



# Confluence

Official Newsletter of the Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo

VOL 2 | ISSUE 2 | SPRING 2015



Multicultural Association of  
Wood Buffalo

30 Years of  
Building Cultural Vibrancy

*Wood Buffalo is the epitome of multiculturalism. Our cultural intersections shape shift and enrich us every day, whether recently arrived or have roots that go back several years, many generations.*

*Though we may travel our own cultural corridors, there are an incredible number of points of intersection everyday in our city between people of entirely different cultural backgrounds.*

*How do these intersections influence us? What kind of patterns of behavior and lifestyle evolve as a result? How do we relate to one another and build our sustainable community enriched by each interaction?*

*You are invited to be part of Confluence by contributing a story, picture or poem about your everyday experience of multiculturalism on the streets, in workplaces or social events etc. in Wood Buffalo.*

Email your contribution  
to Mary Thomas at  
[executivedirector@multiculturalfm.org](mailto:executivedirector@multiculturalfm.org)  
or call us  
at 780 791 5186

## From the desk of MLA, Mike Allen



Dear Friends,

Culture connects our past with our present, reminding us of how far we have come as a province and inciting us to achieve even more. The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo exemplifies how multiculturalism strengthens mutual respect among citizens, illuminates us with different ways of thinking, and provides new avenues for co-operation and understanding.

Across Alberta, that past comes alive through the concerted efforts of those who preserve our heritage; the individuals, organizations, corporations and municipalities who work to conserve historic resources and create awareness of our history in communities province-wide.

The Government of Alberta is committed to strengthening the cultural presence in communities and showed their commitment through providing funds in the last few years for multicultural events and causes in Fort McMurray.

As Albertans, we are so fortunate to live in a land of rich diversity. We are privileged to be able to keep ties with our heritage, and to pass on our values, customs and stories to our children. Because Wood Buffalo is such an attractive place to work, live, and raise a family, we continue to be very appealing to new immigrants to Canada. With this steady influx of immigrants comes an increase in linguistic and cultural diversity. Embracing multiculturalism is about celebrating the culture that connects us to each other, and to the aspirations of those who came before you. As well, multiculturalism helps to promote the Government of Alberta's vision, which includes nurturing a sense of belonging and pride upon all citizens. Your government understands that culture is a cornerstone of the happy and vibrant communities we wish to foster.

Perhaps even more importantly, I believe that we must always remember where we are. Today, as you may celebrate or reflect on the unique features of different cultures, you are, in essence, celebrating Canada. Our country is a land of wonderful ethnic diversity; a place where cultures from all over the world come together to form one undeniable spirit. I take great pride in knowing that we live in a country where people of many different backgrounds can not only live together in harmony, but also celebrate the exceptional characteristics of other cultures. In my mind there is no better place to live in the world. Wood Buffalo, Alberta, and Canada are certainly much richer because of our diversity.

Sincerely,

Mike Allen, MLA Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo

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Multicultural Association of  
Wood Buffalo

Executive Director: Mary Thomas

Program Development Manager:

Caitlin Downie

Event and Volunteer Coordinator:

Krystell O'Hara

Administrative Assistant: Jyothi Muthal

Board of Directors: Sana Elache, Jonathan Song, Sara Florez, Kouame Adie, Don Grose, Rita Zhan, Paul McWilliams, Doug Nicholls and Alexandra Tarasenco





## Miyazaki to Fort McMurray Naoko Chester

**H**i I'm Naoko Chester. I was born and raised in Miyazaki located in the southern part of Japan.

As an English teacher at a junior high school in Japan, I really liked my job. I always store to improve my language skills to be a better teacher.

It was then that I decided to go to Vancouver, Canada to study English. I chose Canada because my best friend who lived in Canada recommended that I study in Vancouver.

In Vancouver, I improved not only my own English but also learned to teach English as a second language. I loved my life in Vancouver.

After finishing my studies, my original plan was to return to teaching English in Japan and to stay in my home country for good. However Canada had other plans for me. It is in Vancouver that I met my husband-to-be. He used to work and live in British

Columbia but he came to Fort McMurray for the plentiful opportunities of this town, and I simply followed him.

I was quite nervous and homesick when I arrived in Fort McMurray, because, I didn't have any friends and the atmosphere was entirely different from Japan.

