



# Take AAME

Newsletter of the Alberta Association for Multicultural Education

2013-2014

WHY CANADA  
SHOULD HAVE A  
MUSEUM FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS

Page 2

HARMONY BRUNCH:  
CELEBRATING THE  
ELIMINATION OF  
RACIAL  
DISCRIMINATION

Page 3

MULTICULTURALISM  
REIGNS AT  
TORONTO FILM  
FESTIVAL

Page 5

## 2014 Harmony Brunch Photo Contest Winners



Kylie Reimchen



Megan Arnemann



Corey Pollack

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
March 22, 2015

**Canadian  
Multicultural  
Education  
Foundation  
18<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Harmony Brunch  
Edmonton, AB**

**Celebrating the  
International Day for  
the ELIMINATION of  
RACIAL  
DISCRIMINATION**

# Why Canada Should Have a Museum for Human Rights

By: Linda McKay-Panos

Recently, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights opened in Winnipeg. It is the first national museum built outside of Ottawa and the only one in the world that is dedicated solely to human rights (Joseph Brean, "Canadian Museum for Human Rights ready to open after 10 years in the making" (18 September 2014) *National Post* ("Brean"). The museum was originally envisioned and supported by the late Israel and Babs Asper. Governments (federal, provincial and municipal), individuals and other organizations have provided additional funding and support. The museum contains exhibits pertaining to both modern and ancient examples of human rights documents. Current galleries include: What Are Human Rights? Indigenous Perspectives; Canadian Journeys; Protecting Rights in Canada; Examining the Holocaust; Turning Points for Humanity; Breaking the Silence; Actions Count; Rights Today; Inspiring Change; and Expressions (see: Canadian Museum for Human Rights <https://humanrights.ca/>). The Museum also collects research and publications on human rights topics.

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is a "member of the Canadian Heritage Portfolio and reports to Parliament through the Minister of Canadian Heritage" (Canadian Museum for Human Rights <https://humanrights.ca/>). The purpose of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, as set out in the *Museums Act*, is:

[T]o explore the subject of human rights, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada, in order to enhance the public's understanding of human rights, to promote respect for others and to encourage reflection and dialogue.

The opening of the Museum for Human Rights has not been without controversy. From the choice of architecture for the building (Alex Bozickovic, "Canadian Museum for Human Rights: An Anticipated work of architecture, but not one of our best" (26 September 2014) *The Globe and Mail*), to the location of the building being an important archeological site (Jim Bender, "400,000 artifacts dug up from human rights museum" (28 August 2013) *Winnipeg Sun*), to the way that Aboriginal rights exhibits do not use "genocide" when referring to residential schools (Brean), to the very contents or lack of contents of materials dealing with the issues addressed, have all been raised as concerns (CBC News "Canadian Museum for Human Rights opening marked by music, speeches and protests (19 September 2014) online: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/canadian-museum-for-human-rights-opening-marked-by-music-speeches-and-protests-1.2771245> ("CBC")). Hopefully,

these and other controversies inspired by the Human Rights Museum's opening and existence, will serve to encourage very much needed dialogue on human rights in Canada.

These controversies, and other concerns raised, and the passion around them, demonstrate the significance of human rights for Canadians. While it is important to celebrate the positive achievements Canadians and others have made to human rights, it is likely more important to address some of the serious human rights violations that are part of Canada's history and current times. It is hoped that the museum will provide a springboard for dialogue, research and contemplation about Canada's human rights record and events. Acknowledging the negative policies, laws and events that occurred in our history serves several significant purposes. First, it provides acknowledgment of the pain suffered by those who were abused and their descendants. Second, acknowledgment by others who have inflicted the abuses, and/or members of the current society, is vital step in the healing process. Finally, we must honestly review the effects of offending policies, laws and practices so that we might learn from them and not repeat them in the future.

I am reluctant to list Canada's ignoble historical events, as I do not wish to offend anyone by failing to mention some. However, some notable violations include:

- Many sections of the *Indian Act*;
- Creation of residential schools for Aboriginal children;
- Internment of Ukrainian Canadians in World War I;
- Chinese Head Tax and *Chinese Immigration Act* of 1923;
- Internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II;
- Refusal to accept Jewish refugees during World War II;
- Forced Relocation of Inuit people during the Cold War;
- Top Secret plans to identify and intern Canadian communists and sympathizers during the Cold War; and
- Criminalization of "homosexual" behavior.

There are many, many others.

Although the opening of the Human Rights Museum has sparked controversy, it remains a very worthwhile endeavour. Stuart Murray, the museum's president and CEO, put it well when he said: "You have to shine a light in some dark corners in Canada's history because we have to know, I think, where we came from to know where we're going" (CBC).

# HARMONY BRUNCH: CELEBRATING THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

For the past seventeen years, the Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation has annually celebrated International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. With the assistance of sponsors such as the Alberta Association For Multicultural Education, the Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Association and the John Humphrey Centre and many volunteers CMEF has been able to make this one of the major events in Alberta on multiculturalism. In 2014, the event attracted over 300 community members as well as municipal, provincial and federal political officials.

In 1960, police in Sharpeville, South Africa opened fire into a crowd that was peacefully demonstrating against the apartheid. The United Nations proclaimed March 21 as International Day in celebration of the elimination of racial discrimination. It is this event which the Harmony Brunch celebrates.

At the event held on March 23 in Edmonton a Harmony Brunch Pledge against racism was given as has been the case in past events. On display were the prize winning photos from the N.A.I.T. photography competition which C.M.E.F. sponsored. A silent auction also took

place. Keynote speaker, Portia Clark, host of CBC Radio active delivered a stirring address on her perspective on multiculturalism.

