abraham Lincoln (president of the United States who freed slaves during the Civil War), and Frederick Douglass (who worked to end slavery) have birthdays in February. The purpose of this month is to recognize the contributions of Black Americans and develop a better understanding of the Black experience.

Jan-Feb Hopi Holy Cycle Indigenous Buffalo dances are performed in Hopi reserves. Days may vary according to community.

LGBT+ History Month GB LGBT History Month is a whole month dedicated to promoting LGBT equality.

Le Mois du patrimoine en Ontario français (Franco-Ontarian Heritage Month)

Ontario Franco-Ontarian heritage begins by going back more than 400 years. Starting in 1613, French explorer Samuel de Champlain travelled – and mapped – parts of Ontario. In 1615, Champlain and his First Nations guides and allies arrived on the shores of Georgian Bay, near what is now Penetanguishene, where he was greeted by Chief Aenon of the Wendat (Huron). This was the longest, most extensive and westernmost of his travels in the lands that would one day become Ontario.

The logo for Diversity Thunder Bay features the word "Diversity" in a large, bold, dark grey font, with "Thunder Bay" in a smaller, lighter grey font below it. To the right of the text is a stylized graphic of several curved lines in black, yellow, and red, resembling a fan or a set of wings.

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Day Observances:

Feb 1 Abolition of Slavery Mauritius: The struggle for freedom of the slaves in Mauritius during the Dutch period between 1638 and 1710 is remembered and honored.

Feb 1 World Hijab Day Global World Hijab Day is observed every year on February 1 to honor Muslim women who wear the hijab. Muslim women maintain their modesty by wearing the hijab. Many also use them to safeguard themselves from male harassment.

Feb 2 Imbolg Wicca 'Imbolg' comes from an archaic Gaelic expression 'in the belly', which signaled the first stirrings of life within the womb of mother earth. Corn dolls are burned as offerings to the sun to hasten his return.

Feb 3 Setsubun-Sai Japan Setsubun-sai is known as Bean Throwing Night. Beans are thrown to protect against demons with shouts of 'Devil out, Good Fortune in'.

Feb 4 Rosa Parks Day USA Rosa Parks Day is a holiday in honor of the civil rights leader Rosa Parks, celebrated in the U.S. states of California and Missouri on her birthday.

Feb 5 Thaiposam Cavadee India, Mauritius Celebrated by Hindus of Tamil origin in honor of Kartikeya, Granter of Wishes, and the second son of Shiva. Devotees with their tongues, cheeks and body pierced with needles, hooks and skewers, dance their way trance-like to the temple carrying the 'Cavadee' - a wooden arch covered with flowers with a pot of milk at each end of its base.

Feb 6 Waitangi Day New Zealand This day commemorates the signing of a treaty at Waitangi on 6th February 1840 by a group of Māori chiefs and the British Government. It honors the rights of the British Crown and also the rights of the Māori people, which are now in the process of being reclaimed.

Feb 6 Tu B'Shevat (Arbor Day) Jewish This day celebrates Judaism's roots in the natural world. It is a holiday and known as the New Year for Trees. Special meals include eating the seven fruits of the land - wheat, barley, figs, grapes, pomegranates, olives and dates.

Feb 6 International Day of Zero Tolerance of Female Genital Mutilation Global In 2012, the U.N. General Assembly declared February 6, International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation. The day aims to generate awareness and intensify efforts to end the practice worldwide. There are strong reasons to believe female genital mutilation could end in a single generation.



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Feb 12 Lincoln's Birthday USA President Lincoln was the 16th president of the United States. He was born February 12, 1809 and assassinated on Good Friday, April 14, 1865.

Feb 14 Valentine's Day Canada, UK, USA One version states that a priest named Valentine was martyred on February 14, 269 A.D. in Rome for secretly marrying couples against the orders of the Roman Emperor, Claudius II. This was the night before a festival called Lupercalia associated with fertility.

