

FALL 2025

VOLUME No.13

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

## NEWSLETTER

### LET'S TALK ABOUT:

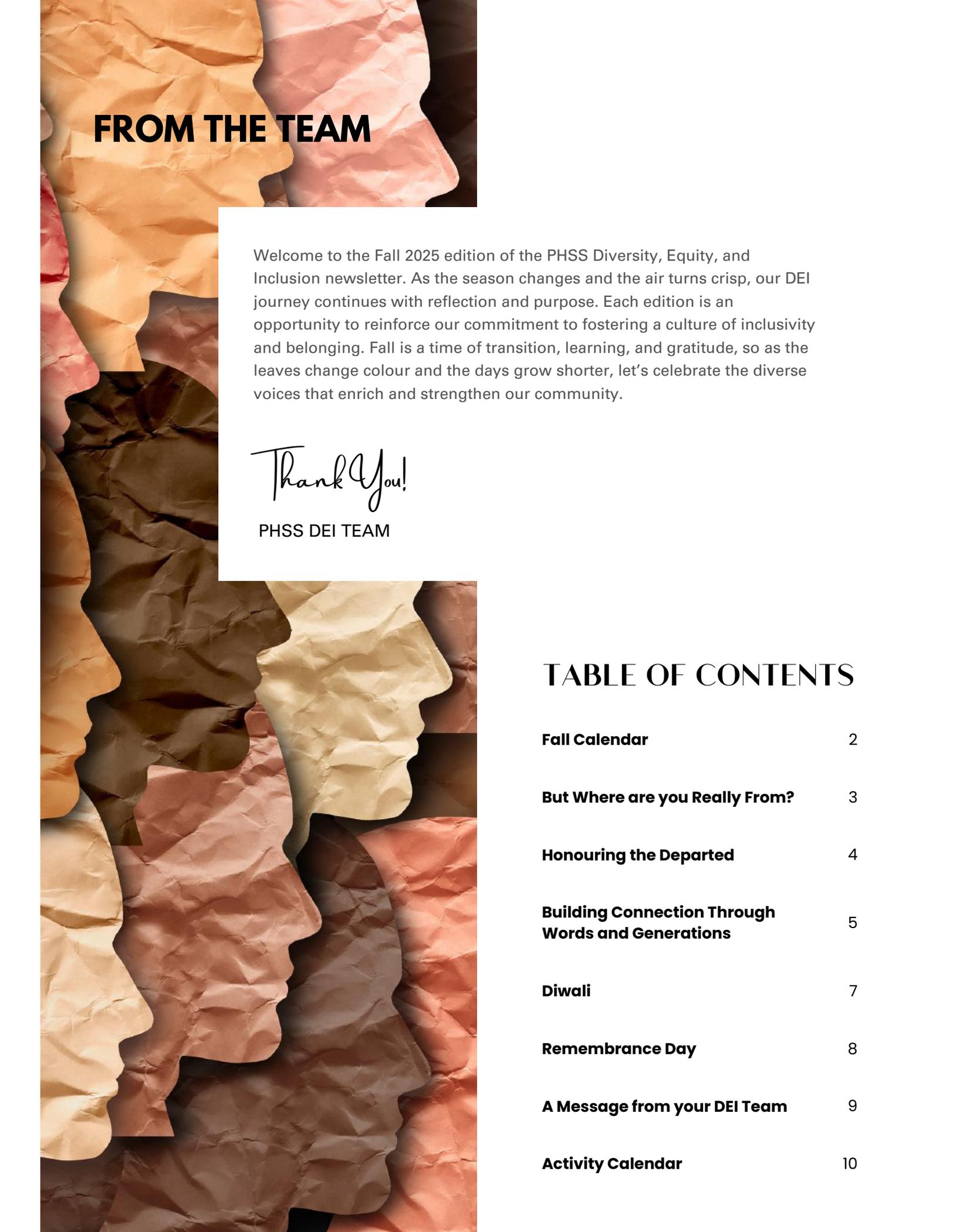
DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

GENERATIONAL IMPACT

DIWALI

REMEMBRANCE DAY





# FROM THE TEAM

Welcome to the Fall 2025 edition of the PHSS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion newsletter. As the season changes and the air turns crisp, our DEI journey continues with reflection and purpose. Each edition is an opportunity to reinforce our commitment to fostering a culture of inclusivity and belonging. Fall is a time of transition, learning, and gratitude, so as the leaves change colour and the days grow shorter, let's celebrate the diverse voices that enrich and strengthen our community.

