

Inclusive Community Plan Annual Report 2024



UNESCO Coalition of Inclusive Communities

In June 2022, the City of Brantford joined the UNESCO Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (CIM), committing to collaborate with local experts and organizations to ensure everyone can fully participate in economic, political, social, and cultural life.



Inclusive Community Plan 2023-2026

As part of our commitment to the CIM, the City of Brantford worked with a range of organizations to develop the Inclusive Community Plan 2023-2026. The plan was developed in partnership with the Wilfrid Laurier University School of Social Work. The consultation process included a breadth of research and community engagement activities, including literature reviews, environmental scans, focus groups, workshops, surveys and key informant interviews.

Our Guiding Principles

Inclusion is a broad concept that recognizes the diverse experiences within communities and the harm caused by hate, discrimination and inequity. Endorsed by over 30 community partners, the plan is based on three guiding principles:



Learn from Each Other



Stand Up for Each Other



Celebrate Each Other





Queer Joy Bike Rides

In partnership with Heron Head Bikes and Queer Joy Brantford, weekly cycle meetups were hosted during fall 2024 for Brantford’s 2SLGBTQIA+ community and allies to socialize, get active, and engage with the local bike trail system.



Community Peace Mural Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

On Friday, June 14, the City of Brantford unveiled the Community Peace Mural through a ribbon cutting ceremony. The mural was a collaboration between artist Yasaman Mehrsa and local workshop participants. The design, shaped by input from community members during May’s weekly workshops, reflecting symbols of identity, culture and peace. Water, a key theme of the piece, represents the participants’ shared history with the Grand River and their diverse cultures and experiences.



Bad at Cricket!

This fun, low-pressure event gave youth with little experience or confidence in cricket a chance to try the sport. It was a collaboration between the City of Brantford, Brant County Cricket League, BGC Brantford, and Brantford Youth Council. The program concept was developed by the Brantford Youth Council and provides opportunities for youth who consider themselves “bad at sports” to gain skills, meet new people and have fun, while promoting social inclusion and cross-cultural exchange through play.





Brantford Immigration Partnership

Established in spring 2020, the Brantford Immigration Partnership (BIP) represents a network of stakeholders working together to create a welcoming community for New Canadians. Over the past year, the BIP developed a number of events and programs to support cultural inclusivity.

Flavours of Brantford: In collaboration with the Grand River Community Health Centre (GRCHC), this program offered free cooking classes for newcomers and community residents. Participants shared recipes and stories from their culture, while establishing new community connections and friendships.

Newcomer Welcome Day 2024: Over 200 individuals attended an event hosted by over 35 service providers/community organizations. Newcomers enjoyed a variety of activities while making connections to local resources and programs.

Building Belonging EarlyON Project: In collaboration with EarlyON Community Living Brant, Child and Family Services of Grand Erie, YMCA Immigrant Services, and Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board (BHNCD SB), this pilot project created engagement opportunities between EarlyON staff and families, while also designing and delivering culturally informed programming, holiday celebrations and events.

Brantford Water Welcome Program: Provided newcomer families the opportunity to learn swimming and water safety basics, while also connecting them to Brantford's aquatic recreational programs at the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre.





Healthy Kids Program

Since 2015, the Healthy Kids Program has offered a wide range of programs and awareness campaigns to support child well-being in Brantford)

Healthy Kids Bright Futures aims to support childhood development as measured by the Early Development Index (EDI) by decreasing vulnerability in the 5 domain areas of the EDI. Throughout 2024, this program stream offered various opportunities focused on equitable access to physical health and wellbeing resources:

March Break Activities

Welcomed over 1,200 children ages 0 – 14 to enjoy free access to painting, swimming, skating, music lessons, pottery, coding, martial arts, dance classes, and ninja warrior classes across Brantford.

“Has Your Child Skipped Today?” Campaign

In collaboration with local organizations, over 6,000 free skipping ropes and dance streamers were distributed to children and youth in Brantford, highlighting the benefits of active movement on childhood development and learning.

Storybook Walk

In partnership with Margot’s Place and EarlyON Child and Family Centres, this free event brought together children and caregivers to enjoy music, movement, Zumba, and engaging with the outdoors through a storybook walk.

Healthy Eating Skills

In partnership with Woodview Mental Health and Autism Services, children ages 5-14 years old had the opportunity to practice social skills in a supportive, structured environment while learning the benefits of healthy eating and cooking.

Little Chefs and Cooking is Fun

In partnership with EarlyON Community Living Brant, and Child and Family Services, these programs were hosted for children ages 2-6 to support families in emphasizing the importance of healthy eating and nutritious food choices.





Healthy Kids, All Kids aims to support inclusion practices of children and youth programs and organizations, resulting in increased diversity in participation. Some key initiatives developed include:

B United Events

In collaboration with 10 community partner agencies, Healthy Kids All Kids hosted three community events focused on helping Brantford newcomers feel at home in the city. Events included features like coding, face painting, Indigenous craftmaking, robotics, African games, food, and music.

Training and Education

Over 50 participants from 15 different child serving organizations have attended a first session in a two-part series of introductory equity, diversity and inclusion workshops.



Brantford-Brant Business Resource Enterprise Centre

Over 50 participants from 15 different child serving organizations have attended a first session in a two-part series of introductory equity, diversity and inclusion workshops.

Futurpreneur Partnership

Through a long-standing partnership with Futurpreneur the BRC has provided tailored mentorship, financing, grant funding and business advisory services to underrepresented entrepreneurs, helping them launch and grow sustainable businesses.