Feb 18 Shivratri Hindu On Shiva's night, the Hindu deity Lord Shiva performed the Tandav, the cosmic dance of creation and destruction. A 24-hour fast is kept and devotees make pilgrimages to major shrines for worship.

Feb 20 Presidents Day (Obsvd) USA A US Federal holiday that celebrates the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln, born Feb. 12, 1809, and George Washington, born February 22, 1732.

Feb 20 Louis Riel Day Aboriginal, Canada He was the famous Metis leader who in 1885 led a rebellion and lost against the Canadian authorities because he feared more Metis land would be taken away by the settlers. Today his name is a symbol for Native independence.

Feb 20 World Day of Social Justice Global World Day of Social Justice is observed annually on February 20. Internationally, the world is plagued with unfortunate issues that prohibit millions of individuals from living a fair life. Many of the world's population, through no fault of their own, are deprived of basic facilities, such as homes, jobs, healthcare, education, nutrition, and more. It must be the responsibility of the privileged to ensure that we can create a just world where social justice is a norm.

Feb 20 Family Day/Heritage Day Canada Family Day was originally created to give people time to spend with their families but it also provides a day off between New Years Day and Good Friday as they are approximately three months apart. As mentioned above, unfortunately, not everyone gets Family Day off, which makes it a debatable holiday in many provinces.

Feb 21 Losar (New Year) Tibet, Buddhist The Tibetan New Year is called Losar and is celebrated for three days by visiting, feasting and the relaxation the monastic discipline.



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Feb 21 International Mother Language Day **Global** Created by UNESCO to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism: “Languages are the most powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage”. It serves as a powerful instrument in the preservation and development of cultures and ethnicities.

Feb 21 Pancake Tuesday **UK** Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras in French which means Fat Tuesday) is the last day before the beginning of Lent. Strict Christian Lenten rules prohibited the eating of all dairy products during Lent, so pancakes were made to use up their supplies of eggs, milk, butter and other fats. Pancake races are held in many parts of England.


Feb 21 Shrove Tuesday **Christian** This is the day before Lent. Taken from the old word ‘shrive’, it means forgiveness. Traditionally it was a time to give up meat and dairy foods.

Feb 22 Ash Wednesday (Lent Begins) **Christian** This day marks the beginning of Lent. Ash symbolizes sorrow for wrong doings and foreheads of churchgoers are marked with the shape of the cross with ashes as a sign of penitence.

Feb 22 Abu Simbel Festival **Egypt** Built by Ramses II, his temple is angled so that the inner sanctum lights up twice a year - once on the anniversary of his rise to the throne and on Oct 22, celebrating his birthday. Crowds pack in the temple before sunrise to watch the shafts of light illuminate the statues of Ramses, Ra and Amon. The other date for this event is Oct. 22.

Feb 23 Pink Shirt Day **Canada** Pink Shirt Day seeks to raise awareness about bullying. This day aims to raise funds for anti-bullying and support programs. It hopes to foster healthy self-esteem in children and prevent bullying in schools, workplaces, and online. This day encourages everyone to wear a pink shirt in solidarity against bullying.

Feb 25 Great Prayer Festival **Tibet** Monks from the Three Great Monasteries of Tibet assemble in Jikhang to pray to Shakyamuni’s image as if it were the Living Buddha. Philosophical debates are held among the candidates for the Doctor of Metaphysics. Pilgrims come from every corner of Tibet.

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Feb 25-Mar 1 Intercalary Days Bahá'í There are four or five days inserted into the calendar called Ayyam-i-ha adjusting the Bahá'í year to the solar cycle. This precedes a month of fasting from March 2-20. Gifts are exchanged, parties and public meetings are held to share the faith.

Feb 27 Clean Monday (Great Lent Begins) Christian - Coptic & Eastern Orthodox It is the beginning of the forty-day fast when Christians imitate Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness before his crucifixion.

Feb 28 Kalevala Day Finland Elias Lonrot, a country doctor, folklorist and philologist compiled the Kalevala, Finland's national epic in 1835. This day is observed country wide with lectures, parades and recitations to honor him.