I hated staying inside the house all day. Due to my diehard attitude and my motto "Nothing changes unless I try" I ventured out with a friend to tour the city.

The first step was taking part in conversation classes which are held at the Mac Island library and the YMCA. I met a lot of nice people there and I really liked the classes.

When I joined the conversation class, representatives from the Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo came and introduced to us the association's goals, their programs

*“ Nothing changes unless I try” I ventured out with a friend to tour the city ”*



## Multicultural Stories

and events. One week later, I became a volunteer member of Multicultural Association because they do really great work here!

Volunteering for the MCA was fun and engaging. I loved teaching Japanese cooking and introducing Japanese culture at the Multicultural EXPO was definitely one of my best experiences in Canada.

Through the many events, I met diverse people from various countries. I learned a lot about the world right here, in Fort McMurray. Chatting with my friends from all over the world is great fun and keeps life interesting!

What multiculturalism means to me is to respect each other and each culture, while retaining your own cultural identity. I was so glad to find an atmosphere like this in a small city of Fort McMurray!

Now my most challenging and engaging activity is teaching Basic English to those who need my help! I want to keep doing this until I find a good occupation.

This is just the beginning of my life in Fort McMurray. I feel blessed to be married to a wonderful man and find roots in Fort McMurray, a wonderful city of many opportunities! 🌸



“ I loved teaching Japanese cooking and introducing Japanese culture at the Multicultural EXPO was definitely one of my best experiences in Canada ”





## *Business etiquette in Canada for newcomers*

Marie Gervais, Director, Shift Management Inc.

**T**here are some expected cultural business norms in Canada with regard to informal meetings, phone manners, email, social media and follow up. If you want to succeed in a professional position in Canada, it is best to follow these norms to give the best possible impression. Learning Canadian business etiquette norms will make you a “client facing” employee. This means your employer can be confident that you are able to work with a group, meet a client, or make a presentation in a calm, friendly and professional manner. An employer does not want to be embarrassed by the behavior of any employee. When the employer can see that professional business etiquette is being observed, you have become “client facing”.

### *Phone: answering*

Answering the phone is an area where many newcomers can learn more about to Canadian norms. It is VERY important to answer the phone in a friendly, clear, relaxed and interested manner. People judge you harshly if you do not answer the phone in a way that makes them feel welcome. “Good morning, ABC Accounting, Jamal speaking. How may I help you? (or how may I direct your call?)” sounds professional. Some newcomers answer the phone in a defensive manner sounding like they are suspicious of the caller. Others do not answer until the other person starts speaking. Yelling, sounding bored and uninterested,

calling out loudly to other employees while on the phone with a client, asking several times who is calling, or not remembering the names of frequent callers are all problematic in Canada. If the callers feel unwelcome, they will take their business elsewhere. Be polite, friendly and businesslike on the phone at all times.

### *Voice mail*

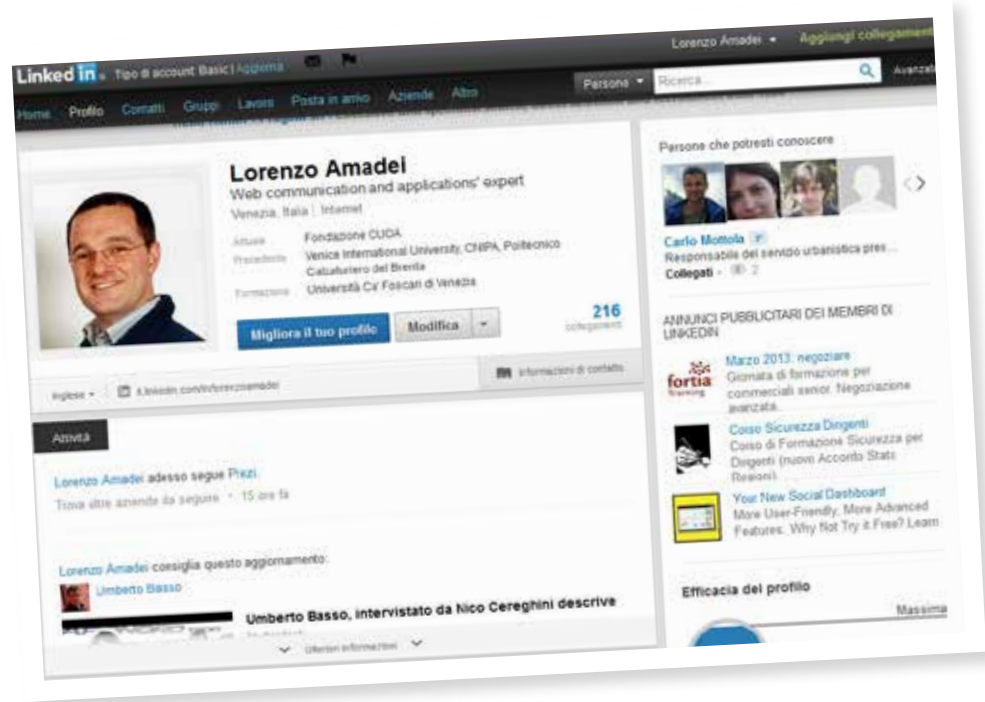
Your voice mail should be clear, welcoming and provide the necessary information in a short period of time. Some newcomers ask a native speaking Canadian to record the voice message at their place of work. This does not leave a good impression because it looks like false advertising. On the other hand if three out of three people cannot understand your voice message, you may consider asking someone else to record it.