RAISE Grant

Through active promotion of the RAISE grant, which provided funding opportunities for racialized individuals, BRC works to break down financial barriers to entrepreneurship. Through these partnerships the BRC can provide access to resources, address systemic barriers, and create opportunities for diverse business owners.





In Partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University

Introduction to Indigenous Matters Course

In January 2025, the City of Brantford launched a free, online learning course to provide community members with an opportunity to learn about Indigenous peoples experiences, history and culture. Offered through the Department of Indigenous Studies, Law and Social Justice, the course modules guide participants through the lives of Indigenous communities before contact, the dynamics of early contact, and contemporary issues and experiences.



Summit for Creative Community Solutions

Hosted by the Laurier Hub for Community Solutions, this inaugural event included keynote speakers, presentations, and interactive workshops featuring community leaders, academics, creators and entrepreneurs, all centered around the themes of innovation, sustainability, and inclusion.



Community ChangeMaker Program

Developed in partnership with Laurier LaunchPad, this free six-week course teaches project management, program design and budgeting, and supports the development of grassroots projects and programs that support social development in Brantford.

ChangeMakers Fall 2024 Cohort: Cultivating Belonging

This series focused on increasing a sense of social belonging in Brantford. Projects developed include:

- **Neurodivergent Arts Collective by Mikayla Hughes:** A drop-in arts space designed for neurodiverse individuals of all ages to engage in independent and collaborative art projects while building social connections.
- **Activ4Kids Sports Experience by Chris Kartik:** A low-barrier recreational program for parents and young children to explore a variety of sports together while strengthening bonds and encouraging active lifestyles.
- **New Paths Brant by Katie MacDonald, Nancy Smith, and Serena Fordham:** A project advocating for long-term sustainable, accessible, and supportive housing solutions for adults with disabilities.
- **Eagle Place Community Pantry by Maggie Nendick:** A dedicated community pantry for fresh and shelf-stable foods and staples to be located in the Eagle Place Community.
- **Shared Pulse by Sumedha Mongia:** A program to promote cross-cultural connection, reduce social isolation in Newcomers and create relationship-building opportunities through a Bollywood-inspired dance program.
- **The Little Neighbourhood That Could by Chad Martin:** A community engagement initiative to create and activate a health and wellness garden at City View Park.



Fusion Beats

Held at the historic Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts, the second annual Fusion Beats event celebrated the diverse talent of artists living in Brantford. A collaborative effort between Laurier Brantford, Conestoga Students Inc., and the City of Brantford, the event featured headline performer Layla Staats, a musician, filmmaker, and activist based in Six Nations. The lineup also included:

- **The Bald Parts of Their Hearts:** Laurier Social Work students Ashley Robertson and Brent Watts
- **Akhil Prabhu:** First-year Criminology student and flamenco guitarist
- **Kaya Kanashiro:** UX Design student and vocalist
- **Sreekar Kanchi:** Master's in applied computing student and Hindi rapper
- **KAOS Dance Team:** Laurier Brantford's dance team
- **Hadassah Olagoke-Daniel:** Local post-secondary student and Yoruba singer
- **Amanpreet Singh:** Local post-secondary student who mixes Desi hip-hop with freestyle
- **Karan Singh:** Local post-secondary student and traditional Punjabi classical and folk singer
- **Paromita Kar & Alex Iarocci:** Local Brantford artists collaborating in dance and music





International Film Series – Fall 2024 & Winter 2025

The International Film Series offers the community a free opportunity to explore and celebrate diverse cultures and languages through cinema. Before each screening, an invited speaker shares insights and perspectives related to the film and their work in the community. These events foster cultural inclusion by promoting understanding and appreciation through film and the arts. Films that have been/will be shown this year include:

Fall 2024

- A Peck of the Cheek (India)
- Becoming Astrid (Sweden)
- Pan’s Labyrinth (Spain)
- Parasite (Korea)
- A Separation (Iran)
- Guten Tag, Ramón (Mexico)



Winter 2025

- Angry Indian Goddesses (India)
- Shoplifters (Japan)
- Let the Right One In (Sweden)
- Once (Ireland)
- Wadjda (Saudi Arabia)
- Rams (Iceland)

Support for Community Initiatives and Events

- Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration
- Pride in the Park
- Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- Sisters in Spirit Vigil





2024 Flag Raisings

- Bell Let's Talk - Mental Health
January 24, 2024
- International Women's Day
March 8, 2024
- Transgender Day of Visibility
March 28, 2024
- Autism Awareness Month
April 2, 2024
- Youth Sports Week
April 6, 2024
- Sikh Heritage Month
April 12, 2024
- National Volunteer Week
April 15, 2024
- Brantford Youth Council
May 1, 2024
- Mental Health Week
May 6, 2024
- National Public Works Week
May 21, 2024
- Intergenerational Day
May 30, 2024
- 2SLGBTQ+ Pride
June 1, 2024
- ALS Awareness Month
June 21, 2024
- International Villages Kick Off
June 28, 2024
- Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
August 29, 2024
- FASD Awareness Day
September 4, 2024
- World Suicide Prevention Day
September 10, 2024
- National Day of Truth and Reconciliation
September 23, 2024
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month
October 1, 2024
- Senior's Day
October 4, 2024
- Cadet Week
October 7, 2024
- PROBUS
October 11, 2024
- Transgender Day of Remembrance
November 20, 2024
- Hindu Heritage Month
November 21, 2024
- International Day for the Elimination
of Violence Against Women
November 25, 2024
- MADD Project - Red Ribbon
November 28, 2024
- Christian Heritage Month
December 3, 2024



