

## Music and art celebrate National Indigenous History Month



On Saturday, National Indigenous History Month kicked off with crafting at the Aurora Farmers' Market.

The weekend session, during which families were invited to make a craft related to the significance of turtles in Indigenous culture, was just the first in a series of events to mark the month, which culminates the week of June 19 with music and storytelling in Town Park.

“National Indigenous History Month is an important time of year for the community and our country to recognize and celebrate the history and accomplishments of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Peoples, said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. “I hope our residents can join us to celebrate this special month to learn more about Indigenous experiences and teachings.”

Crafting is set to return to the Aurora Farmers' Market this Saturday, June 10, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., with a focus on the significance of pollinators like bees to Indigenous cultures.

The following Saturday, crafting activities join culinary adventures at the Market with the creation of corn husk dolls and other activities based around the Three Sisters story – corn, squash and beans.

“As the focus of the day is on the story of the Three Sisters, there will be a hands-on Indigenous seed planting activity from 10 a.m. to 12 noon,” says the Town. “Plant your own seeds using Indigenous technique and grow something delicious.”

Wednesday, June 21, marks National Indigenous Peoples Day and, to mark the occasion, the Dave Mowat Trio will perform a live concert at the Town Park bandshell from 7 – 9 p.m., and serves as a kick-off to Aurora's popular Concerts in the Park season.

“The Government of Canada chose June 21, the summer solstice, for National Aboriginal Day, now known as National Indigenous Peoples Day,” says the Town. “In celebrating this day, the Town of Aurora has partnered with the York Region Arts Council (YRAC) on the YR Experience Trail Marker Project which includes an eight-foot-tall art installation to be unveiled at Town Park. YRAC commissioned Indigenous artist Donald Chretien to create the original design that invites the observer to take an active role in the experience, as they become part of the artwork. This large circular-shape trail marker is designed to invite people to stand in front of the art and become part of it.”

Chretien's work can currently be seen at the east end of Town Park's pathway, adjacent to the historic Aurora Armoury, with a bold piece depicting the bee.

“New this year, we will be starting off Aurora's Concerts in the Park series early with this fantastic Indigenous trio. The concert will

give us the Chicago, Delta and Country Blues feel for the night from a bygone era," says the Town.

The official program wraps on Saturday, June 24, again at the Aurora Farmers' market with Indigenous crafting and, starting at 10.30 a.m., storytelling led by Traditional Anishinaabe Grandmother Kim Wheatley.

"The Aurora Farmers' Market will be celebrating strawberries between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m.," says the Town. "Families are invited to make a strawberry-themed craft while learning about the significance of strawberries in Indigenous culture. During the Farmers' Market, enjoy learning from [Wheatley] through storytelling."

For more on these and other activities, including an online learning portal on resources to learn more about Indigenous history, visit [aurora.ca/indigenouspeoples](http://aurora.ca/indigenouspeoples).

By Brock Weir  
EditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter