



THE BCIS EXPRESS

Black History Month by Mohammed Idriss

February is **Black History Month**. Since 1976, it has been celebrated annually in the USA and Canada in February, and the United Kingdom it is celebrated in October. In the US, some people refer to it as African-American History Month.

This month we would like to highlight a few black Canadians who have had a significant role in our nation.

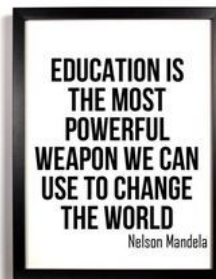
The Right Honourable **Michaëlle Jean** immediately comes to mind. She was Governor General of Canada between 2005 & 2010. She came to Canada as a refugee from Haiti, becoming the Queen's representative, our head of state, and the commander-in-chief of our Armed Forces. Today she is the Special Envoy for Haiti for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Michaëlle is not the first on the list of African woman in Canadian public life.

In 1986, **Rosemary Brown** became the first African-Canadian woman elected to the British Columbia legislature. She was later appointed Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Jean Augustine was the first African-Canadian woman in Cabinet and was responsible, in tandem with the Ontario Black History Society, for having February declared as Black History Month across Canada.

Black men have also made significant contributions to Canada. **Lincoln Alexander** became the first African-Canadian to serve in Cabinet following his 1979 appointment as Minister of Labour. He later became the first Black Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario.



In 1950, **Stanley Grizzle** organized the first broad-based Black History Month celebration in Toronto. He then became the first black citizenship court judge.

These are just glimpses from the history of few of the great men and women that have contributed to the freedom and equality we live in today.

Some of these individuals are Canadian born; while others are immigrants. Who knows? Maybe some of the newcomers in our region could be the next Michaëlle Jean or Lincoln Alexander.

February 2016

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BCIS YOUTH VISIT THE BROOKS FIRE HALL by Ililli



My name is Ililli and I was one of the BCIS youth group members who went for a tour of the Brooks Fire Department. We went to the fire hall in order to learn about fire safety and the ways to try to put out a fire. The fire fighters taught us how to put a fire out safely and warned us to never use a small amount of water when

trying to put out a fire. They showed us a video where water was used to put out an oil fire and this made the fire explode into a much larger fire than was there before! They also taught us to get

down on the floor when a room fills with smoke. This is important because fires back home in Africa and here in Canada are not the same. In Africa, most people use charcoal to cook food, but most people use gas and electrical stoves here in Canada.

That is why it is very important for teens to learn about fire safety in order to teach their families, because fire is dangerous. Fire safety information saves lives. Having basic fire safety can keep your home and family safe by preventing fires before they start. In case your clothes are on fire, we learned how to Stop, Drop and Roll.

Thank you to the firefighters for teaching us fire safety and the ways to keep ourselves and our families safe.

Employment Blog by Ryan Kiedrowski

New Program for Job-seekers

If you're looking for work, or just to brush up on your employment skills, we have just the thing for you.

Beginning February 4, BCIS will bring an exciting new addition to Employment Services with *The Working Group*.

Having a group of like-minded job seekers meet every week will allow people to share their experiences and help each other with their workplace

skills. We will have guest speakers and provide important information on topics such as resume writing, job interview skills, and how to effectively market yourself.

Another key part of the weekly sessions is the employment goal-setting. Each participant will establish a major goal they want to achieve, then a series of smaller goals will be determined that will lead to completion of the primary goal. Please sign up to be part of this program. Contact Ryan at 362-0404.

Also, throughout February, we're having employment workshops every Wednesday, two sessions per day. The first session will start at 10 am with the final session starting at 5:30 pm. The topics include; Work Searches, Marketing Yourself, and Interview Skills. Seating is limited, so call BCIS to book your spot today!

VOLUNTEERING IS A GREAT EXPERIENCE by Jose David Galdamez

Hi my name is **Jose David Galdamez**, and I'm from El Salvador. I came to Canada in 2006 through JBS. I have been working in the hide plant as the lead hand. I love my job.



My passion is dancing. I'm a fitness dance teacher here at the

Lakeside Leisure Centre. I know many dances from around the world. I got my degree at El Salvador University. I won championships in El Salvador and international, I'm also a hip hop dancer & teacher. I went to Medicine Hat College to improve my English for one year. Now I'm

fluent in speaking two languages. BCIS staff are great and very helpful.

I participated in the Brooks Got Talent! event and I managed to finish in second place.

Thanks to BCIS for organizing great events and encouraging people to show their talents.

