

Aurora Town Square offers new opportunities for Culture Days

It will be a busy September not only as Aurora prepares to open Aurora Town Square to the public, but also as the Square plays host to a packed Culture Days program for the first time.

Culture Days, an Ontario-wide initiative, runs from September 20 to October 13, dovetailing perfectly into the grand opening of Aurora Town Square on September 21.

Here, the new community gathering space will be a hub of Culture Days programming as several community organizations pitch in to make this one to remember.

“Culture Days is a national celebration of culture that invites the public to participate in hands-on and behind the scenes activities that highlight the importance of culture in our communities,” says the Town. “Initiated by the Canadian Arts Summit, Culture Days began in 2010 and five years later, it became an independent non-profit.

“Culture Days in Aurora is a collaborative effort across multiple partners who strive to bring creative and engaging programming to the Town.”

Following the big event on Saturday, September 21, Culture Days programs will unfold the following day in the brand-new Aurora Town Square space.

Throughout the day, there will be several opportunities to engage with the Aurora Museum and Archives as they offer guided tours of their new public exhibit spaces and take guests behind-the-scenes to look at artifact storage, conservation and curation in their new workspaces in the Church Street School addition.

From 11.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m., members of the public are invited to share in “the thrill of discovery by joining museum staff to unpack artefacts safely stored in crates during the construction of Aurora Town Square.

“This hands-on, behind-the-scenes drop-in program offers you the chance to help us move into our new home while unearthing hidden treasures from the past,” says the Aurora Museum & Archives.

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Aurora's Pine Tree Potters Guild will host an open house and demonstrations to show “how clay is brought to life.” Hosted in the basement rotunda of the Aurora Public Library, creations made that day will be used in the Guild's annual fall Empty Bowls fundraiser, which benefits Aurora's Welcoming Arms and Newmarket's Inn from the Cold, both of which provide much-needed assistance to residents in need.

SOYRA “the Society of York Region Artists” will activate Aurora Town Square's outdoor gathering space with a Plein Air activity from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. which will encourage people to try their hand at sketching under hopefully blue, sunny skies. All materials will be provided.

Also taking advantage of the outdoor space, from 1 to 4 p.m., will be the Aurora Historical Society, which will run a booth where you can make customized buttons and learn more about the organization and its Hillary House National Historic Site.

“Come and capture the essence of Aurora Town Square with us,” says SOYRA.

Inside the new building that serves as the showpiece of Aurora Town Square, both the Performance Hall and Addison Hall Dance Studio will be a hub of activity.

At 10 a.m. and again at 11 a.m., the dance studio will host a Bollywood Dance Workshop, while, beginning at 2 p.m. The York

Chamber Ensemble will bring Mozart to Movies to the Performance Hall.

“Come try a new, fun, energetic dance style,” say organizers. “Bollywood dancing is a colourful, highly theatrical dance style seen in Indian films. It combines classical forms of dance, including Indian, folk, salsa and belly dance, while also incorporating more Western forms such as hip hop, jazz and funk.”

Additionally, from September 21 to 28, the Cultural Centre will offer an array of activities to mark Discovery Days 2024.

“Pique your curiosity with free, bite-sized introductions to various arts classes!” says the Cultural Centre. “Meet the artist-educators for a brief intro & demo and opportunity to give it a try! From Indigenous Beading, Bookbinding and Printmaking to Wood Carving, Acrylics & Oils and many more. All classes are offered in the Fall program.”

Registration information for the dance sessions will be announced soon, while tickets are required for the York Chamber performance.

For more information, including registration and tickets, visit www.aurora.ca/en/town-square/whats-on.aspx.

For more on the Aurora Cultural Centre's Discovery Days, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca/discovery-days-2024.

By Brock Weir