### *Leaving a message*

When you leave a message, state your full name, clearly and slowly,



“If the callers feel unwelcome, they will take their business elsewhere. Be polite, friendly and businesslike on the phone at all times.”



remembering that the phone distorts voices and if someone has to listen to your message several times to get the information, they may not go to the trouble. Make sure you leave your contact information and repeat it slowly; don't assume the other person has caller ID on their phone, or that they will know who you are. Do leave a message. It makes people suspicious if you call several times and don't leave a message.

#### Calling back

The biggest mistake made by newcomers is not calling back. If someone contacts you and you do not call back you have lost credibility. It doesn't matter to the person who called you if your English is perfect; it does matter that you show you want to communicate. Always return calls. If the other person is not there, leave a message.

#### Email

Most business connections are done by email. You should be looking at your email several times a day and responding within two business days. If you can't give an answer, respond and say you will get

back to the person in a couple of days and then make sure you do. Make sure you have a business email that looks professional. A name like Hotcheeks4U@yahoo.com is not professional and neither is an email that does not have your name in it. Jamal@ABCaccounting.com is a better email than jyt@ABCm.net because the other email does not show your name or the business name.

#### LinkedIn

A great way to connect with businesses, make professional contacts and to keep records of your contacts is to tell them you will connect with them through LinkedIn. This has quickly become the most important professional business connecting tool in Canada.

#### Facebook

It is not considered good taste to try to connect with a professional business connection on Facebook, unless it is through a business Facebook page.

#### Text messaging

Only use text messages if you have confirmed with a client or colleague that they do use texting. When sending a text

“ Make sure you leave your contact information and repeat it slowly; don't assume the other person has caller ID on their phone.”



always identify yourself, it is not always clear where a text is coming from.

### *Common mistakes newcomers make in follow up*

The most common mistake is not following up! The person who called you doesn't care if your English has mistakes in it, he or she does care that you don't return the call, or do what you said you would do. Always follow up what you say you are going to do. Be consistent in fulfilling your promises or don't make the promise in the first place.

The second mistake is making too many calls or trying to get too friendly or personal with your business contact, especially in the beginning. Most business contacts are made through weak interpersonal connections, not strong ones. That means someone who knows someone who knows you is more likely to be your employer than a direct connection or a friend.

### *How and when to interrupt a speaker*

It is a fine art to know when to interrupt a speaker and when not to. In Canada it is generally considered polite not to interrupt. However the person who interrupts is showing that they have something important to say and that they have the confidence to say it. Interrupting too frequently looks disrespectful to Canadians. Not interrupting at all looks like incompetence and lack of confidence.

Study how and when people interrupt and match your interruption style accordingly.

### *How much silence?*

In Canada more than a second of silence is generally considered very long, unless it is an emotional exchange between people, which is not usual in a professional context.

### *Smells*

If you can be smelled, it is generally not considered professional here. People should not be able to smell what you ate for lunch, or what you cooked for dinner the night before. They should also never smell body odor. Strong perfume is frowned upon.

