



NEWS RELEASE

WELCOMING OTTAWA WEEK: JUNE 19-30, 2023

Ottawa, June 19, 2023 – The tenth annual [Welcoming Ottawa Week](#) (WOW) was launched today. With more than 60 events at various venues in the city, WOW is designed to build connectivity, solidarity, and a shared civic identity between newcomers arriving from all over the world and long-time residents.

This year's [WOW calendar](#) features a line-up of over 60 free events happening both in Ottawa and Lanark-Renfrew Counties.

As part of WOW you can take in a multicultural music festival, go on a horse-drawn wagon ride through the Byward Market, attend a town hall to discuss the City of Ottawa's Anti-racism Strategy, attend an art exhibit by newcomer women, view a documentary about how Chinatowns across the globe are under threat of disappearing, or sample some Azerbaijani cuisine. These events are just a small sample of what WOW has to offer.

Also, [seven Ottawa residents were presented with the Welcoming Ottawa Ambassadors Award](#) at the WOW launch breakfast reception co-hosted by OLIP and Mayor Mark Sutcliffe. The annual [Welcoming Ottawa Ambassadors Award](#) recognizes Ottawa residents who embody welcoming attitudes of genuine respect, friendship, and support towards newcomers.

"I want to recognize OLIP partners for their incredible efforts. I also want to celebrate this year's Welcoming Ottawa Ambassadors for their role and kind support in making newcomers feel welcome and appreciated. And I extend my thanks to this year's WOW event organizers for their work in co-creating a mini festival with more than 60 events, all with the objective of offering an authentic welcome to newcomers to Ottawa and the region" says Dominique Dennerly, OLIP Chair.

In 2014, WOW was recognized by the federal government as a best practice initiative in forging a welcoming city. As a result of this recognition and thanks to the success and growth of WOW, the model has been replicated in several Canadian cities. Last year, WOW expanded to neighboring communities in Renfrew-Lanark. The growth of WOW is testament to Ottawa's increasing capacity and commitment to attract and integrate immigrants.

Background

WOW is an annual series of free events and activities such as dialogues and town halls, cultural and celebratory activities, sporting events, documentary screenings, guided tours, storytelling sessions, book

launches, food tastings, and other fun and engaging events intended to convey Ottawa’s genuine welcome and solidarity to newcomers.

The first WOW was held in June 2013 when the Ottawa Mayor proclaimed the last week of June of every year to be the Welcoming Ottawa Week, a time when Ottawa residents would express their genuine welcome to newcomers.

WOW is presented by [OLIP](#), a partnership of 60 organizations working together across five sectors to build Ottawa’s capacity to attract and integrate immigrants. OLIP was co-founded by the City of Ottawa and Local Agencies Serving Immigrants (LASI), in October 2009. The Partnership is funded primarily by IRCC (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada).

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