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Polish Heritage Month recognized for first time in Shelburne]

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The Town of Shelburne marked the start of Polish Heritage Month with a flag-raising ceremony.

Members of the local Polish community and dignitaries gathered at Jack Downing Park in Shelburne on Monday (May 1) afternoon to raise the country's flag in recognition of Polish Heritage Month.

?The flag raising is very important to us because Poland has a long history and we are a very patriotic people,? said Anges Zagorsk, president of the Polish Highlanders Association Dufferin County Chapter. ?I think this will show people who live here that there are Polish people in the community, and they might want to learn a little bit of our Polish history ? it will bring us together.?

Polish Heritage Month was established in 2021 by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in recognition of the impact Polish Canadians have had on Ontario's history, culture and community. Polish Heritage Month is held during the month of May to commemorate Constitution Day in Poland (May 3), which is an important date in Poland's history as it marks the centuries-long struggle for freedom and independence by the Polish people.

Ontario is home to over half a million people with Polish heritage, making the Polish community one of the largest groups in the province.

?It's always nice when we can honour the contributions of certain groups and the contributions they've made to our country, our province, and our community,? said Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills. ?Talking to the residents who helped organize this, I think it's going to be an annual thing and hopefully we'll have a bigger crowd here next year.?

The flag raising at Jack Downing Park on Monday marked the first-time Polish Heritage Month has been proclaimedin Shelburne.

?Part of our DEI commitment is to celebrate and honour the diversity of our community; this is certainly part and parcel of that commitment,? said Denyse Morrissey, chief administrative officer for the Town of Shelburne.