### *A final note*

In your Canadian career, you are likely to find Canadians who are rude or unprofessional in their business dealings. That is not your problem; they will certainly have their own problems if they are not following the expected protocols. But as a newcomer you want to make a good impression, so it is always best to be on the safe side and be careful to observe Canadian business etiquette. Be professional and do the right thing, and you will benefit because of it. 🌸



“In Canada it is generally considered polite not to interrupt”

A big yes for Multiculturalism! It is very important in Wood Buffalo because there are different people living in here. Therefore, they have different group, race, culture, traditions and languages as well that not everybody's aware of. Through the multicultural association, we are given chances to show and learn from each other. Self-esteem is enhanced and discrimination may be avoided no matter what group we belong to.

*Sonalyn Pacio*







## A message of Health



### Making homes KIDS SAFE Karen Brideau, Health Promotion Facilitator

Injuries are an important public health issue. Unintentional or accidental injuries are the leading cause of death for those ages 1-44. In addition, preventable injuries kill more Canadian children than any single disease, and more youth than all other causes combined.

Parachute (the national organization created when the former Safe Communities Canada, Safe Kids Canada, SMARTRISK and ThinkFirst Canada joined together to become one leader in injury prevention) reports that the three leading causes of unintentional injury-related deaths for Canadians are motor vehicle crashes, falls and poisonings.

We can change statistics and change lives! Injuries can be prevented.

#### *Take steps to reduce risk of injury*

On a global view, the World Report On Child Injury Prevention by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF outlines simple steps that we, as parents, caregivers and members of a community, can do to keep kids safe from injury:

#### *Road Traffic Injuries*

- Be a role model: don't speed, drink and drive, or disobey traffic laws and always buckle up.
- Make sure that children riding in your car are strapped into an appropriate, approved child-restraint
- Ensure that all children wear a properly fitted helmet when riding on a bicycle or motorbike.
- Enrol teenagers in a graduated driver licensing system, i.e. one where driving is restricted in the first two or more years.
- Ensure that teenage drivers are aware of the perils of disobeying the traffic laws
- Encourage all children and teenagers to wear white or bright colours or reflective clothing when walking or cycling near traffic to improve

their visibility to others.

- Teach all children to stop, look and listen before crossing a road, and to think about the safest place to cross

#### *Falls*

- Use stair gates to prevent children falling down stairs and keep stairs clear from objects
- Install guards on windows that are above the ground-floor
- Work with your local council, as needed, to improve the standard of equipment in your local playground: appropriate surface material (such as rubber or bark), climbing structures and slides at safe heights, regular safety checks, and maintenance all improve the safety of play areas

#### *Poisoning*

- Remove any toxic products from your home that do not have to be stored there
- Store all drugs and other poisons (including household cleaning products) behind lock and key or out of the reach of children
- Purchase medication in child-resistant packaging
- Find out if there is a poison control centre in your area, which you can call to receive information in case of a suspected poisoning, and keep the telephone number by your phone

What else can we do? Attend a first aid course on how to resuscitate a child, and keep a first aid kit in your home and car.

Injury prevention is a shared responsibility, and is something we all need to pay attention to in our daily lives. The actions we take to protect ourselves and others cannot be underestimated in their importance. 🌸

“Injury prevention is a shared responsibility, and is something we all need to pay attention to in our daily lives”

## My favourite Cultural Dish



### Jyothi Muthal's Favourite Lebanese Recipe: Baba ganoush

TOTAL TIME 35mins | PREP 15 mins | COOK 20 mins

#### INGREDIENTS

##### SERVINGS 6 UNITS

##### Eggplant

1 large eggplant

##### Tahini

1/4 cup tahini, as needed

##### Garlic

3 garlic cloves, minced

##### Lemon juice

1/4 cup fresh lemon juice,  
plus more as needed

##### Cumin

1 pinch ground cumin

##### Olive oil

1 tablespoon extra virgin  
olive oil

##### Parsley

1 tablespoon chopped fresh  
flat-leaf parsley

##### Black Olives

1/4 cup brine-cured black  
olives

##### Salt to taste

#### TAHINI

Preheat oven to 350 degrees  
F (175 degrees C).

Spread sesame seeds onto a  
baking sheet.  
Bake in the preheated oven  
until seeds are fragrant,  
stirring every few minutes, 10  
to 12 minutes.

