



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Calendar February - 2024

Month-Long Observances:

Black History Month: By proclaiming the month of February as Black History Month, the Province of Ontario recognizes the valuable contributions that Black Canadians have made to Ontario's economic, social, political and cultural fabric. Black History Month gives us the opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about Ontario's rich history.

Day Observances:

February 1st—7th: 1st World Interfaith Harmony Week: World Interfaith Harmony Week is an annual event observed during the first week of February, after the United Nations General Assembly designation in 2010. The week aims to promote harmony among all people, regardless of their faith. Further, the week provides a platform for interfaith groups and other groups of goodwill to show their unity and strength.

February 3rd Setsubun-Sai (Japanese): A traditional Japanese festival that marks the day before the beginning of spring, known as Risshun. The festival involves a ceremony called Mamemaki, where roasted beans are thrown to drive away evil spirits (Oni) and bring in good fortune. The phrase "Oni wa soto! Fuku wa uchi!" is shouted during this ceremony, which translates to "Demons out! Luck in!"

February 4th World Cancer Day: Led by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) to raise global awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment. The day aims to prevent millions of deaths each year by pressing governments and individuals across the world to take action against the disease. It originated in 2000 at the first World Summit Against Cancer, which was held in Paris.

February 4th Rosa Parks Day: Rosa Parks Day is a U.S. holiday honoring civil rights leader Rosa Parks. Celebrated on different dates in various states, it commemorates her refusal to give up her bus seat, sparking the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The day promotes racial equality and remembers the struggles against racial discrimination.



February 10th Chinese New Year (Year of The Dragon): Chinese New Year 2024, also known as the Spring Festival, falls on Saturday, February 10th, 2024. The celebrations culminate with the Lantern Festival on February 24th, 2024. This year, the animal sign is the Dragon. The festival, which traditionally lasts up to 16 days, is a time to honor deities and ancestors, feast, and visit family members.

February 11th International Day of Women & Girls in Science: Is a global observance led by UNESCO and UN Women. It aims to promote full and equal access to and participation in science for women and girls. The day underscores the critical role women and girls play in science and technology communities, and advocates for strengthening their participation. It serves as a platform to inspire action towards achieving gender equality in science, technology, and innovation.

February 12th International Epilepsy Day: Organized by the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) and the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE), the day aims to raise awareness about epilepsy worldwide. It highlights the challenges faced by people with epilepsy, including social stigma, misdiagnosis, and inadequate care.

February 13th Mardi Gras: Celebrated on February 13 in 2024, is a vibrant festival known for its parades, music, and costumed revelers. Particularly famous in New Orleans, it marks the day before Ash Wednesday and is the culmination of a season that begins on January 6.

February 14th Valentines Day: Celebrated annually on February 14, is a festival of romantic love. It originated as a Christian feast day honoring Saint Valentine and has become a significant cultural celebration of love in many regions of the world.

February 15th Nirvana Day (Buddhist): Nirvana Day, also known as Parinirvana Day, is observed primarily by Mahayana Buddhists, most commonly on February 15th. It commemorates the death of the historical Buddha and his entry into final or complete Nirvana. The day is a time for contemplation of the Buddha's teachings. Some monasteries and temples hold meditation retreats. It is also a traditional day for pilgrimage.



February 15th National Flag of Canada Day: This day commemorates the official birth of the Maple Leaf Flag in 1965. Canadians often celebrate by wearing red and white

February 15th International Childhood Cancer Day: ICCD is a global collaborative campaign to raise awareness about childhood cancer, and to express support for children and adolescents with cancer, the survivors, and their families.

February 19th Family Day: Is a provincial statutory holiday observed on the third Monday in February in most provinces. Family Day is a time set aside to focus on getting closer to loved ones, learning and establishing family traditions and values.

February 20th World Day of Social Justice: The day focuses on efforts to tackle issues such as poverty, exclusion, gender inequality, unemployment, human rights, and social protections. The United Nations General Assembly approved the observance of this day on November 26, 2007, and it has been celebrated since 2009.

February 21st International Mother Language Day: An worldwide annual observance held on 21 February. It was first announced by UNESCO on 17 November 1999 and has been observed throughout the world since 2002. The day promotes awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and encourages multilingualism. The idea to celebrate International Mother Language Day was the initiative of Bangladesh. The day recognizes that languages and multilingualism can advance inclusion, and the Sustainable Development Goals' focus on leaving no one behind.

February 28th Pink Shirt Day: The day raises awareness about bullying and raises funds for anti-bullying programs. It is a day when people come together by wearing pink shirts to school or work to show they are against bullying.