



## Media Release

County of Dufferin  
W. & M. Edelbrock Centre  
30 Centre Street, Orangeville, ON L9W 2X1

*For Immediate Release: September 4, 2024*

### **Community invited to join Dufferin County for events commemorating Emancipation Day, International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

Join Dufferin County in September to commemorate Emancipation Day, the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Dufferin County will be hosting two events that focus on learning, inspiration and change through meaningful and thought-provoking conversation: “The Paradox of Slavery and Freedom in Colonial Canada: Acknowledging our Past to Understand our Present” and “Past Promises, Present Realities”.

#### **The Paradox of Slavery and Freedom in Colonial Canada: Acknowledging our Past to Understand our Present**

At “The Paradox of Slavery and Freedom in Colonial Canada: Acknowledging our Past to Understand our Present”, Dr. Natasha Henry-Dixon will discuss Canada’s participation in the institution of the enslavement of African peoples and the contemporary ways that legacy has insidiously manifested into systemic anti-Black racism.

In her keynote, Dr. Henry-Dixon will dispel the myth that enslavement did not occur in Canada. She will also discuss the connection of how anti-Black racism is entrenched in institutions in structural ways like policies, procedures and cultural norms because of that legacy and the important role staff and Council have in ensuring that justice and equity is prioritized in County policies, programs and decision making.

The event will take place at the Monora Park Pavilion on Thursday, September 19, 2024 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. [Registration is required.](#)

#### **Past Promises, Present Realities**

At “Past Promises, Present Realities”, Dr. Taiaiake Alfred will discuss Truth and Reconciliation, with a particular focus on past commitments, present realities and pathways forward towards true reconciliation between Canada and First Nations.

Dr. Alfred will provide attendees with a First Nations perspective on roots and dynamics of the Indigenous-state relationship and initiate constructive dialogue on ways the County and Canadians can

contribute to the resurgence of First Nations peoples and embody Canada's legal commitment to the principles of reconciliation.

The event will take place at the Monora Park Pavillion on Thursday, September 26, 2024 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. [Registration is required.](#)

### **About Emancipation Day**

Emancipation Day. It marks the actual day in 1834 that the *Slavery Abolition Act* of 1833 came into effect across the British Empire.

Canadians are not always aware that Black and Indigenous Peoples were once enslaved on the land that is now Canada. Each August 1, Canadians are invited to reflect, educate and engage in the ongoing fight against anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination.

Emancipation Day celebrates the strength and perseverance of Black communities in Canada.

### **About the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition**

The night of 22 to 23 August 1791, in Saint Domingue, today the Republic of Haiti, saw the beginning of the uprising that would play a crucial role in the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

This International Day is intended to inscribe the tragedy of the slave trade in the memory of all peoples. In accordance with the goals of the intercultural project "The Routes of Enslaved Peoples", it offers an opportunity for collective consideration of the historic causes, methods and consequences of this tragedy, and for an analysis of the interactions to which it has given rise between Africa, Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean.

### **About the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation honours the indigenous children who never returned home and Survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. Public commemoration of the tragic and painful history and ongoing impacts of residential schools is a vital component of the reconciliation process.

Orange Shirt Day is also recognized on September 30. Orange Shirt Day is an Indigenous-led grassroots commemorative day intended to raise awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of residential schools, and to promote the concept of "Every Child Matters". The orange shirt is a symbol of the stripping away of culture, freedom and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children over generations.

### **Dufferin County Strategic Plan**

In June 2023, Dufferin County Council approved the [2023 to 2026 Dufferin County Strategic Plan](#). The County's vision under the Strategic Plan is to be "A community that grows together".

Equity was identified as one of the five priority areas of the Strategic Plan with corresponding goals to:

- Align programs, services and infrastructure with changing community needs
- Ensure that the County is an inclusive, equitable and supportive Employer of Choice

As part of the Strategic Plan, the County is also adopting an Equity Lens that will be applied across the entire administration. Equity considerations will be embedded into the County's decision-making and how it delivers the services its community relies upon every day.

### **Equity Strategic Plan**

Dufferin County's vision under its first-ever [Equity Strategic Plan](#) is to be an anti-colonial, anti-racist and anti-oppressive workplace where employees feel a sense of dignity, wellness and belonging.

The County's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion approach focuses on a shared commitment and responsibility to dismantle all forms of systemic oppression derived from white supremacy, including but not limited to anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia and homophobia that operates on the personal, interpersonal and institutional levels.

### **Quotes**

"Dufferin County is working to become a more equity-informed organization where every employee is given the opportunities, resources and support that they deserve, and where every community member can thrive. We invite residents and County partners to join us in September for these evenings of learning, inspiration and change. Through meaningful and thought-provoking conversation, we can create a more equitable and inclusive community, together."

- *Darren White, Warden, Dufferin County*

"Dufferin County continues to provide opportunities for employees, residents and community members to access programming and resources to meaningfully reflect as we work towards understanding the intergenerational harm and injustices that have been perpetuated against marginalized communities. We are proud to host these events in September and look forward to listening and learning together with our community."

- *Sonya Pritchard, Chief Administrative Officer, Dufferin County*

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### **MEDIA CONTACT:**

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