

# PRESS RELEASE



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### LANGLEY SUPPORTS NEW MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

To recognize International Day for the Elimination of Racism March 21, both the City of Langley and the Township of Langley are proud to announce their first collaborative multicultural event - Langley's International Festival to take place July 21, 2007 at Douglas Park.

"This event is an exciting opportunity to raise awareness of the cultural diversity in Langley and neighboring communities. Its significance is immeasurable. As well as promoting tourism, it will bring people of all cultural backgrounds together to share our similarities and differences. It will show people in our society the advantages of cultural diversity," Mayor Peter Fassbender said.

Township of Langley Mayor Kurt Alberts believes that the timing is perfect. "The announcement of this festival coincides with the development of a new civic committee called the Anti-Racism and Multiculturalism Task Force. Its mandate is to focus on ways to create ongoing multiculturalism awareness and education. The International Festival will be a cultural centerpiece to us help promote these goals."

Mark Warawa, Langley Member of Parliament, endorsed the idea as well. "It's in the best interests of all communities to support and be involved in events that promote positive multicultural experiences for all of its citizens. It allows the community to better know each other."

Shar Dubas, community advocate and special event planner first conceived of the idea of a local international festival in Langley. Her intention was to bring people together from varying ethnic backgrounds to share their traditions in a fun, safe environment. She found a venue - her local church - and a handful of volunteers and supporters to get the project going. In 2001, St. Joseph's Parish hosted the first multicultural festival in Langley. It was an expansive collage of the visual and performing arts, a cornucopia of ethnic foods, and colorful native costumes.

"The annual event was hugely successful and grew in popularity over the five years it ran. We continue to receive widespread recognition and support from municipal government, local merchants, community groups and a host of sponsors. I knew that it was time to enlarge our scope, when last fall, Ana David, a Latinos in Action advocate and special event planner approached me to collaboratively coordinate Langley's first International Festival," Dubas said.

David has organized many Latin cultural community events and also sits with Dubas on Langley's Anti-Racism and Multicultural Task Force. "I have a passion for community development and cultural sharing. This festival, while focused on family and friendships, is part of a larger vision. That vision is to build world peace, one block at a time.

"Langley has a diverse cultural population, and we want to encourage these individuals to meet, establish a cultural network and develop more meeting places in the community where they can honor their traditions. Our hope is that the festival will become a catalyst to facilitate this in an effort toward our understanding and cultural awareness," David said.

Sponsors for this year's festival so far include the Langley Times, OMNI TV, QMFM, The Beat 94.5 FM, City of Langley, Township of Langley, Douglas Park Community School Association, Kwantlen University College, and the Langley Senior Recreation and Resource Centre.

Terry James, Business Improvement Coordinator, Downtown Langley Business Merchants Association says the festival will be a winner "It will not only promote diversity in our community but has the potential to draw substantial attendance which will be a boost to local tourism."

Dubas couldn't agree more. "This event has huge potential. The essence of the festival is still about bringing family and friends together to celebrate their heritage, but the vision is much larger. It really gives people a voice to take pride in their traditions and pass them on to future generations. At the same time, it encourages all of us to embrace a more global awareness that despite our cultural differences, we are all connected, and every human being deserves to be treated with dignity and respect."

The International Festival will take place Saturday, July 21, 2007, 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Douglas Park in central Langley. This lively and fun community event is for all ages. Sponsorships are still available. Ethnic participants are welcomed. For more information, call: 604-530-4661 or 604-533-4380. Admission is free. Partial proceeds of the International Festival will go to the Langley Arts Council and the Canadian Food For Children fund.