

Canada's Birthday Town gearing up for celebration



By Brock Weir

Canada's Birthday Town is putting the finishing touches on Aurora's Canada Day celebrations.

This Monday, July 1, Yonge Street will be a sea of red and white as the traditional Canada Day Parade marches south on Yonge Street from Mosley Street in the north to Murray Drive beginning at 10 a.m.

Always a colourful spectacle, this year's parade will see multicultural performers, marching bands and even mounted guards, according to Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora.

"This is one of our biggest party day celebrations, but it's a party where we really get to boast about what it means to be a Canadian, and how proud we are to be Canadians," says Ms. Ware, who has been spearheading Canada Day celebrations in Aurora for the past 16 years. "I can't imagine a different way to celebrate this day than to give every single ounce of energy to contribute in some way to make a great celebration for thousands of people. I think for those who were born in Canada, it wasn't a choice we made; we were born into this privilege and it is our responsibility to be aware of our privilege and be aware as to how we can be our best versions of our Canadian selves. There are many Canadians who weren't born here, who have chosen to come here, and I think this day is probably just as special to them as well.

"We're starting our day with a great cross-section of marching bands, including one of them being the Governor General's Horse Guards, along with our local White Heather Band and our Royal Canadian Legion as well with their Colour Party. In addition to having the marching bands and floats, we're also going to have different groups of cultural performers as well [such as] Armenian, Brazilian and Mexican dancers." Following the parade, the festivities will take on a further patriotic tone at Lambert Willson Park, with a full-day of activities planned into the evening, including a citizenship

re-affirmation ceremony.

The Lambert Willson Park party will kick off with a free pancake breakfast served up by the Optimist Club of Aurora, a passport? activity with thirteen games, each inspired by one of Canada's 10 provinces and three territories, and interactive performances from Scientational Snakes, the Toronto Kite Fliers, Engineering for Kids, a craft workshop hosted by Home Depot and a horseshoe tournament.

On stage, entertainment includes the Pontune 5 Band, Big Shiny 90s Band, Louisa and the Planets, and the final round of the Aurora Teen Idol competition, which will see the Top 8 finalists in a sing-off for the top crown.

The evening will be closed out by Sheer Heart Attack: A Tribute to Queen, and a spectacular fireworks show around 10 p.m.

Our citizenship reaffirmation ceremony is small, but, to me, it makes a big impact, says Ms. Ware. There are many Canadians who are born into this privilege so we've never had to affirm our citizenship as it was granted to us. This is an opportunity for all of us Canadians to express that oath in unison and that has a huge impact.

Last year, we were faced with extreme weather with the heat advisory we had, but I want to remind people that not everyone is aware we have indoor activities as well. In the nearby Aurora Family Leisure Complex, there is a free indoor family gym, skate and swim. Not everything is solely outside; there are definitely lots of options to stay physical and be able to do a family activity together indoors.

For more information on the 2019 Canada Day Celebrations, visit www.aurora.ca/CanadaDay or call the Town's Special Events Line at 905-726-4762.