Transfer toasted seeds to  
a blender and add olive  
oil. Blend until completely  
smooth, adding additional  
oil if needed. Refrigerate in a  
sealed container.



#### HOW TO PREPARE

- Prepare a medium-hot fire in a charcoal grill. Preheat an oven to 375°F.
- Prick the eggplant with a fork in several places and place on the grill rack 4 to 5 inches from the fire.
- Grill, turning frequently, until the skin blackens and blisters and the flesh just begins to feel soft, 10 to 15 minutes.
- Transfer the eggplant to a baking sheet and bake until very soft, 15 to 20 minutes.
- Remove from the oven, let cool slightly, and peel off and discard the skin.
- Place the eggplant flesh in a bowl.
- Using a fork, mash the eggplant to a paste.
- Add the 1/4 cup tahini, the garlic, the 1/4 cup lemon juice and the cumin and mix well.
- Season with salt, then taste and add more tahini and/or lemon juice, if needed.
- Transfer the mixture to a serving bowl and spread with the back of a spoon to form a shallow well.
- Drizzle the olive oil over the top and sprinkle with the parsley.
- Place the olives around the sides. Serve at room temperature with your own homemade pita chips to make an even more healthful snack, as well as a prettier presentation 🌿



## Literally Speaking - Winning entries from tackle racism competition

### Delicate Flowers

Beauty lies within the eyes of the beholder they say,  
Yet this is not the ideology the world chooses to portray.  
We are judged and mistreated before being given a chance,  
Delaying the sacred future and our career plans.

If only racism were a disease with medication to cure,  
The world would be extravagant, magnificent and pure.  
Races are significant therefore we differentiate,  
However it does not give us the right to discriminate.

What if we were incapable of seeing in color?  
Will it change the way we perceive or just make things duller?  
I would like to see the day where we walk lacking hesitation,  
Without hiding ourselves, our original representation.

Like a python discrimination will trap its prey,  
Squeezing tight, absorbing their vivacity, until they decay.  
Therefore I declare that it is time for a change,  
I will tackle down racism and make it estranged

We must examine our beliefs and our ruthless attitudes,  
Speak up when we see or simply hear something rude.  
Develop the courage to perish our weaknesses,  
Become soldiers in these cases, not simple witnesses.

Take condemnatory outlooks and forever dismiss,  
Wave prejudice considerations away with a kiss.  
Free ourselves from the destruction of human kind,  
With easy adjustments we can sort in our minds.

So let us build an army much stronger in power,  
And fight for the victims; these delicate flowers.

**- Sharon Joseph**  
Gr 10, Holy Trinity C H S

### Disease

Are you silent?	Your silence
Watching them laugh	Is very contagious
At victims they	It will spread
choose	Unless you cure it
To bear the hate	And speak
All because	Devoid of fear
They are ill	Or hesitation
Having let disease	Try to find the
Seal their eyes	Key within
With ignorance	

They don't see	That allows for
That tears and blood	The shackles
And sweat and spit	To finally release
Appear the same	Your imprisoned
That sorrow	Rational tongue

And happiness	
Are colour-blind	Tell those you
	Watched silently
Try to remember	To unite not divide
Looking at a rainbow	Ask them to see
So vibrant and bright	Past the skin
Now shatter it	That merely covers
Separate the pieces	The heart beneath
Once colourful	

And strong	
Rendered useless	This man-made
And incomplete	Acute disease
	That controls the
There is such	weak
Profound power	And spares the wise
In your voice	Can only be destined
It can hurt or heal	For destruction
Destroy or make	By man

This antidote  
To the disease

**- Aiman Naeem**  
Gr 11, Westwood  
High School



## Literally Speaking - Winning entries from tackle racism competition

### More than Colour

If you judge people by their faces,  
I think you are being racist.  
I don't think it's fair,  
To judge people by their hair.  
A mohawk, a side fade, a half walk or a weave,  
People, we are NOT pleased.  
Yellow, pink, orange or blue?  
Would you like someone to judge you  
by your colour, too?  
There is more than colour to see and choose,  
Than your skin colour, that others could use,  
Your personality, your emotions, and the sports that you do,  
Those are just a few of the things that make you, you.  
And help others judge who's who.

