

Aurora Public Library to host Human Rights panel

People often think of human rights as an international concern, and they very often are; but human rights issues, and indeed abuses, are things that can hit very close to home.

The Aurora Public Library aims to underscore this point next Wednesday, May 14, when they host a Human Rights Panel at the Library as part of their One Book One Aurora initiative.

Organizers promise "a stimulating discussion about how we can bring about human rights from a global and local perspective."

Moderated by Colleen Abbott, former CEO of the Aurora Public Library, and current co-chair of the Aurora Film Circuit, the panel will bring together four panelists speaking to wide-ranging issues in this field.

Suniana Mannan is one such panellist. As York Region's Anti-Human Trafficking Coordinator at the Women's Centre of York Region, Ms. Mannan specializes in gender-based sexual violence within York Region and the Greater Toronto Area, focusing on prevention, advocacy, outreach and crisis lines.

Speaking about how businesses can have an impact on human rights will be John Crowell, Manager of Social Responsibility for Magna International. Very active within Magna for the Community, as well as Neighbourhood Network, Mr. Crowell will speak about his background with business ethics and sustainability, as well as his volunteer work with a wide spectrum of charities and non-profits, including Inn From The Cold.

Having spearheaded a number of philanthropic initiatives within the community from a very young age, including last year's coffee house to support education initiatives in the Ukraine, Grade 11 Aurora High School student Sally Falk will speak about her work as Head Fundraiser and Community Outreach Advocate for the Youth Informer, an online magazine run for youth by youth focusing on national and international affairs.

Talking on the international perspective will be Andrea Beal, who has worked here in Canada, but also as far afield as Swaziland on issues related to human rights as part of the Grandmothers Advocacy Network. Focusing on the plight of older women and children in their care, particularly older women in sub-Saharan Africa who have been left to care for their young grandchildren and relatives after losing their parents to AIDS, she will speak about networks that can be founded here at home to help counterparts abroad.

Tickets for this free event are available at the Library's Adult Information Desk, or by calling 905-727-9494 x275. The event gets underway at 7 p.m.