

Museum of Dufferin hosting panel in recognition of Black History Month

Written By ALYSSA PARKHILL

On Feb 23, the Museum of Dufferin is celebrating Black History Month by hosting a regional exhibition and panel.

The Museum of Dufferin began the celebration on Feb 1 with a flag raising ceremony, honouring the The Pan-African flag, created by Marcus Garvey in 1920 to express black liberation.

The Museum is hosting this event in partnership with Alethia O'Hara-Stephenson who is a part of the Centre Dufferin District High School (CDDHS) Youth Advisory committee. She will also serve as a speaker on the panel discussion.

It all began when O'Hara-Stephenson, alongside Shelburne Deputy Mayor and Dufferin County Coun. Steve Anderson approached the museum and the County about hosting this event. The county was widely supportive of the proclamation and put into motion to support Black History Month.

Events, Promotions and Marketing Coordinator from the Museum of Dufferin Nanci Malek, worked together with O'Hara-Stephenson on different ways to celebrate the month in which they put together the flag-raising ceremony as a monumental beginning to the month.

'There are lots of people who just don't know when we need to turn education on many things, such as diversity, and this is the time. Well, this time is a long time ago but this is 2020, and it's a new day and our communities are expanding the winds with new folks and we just believe that's almost the community hub at the museum, that we recognize all the communities,' explained Malek.

This is the first year celebrating Black History Month at the museum, with Malek indicating they will continue to annually celebrate each February in the future.

Malek describes the importance of educating celebrating inclusiveness within the community.

'I really am a strong supporter of diversity and inclusiveness,' said Malek. 'But, the important thing is connecting with your community.'

The event hosts a list of panelists who aim to educate the community, that includes: Alethia O'Hara-Stephenson, Steve Anderson, Geer Harvey ? MSW, Social Worker/ Attendance Counsellor Upper Grand District School Board, Althea Casamento ? Director, Choices Youth Shelter, Linda Amour Grant ? CFP / Financial Planner, CDDHS Youth Advisory Member Student

A special guest speaker who will be presenting at the event is one of the earliest Canadian rappers to gain stardom and who has earned the name 'Godfather of Canadian hip hop', Maestro Fresh Wes.

'Symphony in Effect' which came out in 1989 was the first certified platinum album to be released by a Black Canadian artist, alongside the first single from a Canadian hip hop artist to go gold, 'Let Your Backbone Slide', which was later inducted into the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame.

Wes will be speaking to the community about the music history in Canada and the influence of diversity in the music industry.

The event will take place at the Museum of Dufferin, located on Highway 89 and Airport Road from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Feb 23.

For more information, please visit dufferinmuseum.com.