*Thank You!*

PHSS DEI TEAM

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# FALL CALENDAR

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## OCTOBER

<b>Yom Kippur</b>	1-2
<b>Dussehra</b>	2
<b>Sukkot</b>	6-13
<b>Mid-Autumn Festival</b>	6
<b>World Mental Health Day</b>	10
<b>National Coming Out Day</b>	11
<b>Thanksgiving</b>	13
<b>Persons Day</b>	18
<b>Invisible Disabilities Week</b>	19-25
<b>Diwali</b>	20-25
<b>Halloween</b>	31

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## NOVEMBER

<b>All Saints' Day</b>	1
<b>All Souls Day</b>	2
<b>Veteran's Week</b>	5-11
<b>Indigenous Veteran's Day</b>	8
<b>Remembrance Day</b>	11
<b>Transgender Day of Remembrance</b>	20
<b>National Housing Day</b>	22
<b>Addictions Awareness Week</b>	23-29
<b>International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Woman</b>	25

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## DECEMBER

<b>Advent</b>	1-24
<b>International Day for Persons with Disabilities</b>	3
<b>National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Woman</b>	6
<b>Pansexual Pride Day</b>	8
<b>Human Rights Day</b>	10
<b>Hanukkah</b>	14-22
<b>Winter Solstice</b>	21
<b>Christmas Eve</b>	24
<b>Christmas Day</b>	25
<b>Boxing Day</b>	26
<b>Kwanzaa</b>	26-1
<b>New Years Eve</b>	31

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# “But where are you **REALLY** from?”



At first glance, the question “Where are you from?” may seem like a harmless way to start a conversation with a colleague. But for many people of colour in Canada, it carries extra weight that may not be visible to the asker. Too often, it suggests that the person being asked is “not quite from here” or not “Canadian enough” to have origins in Canada. When asked repeatedly, it can wear someone down, turning a simple question into a microaggression that places doubt upon their identity and whether they truly belong.

This sentiment is especially clear when the question is followed by “But where are you really from?” if the first answer, “I grew up here,” or “I’m from London”, doesn’t match the asker’s assumptions. In that moment, the person is put on the spot to prove their ancestry or provide an explanation that aligns with someone else’s idea of what belonging should look like, based on unfounded biases or assumptions.

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It’s important to remember that **intent** is not the same as **impact**. Even when a question is asked out of curiosity or meant as a friendly icebreaker, it can still leave someone feeling singled out or excluded. In the workplace, this is especially true when we are getting to know new coworkers. Until trust and rapport are established, people may not know the intent behind our words, only how those words make them feel. Choosing open and respectful questions help us build positive connections from the start.

So, how can we rephrase this question to allow for people to respond on their own terms, without the extra baggage? Educator Alice Tsui suggests reframing the conversation with questions that invite people to share what feels meaningful to them, such as:

- Where do you call home?
- What communities are important to you?
- What places have shaped who you are?

Tsui believes that these kinds of questions create space for people to share their identity on their own terms, without forcing them into a box or specific geographical location. At the same time, it’s important to remember that not everyone will feel comfortable sharing, and that’s okay. Respecting someone’s choice not to answer, or to keep their response brief, is just as valuable as asking the question in the first place.

Being aware of how our questions affect others helps us listen differently and respect how much someone chooses to share. Even a small change like reframing a question can help build a stronger sense of belonging for all.

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# Honouring the Departed: Día de los Muertos and All Souls' Day

As the crisp autumn air settles in, many cultures around the world prepare to honour and remember their dearly departed. Two significant observances during this time are Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) and All Souls' Day. While distinct in their origins and customs, both share a profound commitment to celebrating life and maintaining a spiritual connection with those who have passed.



