

Black History Month programs planned throughout February

By Rob Paul

February is Black History Month and, throughout the community, there will be programs to both celebrate and learn about Black history.

Black History Month is a time of reflection and recognition for those of African and Caribbean descent that have helped shape both Canada and the world.

The theme for Black History Month this year is February and Forever: Celebrating Black History today and every day?which focuses on recognizing the daily contributions that Black Canadians make to Canada.

Peel Art Gallery, Museum, and Archives (PAMA) has a few different programs planned to bring awareness and provide learning opportunities for Black History Month.

There will be a virtual panel discussion with the Brampton Museum of African History and Culture on February 9 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The conversation will also touch on the making of a museum.

Co-chairs Myrna Adams and Charles Matthews will discuss the importance of building this museum to help the community learn from the past, take action in the present, and look to the future. The panel will teach attendees about the journey thus far, the museum themes, the plans for further action and how the community can get involved.

PAMA will run a program called ?Unearth Uncover,? a community showcase created by students from Cawthra Park Secondary School that will take guests on a virtual tour of plaques throughout the area that commemorate important pieces of Black history.

The Unearth Uncover Historical Plaque Project began as an act of protest. In the summer and fall of 2021, signs appeared throughout Toronto and Brampton, commemorating significant people, places and events in Black Canadian history.

A passionate group of teachers and students created the signs to shine a light on Black Canadian history. Specifically, the group wanted to bring attention to lesser-known histories not being taught in schools, and to the Black scholars and activists who, for decades, have been working to elevate Black history.

Finally, PAMA will run ?Our Voices, Our Journeys: Black Communities in Peel.? It's a celebration of one of many Black communities in Peel Region.

It highlights the personal journeys of leaders and mentors from the North Peel Community Church congregation. Their photos and objects illustrate stories of immigration, resilience, and family life, and how they established a community of faith in Caledon.

For more information, or to register for PAMA's Black History Month programs visit, pama.peelregion.ca/en/index.asp.

The Caledon Parent-Child Centre has provided a list of books for children that are easy to read and will help them learn more about Black history this month. The books are aimed at children between the ages of three and five.

The list comes from Charnaie Gordon of ?Here We Read,? who is a prominent reading advocate and children's book author. The list of books can be found at Gordon's website hereweeread.com.

?This year, I decided to focus on a few board books and picture books for the younger readers,? she said. ?If you've been looking for excellent quality historical books about prominent Black people from the past and present, I hope you'll enjoy this list. I recommend

these books because they are not overly wordy and don't dwell strictly on oppression, slavery, pain, or struggle.?

On February 17, Canadian Heritage will be host a Black History Month virtual celebration on Facebook Live at 7 p.m. This live virtual event highlighting this year's theme will feature performances, tributes, interviews, and more (to tune into the virtual celebration, visit www.facebook.com/CdnHeritage).

For Black History Month, Peel District School Board (PDSB) will focus on the theme of 'Black flourishing.' Black flourishing is a multifaceted concept that refers to a state of well-being where Black students and staff can thrive, grow and prosper unencumbered.

The ability to flourish is consistent with one's sense of self-worth and possibility. As Black students, staff and families flourish, their sense of pride and belonging grows.

As part of PDSB's theme of Black flourishing, there will be a virtual family engagement with Nadine Williams, a native of St. Mary Parish, Jamaica, award-winning poet, author, and entrepreneur. The four-part event will take place Thursdays, February 3, 10, 17, and 24 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.

Sunny View Middle School and the University of Toronto Mississauga will also host a Black Access to Educational Excellence event on Tuesday, February 8, from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

For more information on the events or to register, visit peelschools.org.