This organization is a great help to the community as it provides volunteer services to other organizations and to people having language barriers.

Keep it up. Great job BCIS!

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH



Thank you to our volunteer of the month for January

Cunha An.

We appreciate all you do to assist us at BCIS.

Save the Date!

English Language Assessment

The team from SALAS will be at the Brooks Campus of Medicine Hat College for two assessment sessions.

Tuesday, February 9; 4-8 pm

Wednesday, February 10; 9 am-1 pm

To book an appointment, call the Brooks Campus at (403)362-1677 and speak with Lorelei, Khamla or Marian. You can also call SALAS toll-free at 1-888-329-4811 or email salasltd@telus.net.

Stay Safe on the Ice



A large part of enjoying a Canadian winter includes games on ice. Playing hockey, skating, or just going for a walk are all great ways to stay fit and enjoy the outdoors, but frozen ice on a lake can be dangerous. It may look safe, but might actually be very thin.

Lake or river ice needs to be at least 15 cm thick to walk or skate on, and 20 cm thick for large groups.

If you plan to take a snowmobile across a lake, the ice needs to be at least 25 cm thick. The colour of the ice is also very important, as clear blue ice is the strongest. White opaque or snow ice is only half as strong as blue ice, and if it is grey, stay off! **Grey ice is dangerous.**

If you do fall through the ice and you're all alone, call for

help. Do not try to climb back onto the spot where you fell- the ice is not safe there. You can use the air trapped in your clothing to get into a floating position on your stomach, then reach forward (without pushing down) on the ice. Kick your legs to push yourself onto the ice, then crawl with your arms and legs spread out so you can distribute your weight. It is important not to stand up in case the ice is still weak where you are. Instead, crawl to the shoreline.

If you're in a group and someone falls through the ice, call **9-1-1**. If you can reach the person with a long pole or branch from the shore, lie down and reach out to them. If you need to go onto the ice, put on a lifejacket. Take the pole, branch, rope, or whatever you can use to reach the person. Once you get near the break, lie down and slowly crawl forward. Extend whatever device you brought with you to the person, and have them kick while pulling them out. Move the person to a safe place on shore or where the ice is thick until help arrives.

Activities on the ice can be quite fun, and the more you know about ice safety will ensure you can come out to play again.



BCIS is once again launching a campaign to raise awareness about March 21, **The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**. Keep watching our Facebook page (March 21 Eliminate Racism) and our website (bcis-brooks.ca) for more information and how you can get involved!

YOUTH HAPPENINGS by Seina



Seina's Brooks Bandits

My name is Seina and I liked going to the Brooks Bandits hockey games. I go there with my friends and we have a lot of fun. I learned many things from Brooks. We drove to the Centennial Regional Arena with our classmates and from there we met the Brooks Bandits players. When we met

them, they welcomed us and gave us a tour of their locker room. They introduced themselves and they come from all over Canada, and even the United States. They were very welcoming and we were able to ask them many questions. One question we asked was, "How old were you when you started playing hockey?"

I really had a lot of fun because I went there with my friends, and we took pictures with the Brooks Bandits.

Bay 2-500 Cassils Road East
Brooks, Alberta

Phone: 403-362-0404 ~ Fax: 403-362-0435

Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 8:30am-4:30pm
Wednesday 8:30am-7:00pm
Friday 8:30am -2:00pm



Connect with us!

www.bcis-brooks.ca



@askBCIS

THE GAMES ROOM

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UPCOMING EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

RRSP's

With tax season coming, find out how an RRSP can help you!

Wednesday, February 3
4-6pm

Work Search

How to find a job that you are qualified for.

Wednesday, February 3
10 am & 5:30pm

Immigrant Women's Breast Health

Get the facts and ask questions to be sure you have important information regarding your health.

Sunday, February 7
1 pm

Marketing Yourself

How to promote your skills and strengths

Wednesday, February 10
10 am & 5:30pm

Family Day

Office Closed

Monday, February 15

Interview Skills

Preparing for a job interview

Wednesday, February 17
10 am & 5:30pm

Family Sponsorship

We will be having two sessions. Call BCIS 403-362-0404 to register. You MUST sign-up to attend.

February 21

Newcomer Orientation

Important information for newcomers to the community.

PLUS

Fire Safety in your Home

Learn what you can do to keep your family home safe and what to do in the event of a fire.

Sunday, February 28
1pm

Lunch & Learn Series

Held on the last Wednesday of each month.

Wednesday, February 24
12-1 pm