**Día de los Muertos**, celebrated primarily in Mexico and parts of Latin America, blends ancient Mesoamerican traditions with Catholic influences. It is observed over two days: November 1 honours deceased children (Día de los Inocentes), and November 2 commemorates adults. The celebration is rooted in the belief that the souls of the departed return to reunite with their families, so the living prepare altars, or ofrendas, adorned with marigolds, candles, photographs, and favorite foods of the deceased.

**All Souls' Day**, observed on November 2, is a Christian tradition dedicated to praying for the souls of all the faithful departed. It emphasizes the belief in bodily resurrection and eternal life, with customs varying across cultures. For instance, in parts of Europe, families visit cemeteries to clean and decorate graves, light candles, and offer prayers.

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In our diverse community, recognizing and respecting various cultural practices is essential. Día de los Muertos and All Souls' Day provide opportunities to learn about and appreciate different ways of honoring the departed. These observances highlight themes of remembrance, respect, and the enduring bonds between the living and the dead.

As we approach this season of remembrance, let us take a moment to reflect on the lives of those who have come before us. Whether through the vibrant celebrations of Día de los Muertos or the solemn prayers of All Souls' Day, these traditions remind us of the importance of honouring our ancestors and maintaining connections that transcend time.

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# Building Connection Through Words and Generations

In today's workplaces and communities, we are more connected than ever but also more diverse, not just in culture or background but in generations. From Baby Boomers to Gen Z (and even the emerging Gen Alpha), we all bring our own ways of communicating, shaped by different life experiences, technologies, and expectations.

Understanding these differences helps us connect more meaningfully, avoid miscommunication, and build stronger and more inclusive relationships.

For the first time in history, up to five generations are working side by side, from Baby Boomers to Gen Z, and even some Generation Alpha beginning to enter the workforce.

Each generation has been shaped by different life experiences, technologies, and social changes, all of which influence how they prefer to communicate.



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*Let us look at what makes each generation unique, and how we can bridge the gaps.*

## *Baby Boomers (1946–1964)*

- Prefer in-person meetings or phone calls where tone and intent are clear.
- Value structure, respect, and professionalism in communication.
- Appreciate detailed explanations and opportunities to discuss decisions.

Workplace Tip: If you are emailing a Boomer colleague or supervisor, use complete sentences and clear subject lines. Avoid overly casual tone, clarity and respect go a long way.

## *Generation X (1965–1980)*

- The “bridge generation”, comfortable with both traditional and digital communication.
- Prefer concise, direct, and factual messages.
- Value efficiency and dislike unnecessary meetings or jargon.

Workplace Tip: Send them key points upfront, and include supporting info as attachments. They appreciate when communication respects their time.

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### Millennials (1981–1996)

- Grew up during the tech boom, comfortable across digital tools.
- Appreciate collaboration, feedback, and open communication.
- Value authenticity, transparency, and purpose-driven conversation.

Workplace Tip: When sharing feedback or updates, include the “why” behind actions. Use positive, inclusive tone, and be open to two-way dialogue.

### Generation Z (1997–2012)

- Digital-first and visually oriented, communication tends to be fast pace, concise, and multimedia-based.
- Prefer honesty, diversity, and emotional authenticity.
- Expect inclusivity and value shared decision-making.

Workplace Tip: Do not mistake brevity for lack of interest, Gen Z communicates in short bursts but appreciates genuine, respectful interactions.

As our workplace continues to grow in culture, age, background, and experience, communication becomes even more important. When we adapt our style, choose words thoughtfully, and listen with empathy, we build trust and connection that go far beyond our roles. Above all, remember to avoid making assumptions. Take time to reflect on what works for your coworkers, but also for you.

### *Bridging the Generational Gap*

*Adapt Your Style:* Adjust tone and format depending on your audience.

*Blend Methods:* Combine meetings, emails, and chat tools to meet everyone’s preferences.

*Summarize Key Points:* What is clear to one person might be missed by another.

*Be Respectful:* Listen actively and validate contributions.

*Ask, Don’t Assume:* “How do you prefer to communicate?” is a simple but powerful question.

*Remember:* Communication is not just about talking, it’s about connecting.





