

June 2, 2009



Alberta talent showcased in five community celebrations on Arts Days

Challenge issued to schools and libraries

Edmonton...Keyano College in Fort McMurray, the Myer Horowitz Theatre in Edmonton, the Fine Arts & Multi Media Centre in Olds, the EPCOR Centre in Calgary and the Esplanade in Medicine Hat have been chosen as this year's feature celebration sites for Arts Days 2009. Each of the sites received support from the Government of Alberta to plan and produce Arts Days activities.

"These celebration sites will spotlight our amazing local artists and feature distinctive themes," said Lindsay Blackett, Minister of Culture and Community Spirit. "I challenge other Alberta communities and municipalities to develop creative and unique partnerships with their local artists and arts groups."

Alberta Arts Days focuses on ensuring all Albertans have opportunities to discover, experience and celebrate arts and culture. Last year, during its inaugural year, thousands of Albertans participated in over 100 events in 30 communities. This year, to allow more Albertans the opportunity to get involved, the celebrations have expanded to three days. Alberta Arts Days 2009 runs from September 18 to 20.

"By extending the celebration into schools, our students now have a wonderful opportunity to get involved in Arts Days and showcase their many talents," said Dave Hancock, Minister of Education. "Arts education helps students actively engage in creative and critical thinking, understand and celebrate their culture and the perspectives of others. In honour of Arts Days, I'm issuing a challenge to all schools to celebrate the arts on September 18."

Alberta Arts Days is intended to bring families and all Albertans together while demonstrating our provincial pride and showcasing the amazing talent that exists in our communities.

"Artistic expression brings out the best in our society and our communities," said Ray Danyluk, Minister of Municipal Affairs. "I challenge all libraries across the province to become key celebration sites within their communities and to partner with local arts groups. Our strong network of libraries is the perfect setting to promote Albertans' unique artistic spirit."

To help communities, libraries, schools and individual Albertans get started in planning their own events and celebrations, the Government of Alberta has developed an online Arts Days hub. AlbertaArtsDays.ca features celebration ideas, a step-by-step guide to hosting an event, an Idea File for teachers, posters and ads, and much more. In addition, the site includes an online calendar where communities are encouraged to advertise their local Arts Days events. AlbertaArtsDays.ca and the online calendar will be updated often, so Albertans are encouraged to check back frequently.

In addition to the five main Arts Days celebration sites, all provincially owned historic sites and museums normally open during the third weekend in September will provide free general admission throughout Arts Days. Alberta Arts Days is helping to achieve the goals of Alberta's cultural policy, *The Spirit of Alberta*, which is designed around four keystones: access, capacity, excellence and cultural industries.

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Backgrounders: List of celebration sites, themes and key contacts; and details on schools challenge.

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Five sites lead Arts Days 2009 celebrations

Keyano College in Fort McMurray will put a spotlight on emerging Alberta artists, including Aboriginal artists, offering both them and the community the opportunity to experience and showcase Northern Alberta's unique cultural mosaic throughout the day and leading up to an evening performance on Saturday, September 19.

Contact: Claude Giroux, Events, Wood Buffalo
717-960-5273 (Note this is an out-of-province cell number)

The Myer Horowitz Theatre in Edmonton will host daytime activities focused on the campus community and family-friendly activities capped with a Saturday evening performance on September 19 that will engage youth and attract pop and alternative music fans.

Contact: Christine Rogerson, Manager, Programming and Venues, University of Alberta Students' Union,
780-492-4764

The Fine Arts & Multi Media Centre in Olds will celebrate the contribution of rural artists, and the role of cultural experiences in building a strong community with arts workshops, video conferencing, performances and more throughout the day on Saturday, September 19. There will also be an evening showcase at the TransCanada Theatre.

Contact: Kerry Moynihan, Director of Marketing, Community Learning Campus
403-507-7709

Calgary's EPCOR CENTRE for the Performing Arts salutes the cultural heart of its city as resident arts groups and other cultural groups bring the CENTRE to life with a festival. On Friday, September 18 the CENTRE's Arts Learning and Creative City Programming's One Day Arts School, will host education activities. Saturday, September 19 will feature an open house, fair and arts market including showcase performances and interactive workshops. The evening will offer a free, family-friendly concert in the Jack Singer Concert Hall including music, dance and theatre performances.

Contact: Kerri Savage, Communications Manager, EPCOR CENTRE for the Performing Arts
403-294-7455

The Esplanade in Medicine Hat will celebrate the partnership of arts and culture and the larger community on Saturday, September 19 through daytime activities that will include an Artisan Fair on the front grounds of the Esplanade, an artist-guided exhibition tour at the Esplanade Art Gallery and a variety of arts workshops and demonstrations hosted by the Esplanade's educational Discovery Centre. The evening will feature a dynamic and ethereal musical arts experience in the lobbies.

Contact: Paul Heywood, Director, Theatre Operations, Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre
403-952-5713

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Alberta Arts Days School Challenge

In honour of Arts Days 2009, Education Minister Dave Hancock has issued a challenge to all schools to find innovative and creative ways to celebrate the arts in classrooms or schools on September 18.

To be a part of the Arts Days School Challenge:

- Schools need to register their celebration on the 'Events Calendar' at Education.Alberta.ca. The online calendar will be available in August.
- On September 18, get as many people as possible in the school and community involved in celebrating the arts.
- After the event, schools will be able to showcase photos or short video clips of what was created or celebrated in the online 'Virtual Gallery' at Education.Alberta.ca.
- All classrooms or schools registered will receive a certificate acknowledging their participation in the Arts Day School Challenge.

Submissions to the Virtual Gallery may also be profiled at the *Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans* Provincial Conversation in Edmonton in October 2009.

Schools are encouraged to be innovative when planning their Arts Days activities and events. While the performing arts are important, celebrations could also include activities that explore life-long learning in the arts, or engagement in the creative process.

For example, schools could:

- engage students in discussion about their artistic works in progress and their sources of inspiration
- research careers in design and how the skills of the arts apply to the world of work
- take part in a dance-a-thon, workshop or a talent show

An 'Idea File' has been created to help teachers in their Arts Days planning. The Idea File can be found on the Arts Days website, AlbertaArtsDays.ca or on Education's website, Education.Alberta.ca

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