President Earl Choldin, in his address reported on several initiatives, which CMEF has undertaken during the past year. These initiatives include *Seniors On The Move* which includes a Multicultural Day, *Celebrating Connections: Weddings in Multicultural Alberta*, *Communities* (a Museum Exhibit, and a film series at the Faculty of Education to provide student teachers and practitioners with discussion and exploration of different cultures in Alberta classrooms.

AAME BOARD member Nicholas Spillios was presented with the first award given by CMEF for contributions in promoting multiculturalism. Nicholas is a founding member of both CMEF and the Alberta Association For Multicultural Education.



## ALBERTA ASSOCIATION FOR MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

**AAME's Mission Statement:** The Alberta Association for Multicultural Education's [AAME] goal is to assist Alberta citizens and their organizations with ongoing dialogue, education and training in the areas of multiculturalism and anti-racism.

**AAME's Vision** is an inclusive society in Alberta that values, respects and celebrates its diversity.

For information on how to become a member, please go to:  
<http://aamed.org/sign-up/>



Nicholas Spillios receiving CMEF Multicultural Award from Madan Prasad, Vice-President.



Maskwacis Cadet Corps saluting



Mayor Don Iveson addressing more than 300 attendees



Beryl Davis and Lan Chan- Marples, Co-Chairs of Harmony Brunch

## Projects and Programs AAME has Recently Supported

by Linda McKay-Panos,  
AAME President

We at AAME have been very busy the past couple of years providing support for various programs and projects, including:

- International Heritage Languages Association (Edmonton)– International Mother Language Day – student essay book publication
- Kerby Centre (Calgary) - Diwali event; Métis event
- Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation (Edmonton) – Harmony Brunch; Multicultural Film Festival; NAIT Student Photography Contest
- Ellipsis Tree Collective – Black Canadian Theatre Series
- Calgary Learns - Life of Learning Awards
- Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre – Anti Racism Project
- Public Libraries – Multicultural Reading Resources

If your organization would like to apply for support, please consult our website at [www.aamed.org](http://www.aamed.org)

## MULTICULTURALISM REIGNS AT TORONTO FILM FESTIVAL

by Nicholas Spillios

The Toronto International Film Festival annually showcases upcoming international releases of interest to educators and the general public. All the following titles are worthy and hopefully will be released in Canada. They were selected as being representative of outstanding multicultural films for 2014 – 2015.

**MARY KOM.** Covers the problems faced by India's first female Olympic boxing medalist. Born to a tribal family in a north-eastern state, she is forced to conceal her interest in boxing from her parents and friends. One of the tasks she takes on includes fighting for facilities available to female contenders.

**LEARNING TO DRIVE.** Ben Kingsley is a driving instructor who establishes an unlikely bond with his student (Patricia Clarkson). Both face marital relationship issues, she is recovering from a marriage breakup while he questions his impending marriage. Rediscovering oneself in the middle years with a Sikh leading the way is nicely juxtaposed.

**THE GOOD LIE.** Three emigrants from the Sudan civil war face problems in adjusting to life in the U.S. Reese Witherspoon is the employment worker who helps them with their problems including the harshness of work and bureaucratic rules but whose relationship give all the strength to go on.

**ROSEWATER.** Depicts the detention and ordeal of a Canadian journalist, Maziar Bahari, whose humorous comments on Jon Stewart's show in 2009 imprisoned him in Iran on a charge of treason. His imprisonment forms the basis for the film with his interrogator asking pointed questions. Directed by Stewart.

**TRICK OR TREATY?** Reminds Canadians on the deception unleashed on the First Nations by Treaty 7, considered the most important document in First Nations history. The document forced their communities to relinquish sovereignty over their traditional lands. A number of interviews with legal, historical and cultural authorities give us a better understanding of the issue. Produced by the National Film Board.

**MARGARITA with a STRAW.** Laila suffers from cerebral palsy but also struggles with carrying on normal day-to-day activities. She is an aspiring New Delhi writer/composer who creates electronic sounds for an indie band. Emigrating to New York, she connects with an angry female activist and explores her sexuality. Winner of outstanding Asian film at TIFF.

**THE LESSON.** Set in a Bulgarian small town, a teacher attempts to teach morality to her charges while at the same time dealing with her own moral issues. Faced by opposition from those who hold a key to her economic problems but who take advantage of her, she finds her situation insurmountable.

**THEEB.** The impact of the railroad on traditional desert societies in 1916 forms the backdrop for this film on the survival of a young Bedouin who fights for his life with his brother acting as desert guides. The photography of the desert becomes an outstanding catalyst as we follow their adventures in these roles thrust upon them.

**BLACK AND WHITE.** Explores the racial tensions which develop within a family facing a custody battle. A New Orleans attorney (Kevin Costner) fights for custody of his biracial daughter with his African American mother-in-law (Octavia Spencer). Raises questions about the responsibilities of parenthood and racial prejudice.

## Multifaith Calendar 2015 – Stillness



**AAME** is the southern Alberta distributor of the Multifaith Calendar. The calendar is the leading source of complete and accurate dates, times, and descriptions for 370 events (including over 180 religious and cultural occasions). Information from fourteen World Religions and faith groups is collected and updated annually. We are excited about the rich diversity of images throughout the Calendar, published in a full size (13" x 10") and colour format. To order, please **phone or email us**. Proceeds are used to help fund the initiatives of AAME.

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