**Diwali- The Festival of lights** is celebrated widely among, many communities in India and all over the world. It marks the triumph of goodness over evil. In Jungian psychology this can be interpreted as the advent of enlightenment that pierces the darkness and corruption (seven deadly sins) in human soul. It is celebrated by lighting oil lamps, worshipping Goddess Lakshmi (Goddess of wealth and prosperity) and Ganesha (the elephant headed God that removes obstacles), family get together and cooking desserts and traditional sweets.

## Ladoo



Ladoos a common sweet that is offered to Goddess Lakshmi (to commemorate her feminine grace, sweetness and power) is made and shared as a representation of health (represented with its orange colour) and goodwill (due to its sweet taste).

### Ingredients:

1. Besan (chickpea flour)
2. Sugar (make sure its in powdered form)
3. Ghee (clarified butter)/oil
4. Cardamom powder
5. Nuts, almonds, pistachio for garnishing

### Instructions:

1. To a heavy bottom pan, add 1/4 cup ghee (55 grams) and let it melt on medium heat. Add 1 cup besan (110 grams) in this melted ghee. Stir and set heat to low.
2. At first it will form a clump. After 7 to 8 mins the clump will start loosening up. Wait for it to turn into smooth consistency. Keep stirring, else it will burn. Once done, take the pan off.
3. Keep stirring for 5 minutes until it cooled down a bit. Let it cool down for around 10 minutes, lukewarm is fine.
4. Then add 1/2 cup powdered sugar (75 grams).
5. Add 1/4 + 1/8 teaspoon cardamom powder and also chopped nuts and raisins if you like at this point.
6. Mix everything together until the sugar and cardamom is well combined with the besan. You will get a smooth besan dough.
7. Now, pinch a small bowl from the dough. Press and then roll between your palms to form a round shape
8. Repeat, you will make 7 to 8 ladoos out of the mixture. You can garnish them with nuts if you like.

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# Remembering Together

## Reflecting on Service, Sacrifice, and Belonging



Each November, North Americans pause to honour those who have died in military service, and to mark the end of hostilities in World War I. Poppies rest on lapels as a visible symbol of remembrance, prompting a reflection on the cost of war. At 11am on November 11th, as “The Last Post” sounds and heads bow, we take a collective moment to genuinely reflect on why this day matters to our entire community.

While traditions remain constant, Remembrance Day represents more than just the two World Wars. It encompasses a wide range of histories, experiences and people who have service in different ways. For example, North American traditions often focus on the heroism of military service, while Armistice Day ceremonies in Germany or Japan typically center on pacifism and prevention of war.

This year, consider the many perspectives that shape remembrance:

### ***Indigenous Peoples:***

Despite not having the right to vote, thousands volunteered to serve in WWI, and distinguished themselves as trackers and snipers garnering awards and Military Medals. For many Indigenous and colonized peoples, military service carries complex meaning, both as an act of duty and resistance. Their military service in WWI was a catalyst leading to the creation of organizations like the League of Indians of Canada, fighting for the rights of Indigenous people.

### ***Newcomers:***

New immigrants have long served in the armed forces, which can act as a path to citizenship and belonging. During both world wars, thousands of newcomers from Europe, Asia and the Caribbean served in Canadian Forces, some before being granted citizenship. Today, over 10% of Canadian Armed Forces members were born outside of Canada.

### ***Women:***

In WWI, women joined the war effort in unprecedented numbers, filling roles traditionally held by men. Their service ultimately led to the suffrage movement and paved the way for future service members such as Heather Erxleben, the first woman to join the regular infantry in 1989.

### ***Black Canadians:***

Initially barred from enlisting, Black Canadians eventually served in WWI in all-Black No. 2 Construction Battalion. Only seven Black Canadians were recognized as officers in WWI. By the time WWII launched 20 years later, no segregated battalions were created.

### ***LGBTQ+ Service Members:***

From “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (1993-2011) to present day advocacy, LGBTQ personnel have long faced challenges to openly serve. In America, Over 100,000 people were discharged from service between WWII and 2011 due to their identities.