- **Antwone Meyers**

Grade 3, Father Turcotte School

### Blossoms

If flowers can be red, yellow, pink, and white,  
and still be flowers.  
Why don't we judge them the same way  
as we judge each other?  
If hair can be blonde, brown, black, white,  
and red and still be hair,  
Why don't we be racist against that single piece of hair?  
Does it really matter what style or  
colour we choose to wear?  
All that matters is what is truly on the inside  
If a rainbow can be colourful,  
why can't we see the colours that fill up  
our world today?  
So why can't we be brown, black, white, pink,  
and yellow  
and still be people?  
How long will it take us to realize that these colours aren't  
what really define us cuz our inside is who we really are?

SINCE WHEN DOES THE OUTSIDE SAY ABOUT THE INSIDE?  
LET'S ALL UNITE AS ONE TO SHOW HOW WE ARE ALL AGAINST  
RACISM. IT'S NOT A FUN PLACE TO LIVE WHERE RACISM EXISTS.

- **Fatima Khan,**

Gr 5, Islamic School

### My Friends, My Girls

Friends, friends, oh my wonderful friends!  
I hope my friendships will never end!  
My friends, my girls. . .  
They're from every country in the world.

Mallory loves to paint  
And create,  
Loves art and is very smart.  
She has beautiful blonde curls,  
And she loves wearing pearls.

Amer has a weave of curly black hair  
Is polite and likes to share.  
She's from Zimbabwe,  
And she loves to eat. . . Subway?



Ayesha loves sports like, soccer, hockey and biking.  
In Fijian Mountains, she's gone hiking.  
She likes rice, she's also is very nice.  
She used to go to school at Greely Road  
We connect by my g-mail and her secret friendship code.

Then there's Faith from Newfoundland,  
She wants to play in a high school band.  
She's most like Mallory, cause she's very good in art,  
And she has a kind, warm heart.

Friends, friends, oh my wonderful friends!  
I hope my friendships will never end!  
My friends, my girls . . .  
There're from every country in the world.

- **Jazmine Gervasio,**

Gr 3, Father Turcotte School



## Activities



1. Rocky Mountain House and Fort McKay Cree dancers launch the Multicultural EXPO-2015
2. International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination cake with our sponsor Servus' logo
3. Ukrainian dancers at the EXPO
4. MLA Don Scott presents an award to one of the winners of the Tackle Racism Competition at MacDonald Island Art Gallery
5. Board directors, Kouame Adie, Sana Elache and Cindy Julaton at EXPO-2015
6. Multicultural EXPO Cuba booth
7. Winners of the Tackle racism represent all schools, backgrounds and races
8. Dignitaries and community leaders, judges and board members, come together to celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination





## Volunteer Appreciation

April 15, 6.30-8.30

MCA boardroom Walter & Gladys Hill School

## Multicultural Engagement Meeting

April 16, 6:30pm

MCA boardroom Walter & Gladys Hill School

## Financial Literacy Program

Tuesdays Apr14-May26, 7:00pm-8:30pm

MCA boardroom Walter & Gladys Hill School

## Cross Cultural Parenting Program

Fridays Apr17-May22, 1:00pm-4:00pm

MCA boardroom Walter & Gladys Hill School

## Mexican Cookery

April 25, 10am-1pm

Ecole McTavish Junior High School

## Peace Warriors: Health & Arts Festival

May 1-3 Fri 5-8, Sat 8am-8pm, Sun 9

Westwood High School, Thickwood

## Community Get-together and AGM

June 27, 5-7pm,

RBC Stoney Creek



1. Bangladeshi community at EXPO-2015
2. DJ Dennis at EXPO-2015 Jamaica booth
3. Mexicanos en Fort McMurray
4. Calligraphy at the EXPO-2015 Japan booth
5. Filipino dancers EXPO-2015
6. Ethiopian booth engages the community in the coffee ceremony
7. Lots of food and smiles at the Iranian booth EXPO-2015
8. Peru Inka Association of Fort McMurray dancers looking pretty

Please register on  
[www.multiculturefm.org/programs](http://www.multiculturefm.org/programs)



[www.facebook.com/MulticulturalAssociationOfWoodBuffalo](https://www.facebook.com/MulticulturalAssociationOfWoodBuffalo)



[www.twitter.com/MCA4WB](https://www.twitter.com/MCA4WB)

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