

Shelburne recognizes Sikh Heritage Month with flag raising at Town Hall



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The month of April marks the celebration of Sikh Heritage Month in Canada, and the Town of Shelburne took part in that celebration last week.

Members of the Heritage Celebration Committee, alongside Shelburne Deputy Mayor Steve Anderson and local members of the Sikh community, gathered outside of Town Hall on April 7 to raise a flag in recognition of Sikh Heritage Month.

"The Sikh heritage is a very rich heritage, and Sikh Heritage Month gives us the opportunity to talk about it," said Sukminder Singh Hansra, a member of the Sikh Heritage Celebration Committee, to the small group.

Canada has celebrated Sikh Heritage Month annually across the nation since 2019 while Ontario, the first province to recognize the month, has been doing so as of 2013.

Nearing the end of the 19th century, Sikhs began to arrive in Canada, with the majority arriving in the country from 1904 to 1908. Canada has the second largest Sikh population in the world with more than 500,000 Sikhs.

At the flag raising one member of the committee, whose son is currently serving in the Canadian military, spoke of the contributions Sikhs have brought to the armed forces, noting their efforts in both the First and Second World War serving in the British Indian Army.

While Sikh Heritage Month is celebrated in April, it is also a significant month for Sikhs globally. During the month of April, Sikhs around the world celebrate Vaisakhi, which dates back to 1699, with the formation of the Khalsa under Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

"Sikh heritage represents that you help the weaker, you help those who are in need," said Hansra. "I wanted to thank the community here in Shelburne for giving us this opportunity to raise the flag because the flag flies up there and represents our true Canadian spirit and true Sikh spirit."

Shelburne Deputy Mayor Steve Anderson, was in attendance for the third annual flag raising in Shelburne for Sikh Heritage Month.

"One of the things that we review here in Canada, is service and sacrifice. When we think about our teachers, officers, the sacrifice of the service that they make every single day and when we think about our military; how they lay it on the line. When we think of those groups and individuals, are there not members from the Sikh community that are teachers, officers, military members that are laying it on the line every single day, making that sacrifice so that we can enjoy the freedoms that we do today," said Anderson.

"That is the reason why we're raising this flag, taking a moment to honour the sacrifice and the contributions that the Sikh community had made to the Town of Shelburne, Dufferin County, Ontario, and Canada."

Continuing he said, "When we talk about Shelburne Strong Together, this is what we're talking about. It's not a hashtag, it's not a buzzword ? it's reality."