### ***Conscientious Objectors:***

Those who refused to participate in military service or war efforts due to moral or religious reasons often faced penalization, imprisonment and even execution for their anti-war beliefs. In 2006, the United Nations Human Rights Committee affirmed the right to conscientious objection.

### ***WWII Veterans:***

With WWII veterans now averaging 98 years of age, it is imperative to preserve their stories. Their first hand accounts in all forms – books, films, essays and documentaries – remind us of war’s cost and the fragility of peace.





# A Message from your DEI Team

Though it may be hard to believe, 2025 is rapidly coming to a close. In these final months, we start to think ahead: What will the new year bring? What priorities will take the limelight in the new year? How will those priorities shape our actions and next steps?

As we brainstorm, discuss and collaborate to build together towards the new year, it becomes critical to consider you, our larger PHSS family. We are considering the factors that impact staff, people supported, families, board members, and partners. The barriers that can stand in our way, and the problem solving required to overcome them.

There are some exciting endeavors underway that we look forward to launching in 2026, but there's still time for you to **let us know what areas are important to you**. Is there something critical that our team hasn't tackled yet? What area of work and/or life at PHSS could use some fresh focus with a DEI lens? Let us know! We're only an email away. Contact us at [DiversityTeam@phsscommunity.com](mailto:DiversityTeam@phsscommunity.com) with your ideas, wishes and recommendations. If you're feeling inspired and want to take it to the next level, become a part of the conversation! We're always excited to add new members to the team.

The close of a year is not just a time for reflection, it's a chance to reimagine what's possible. With your voices and ideas, we can continue to shape PHSS into a place where diversity is celebrated, equity is prioritized, and inclusion is lived every day. Let's keep moving forward, together.



# Fall Community Activities

## London

### London Multi Vendor Expo

Date: November 8

Location: Centennial Hall

*Support local entrepreneurs and diverse small businesses.*

### Christkindl Market

Date: November 21–23

Location: German Canadian Club

*Celebrate German and European traditions with a cross-cultural holiday exchange.*

### Lighting of the Lights

Date: November 24

Location: Victoria Park & Covent Garden Market

*A festival of lights, music, and community togetherness.*

### Holly Jolly Market

Date: December 5–21

Location: Covent Garden Market

*Local artisans, festive crafts, and community gathering.*

### Christmas Market

Date: December 13

Location: London Ukrainian Centre

*Holiday celebration hosted at the London Ukrainian Centre.*

## Owen Sound

### Outdoor Movie Night

Date: October 25

Location: River District (in front of City Hall)

*Enjoy an outdoor movie night featuring Ghostbusters – Frozen Empire.*

### Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella

Date: November 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29

Location: Roxy Theatre

*An Owen Sound Little Theatre Production Cinderella – a kind-hearted girl, mis-treated by her devious stepmother and envious stepsisters wishes to go to the Royal Ball.*

## Ottawa

### The Ottawa Chocolate Show

Date: October 25

Location: Algonquin College

*Meet award-winning chocolate makers, chat, sample their chocolate and take home a few bars!*

### Pumpkin Fest

Date: Ongoing until October 26

Location: Proulx Maple & Berry Farm

*Pack a lunch and bring the whole family down to the Annual Pumpkin Festival featuring a petting zoo, corn maze, wagon rides, and pick-your-own pumpkins.*

### Monster Mixtape

Date: October 29–31

Location: Southam Hall

*Step into the crypt for an evening of spine-chilling musical melodies performed by the NAC Orchestra!*

### Day of The Dead Festival

Date: October 31–November 2

Location: Byward Market

*The Day of the Dead Festival focuses on promoting the richness of Mexican culture through art, gastronomy, music and dance that appeal to the senses of all ages.*





**EMPLOYER  
PARTNER**

As an Employer Partner with the Canadian Centre for Diversity & Inclusion (CCDI), PHSS is able to provide a number of resources for staff to support us on our diversity and inclusion journey! If you haven't already; be sure to self-register today by scanning the QR code!

*(Be sure to use your PHSS staff email address when signing up!)*



CCDI Registration

**[www.phsscommunity.com](http://www.phsscommunity.com)**