

Asian Heritage Month

Toronto District School Board

MAY 2022

Land Acknowledgement

Asian people have arrived to the land now known as Canada in many waves over time, as undocumented, labourers, migrant workers, refugees and immigrants.

When arriving in Canada, settlers, including Asian people, become part of Canada's historic and ongoing project of colonialism. We have a responsibility to learn the histories of Indigenous peoples whose ancestral lands we now occupy, and to recognize the enduring presence of all First Nations, Métis and the Inuit peoples.

We also recognize how Indigenous and Asian struggles are inextricably linked. We recognize the need for our communities to raise our voices in solidarity, share resources and take collective action for truth and reconciliation.

On December 6, 2001, the Senate of Canada adopted a motion introduced by the honourable Dr. Senator Poy to federally recognize the month of May as Asian Heritage Month.



In May 2002, the Government of Canada signed an official declaration to designate May as Asian Heritage Month.

Asian Heritage Month is a time to reflect and highlight the important contributions of Asian Canadians to the settlement, growth and development of Canada, the diversity of the Asian community, and its present significance to this country.



(Poy, 2009)

Asian Heritage Month at the TDSB

- We are proud to celebrate the numerous achievements of Asian-Canadians and their significant role on the global stage. This year our theme is ***Many Voices United as One.***
- The TDSB is the largest and one of the most diverse school boards in Canada. Nearly one-quarter of our students were born outside of Canada and collectively we speak more than 120 languages.
- **Within this presentation you will find:**
 - Spotlights on specific Asian countries.
 - Recognizing a broad spectrum of Canadians of Asian heritage that contribute to the diversity of many voices.

Who is of “Asian” Descent?

The term “Asian” refers to a broad group of people spanning diverse political, economic, social, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious contexts.

The Toronto District School Board and Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario understand the definition of “Asian” to apply to, but is not limited to, all individuals who come from or whose ancestors came Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia, South East Asia, West Asia.

40%

In the TDSB, more than 40% of students self-identify as Asian

*According to the 2017 TDSB Student & Parent Census

Spotlight: Bangladesh

- Population in 2020: 164.7 million
- Language Spoken: Bangla/Bengali
- Capital City: Dhaka

Special Facts:

Government:

- Home of the longest female-led government in the world.

Medieval Town of Bagerhat:

- This famous UNESCO Historic Mosque City located was hidden away in the jungle for centuries and is renowned for its number of religious Islamic monuments.



Spotlight: Jordan

- Population in 2020: 10.2 million
- Language Spoken: Arabic
- Capital City: Amman

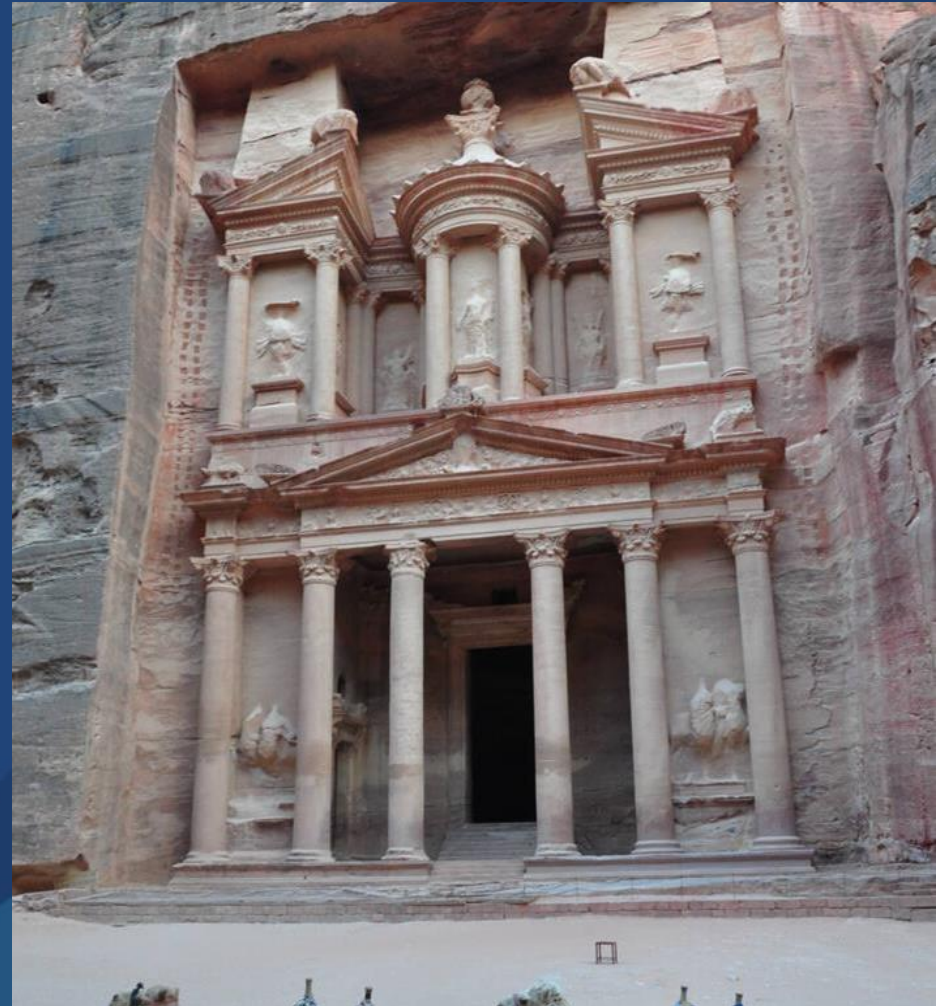
Special Facts:

Petra:

- Petra: An ancient city located in Jordan
- Ruins of the once-great metropolis and trading center now serve as an important archaeological site and tourist attraction.

The Dead Sea:

- The Dead Sea, which is known to be the lowest lying point on earth (408 meters below sea level) is located on the coast of Jordan and is visited by many people around the world.



Spotlight: Kazakhstan

- Population in 2020: 18.75 million
- Language Spoken: Dialects of Kazakh language and Russian
- Capital City: Nur-Sultan

Special Facts:

Apples:

- Apples originated in Kazakhstan as the *Malus Sieversii* which grew in the Tian Shan mountain region.

The space program of Kazakhstan:

- Cosmonaut and satellite missions.
- Launch site is known as Baikonur Cosmodrome.
- Program has been led by KazCosmos since 2007.



Spotlight: Malaysia

- Population in 2020: 32.37 million
- Language Spoken: Malay
- Capital City: Kuala Lumpur

Special Facts:

Petronas Towers

- One of Malaysia's and the world's most recognisable landmarks.
- Still hold title of world's tallest twin towers.

Rotating Monarchy

- Malaysia follows a rotating monarchy system
- It's made up of nine ethnic Malay state rulers who take turns becoming king for terms of five-years.



Spotlight: South Korea

- Population in 2020: 52.78 million
- Language Spoken: Korean
- Capital City: Seoul

Special Facts:

K-Pop:

- BTS K-Pop group originated from South Korea and has a global following.
- K-Pop brings in over \$600 million in cultural exports for South Korea.

Taekwondo:

- Taekwondo is one of the oldest forms of martial arts (over 2000 years old) and the art of self defense that originated in **Korea**.





Dr. Joanne Liu - Humanitarian

- Place of birth: Quebec City, Quebec
- Former International President of Doctors without Borders/Medecins Sans Frontieres Organization
- As a daughter of Chinese immigrants, Dr. Liu dreamed of becoming "a doctor without borders" one day.
- In 2014, Liu gave a briefing to the United Nations General Assembly, urging them to mobilize against the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

People inspire me. Every day, I meet amazing individuals in the field. When I see a mother who has walked for three weeks to come to a MSF clinic, with two kids on her back and her belongings on her head, facing intimidation and physical abuse on her way, I am inspired by her resilience - her desire for life.

Vicky Sunoharo - Athlete

- Place of Birth: Scarborough, Ontario
- Known as the “Wayne Gretzky of women’s hockey”
- Vicky is a two-time Olympic gold medalist serving as an assistant captain for seven years with Team Canada before retiring from international competition in 2008.
- She is the head coach for University of Toronto’s women’s hockey team.
- Vicky is of Japanese and Ukrainian heritage.

“Whether we’re down a goal, or up a goal or down two goals, we still believe in ourselves.”





Mahmud Jamal - Supreme Court Judge

- Place of birth: Nairobi, Kenya
- Appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada on July 1, 2021.
- Mahmud completed high school in Edmonton, Alberta, and attended the University of Toronto and McGill University.
- Mahmud, of Indian heritage, is the first person of colour appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada.

“Like many others, I experienced discrimination as a fact of daily life. As a child and youth, I was taunted and harassed because of my name, religion or the colour of my skin.”

Simu Liu - Actor

- Place of birth: Harbin China
- Simu Immigrated with his parents to Canada when he was 5 years old and grew up in Mississauga, ON.
- Best known for his role in Marvel's Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings (2021).
- He played Jung Kim on the CBC sitcom Kim's Convenience, and is also a writer and producer for TV and films.

"We have a lot of heroes. We have Asian heroes, we have Asian American heroes, men, women, of all ages, and not all of them do martial arts. But that doesn't mean that they don't have their own arcs, their own stories, their own subtleties and nuances. And I think that's what's important."





Lilly Singh - Author, Creator

- Place of birth: Toronto, Ontario
- Lilly Singh began making YouTube videos in 2010, and has established herself as a leading force in the world of digital media, with a global audience of more than 38 million.
- Lilly's parents immigrated from Punjab, India and she is a graduate from the Toronto District School Board.
- Her Ted Talk on Dec. 2, 2021 spoke to issues of gender equality.

"I'd like to present a set of guidelines I very eloquently call 'how to build a table that doesn't suck,'"

Vivek Shraya - Writer, Artist

- Place of Birth: Edmonton, Alberta
- Shraya is dedicated to bringing creative writing opportunities to emerging BIPOC writers.
- Vivek was a Pride Toronto Grand Marshal and has been a brand ambassador for MAC Cosmetics and Pantene.
- She has written a children's book incorporating her South Asian heritage in *The Boy and the Bindi*.

"Children's books have great potential to reveal new possibilities to readers, because the intended audience is at an age of genuine learning."



Hazel Mae - Sportscaster

- Place of birth: Tagbilaran City, Philippines
- Mae is currently a Sportsnet broadcaster for Toronto Blue Jays games as their field-level reporter.
- Mae grew up in Toronto and began her sports broadcasting career hosting a sports update show on campus at York University.

"Sadly, I'm usually the only one in the clubhouse of Asian descent."



Malala Yousafzai - Activist

- Place of birth: Mingora, Pakistan
- She also wrote the picture book Malala's Magic Pencil, based on her childhood.
- In 2014 Malala and Kailash Satyarthi were jointly awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in recognition of their efforts on behalf of children's rights
- In 2014 Malala was bestowed an honorary Canadian citizenship.

"If we want to achieve our goal, then let us empower ourselves with the weapon of knowledge and let us shield ourselves with unity and togetherness."

