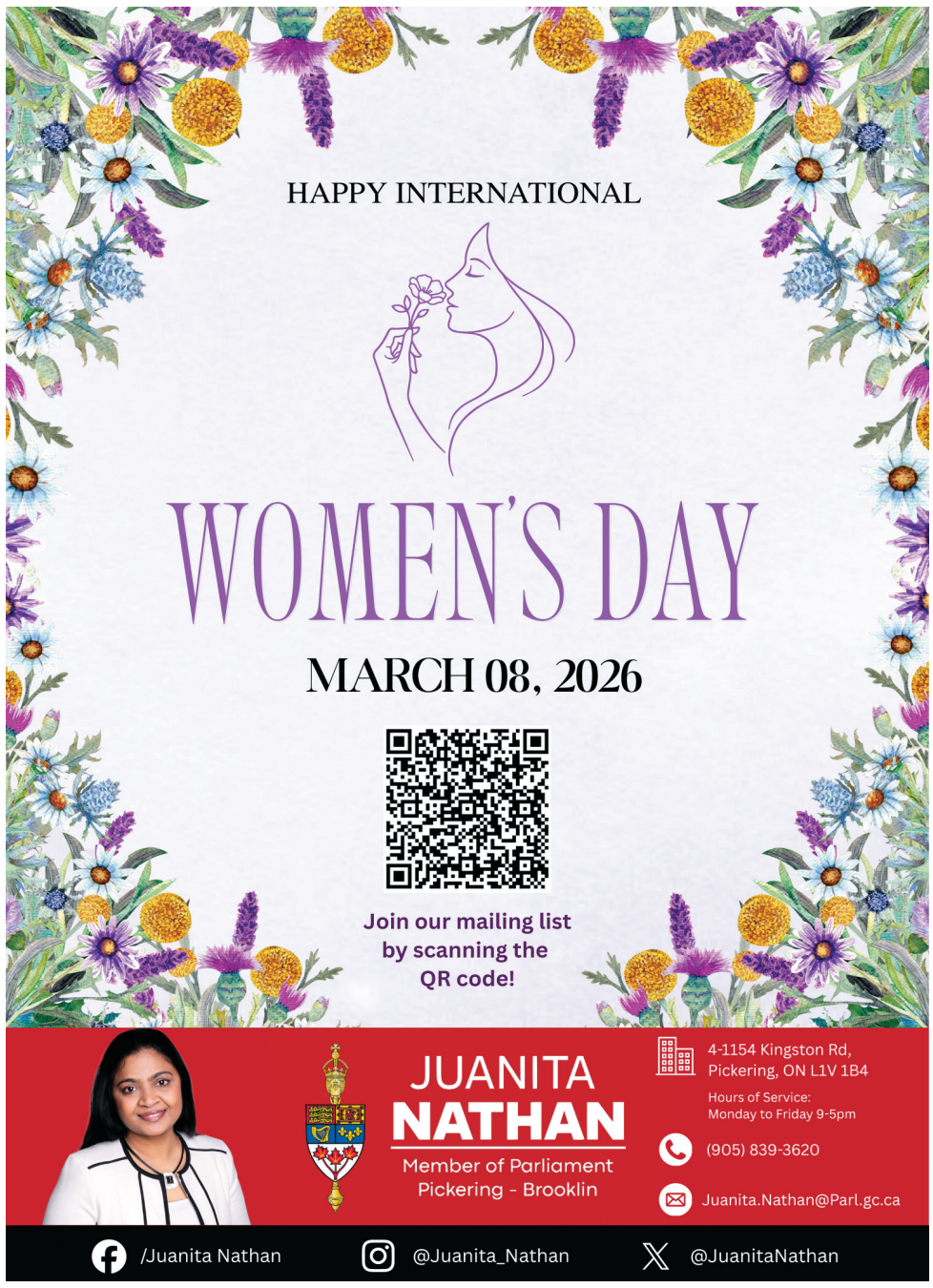

Celebrate International Women's Day at the Region of Durham's community event

Whitby, Ontario – Each year on March 8, communities around the world mark International Women's Day, a global celebration of the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women, and a vital call to action for advancing gender equality.

In recognition of this important occasion, the Region of Durham, together with local municipalities and community partners, is proud to host its annual International Women's Day event. This free event is open to members of the public from across the region.

This year's theme is "Balance the scales", highlighting the importance of health and well-being for women and girls. The event will feature a vendor market, a guided grounding exercise, performances, and a panel discussion focused on mental, holistic and overall wellness.

International Women's Day

International Women's Day (often referred to in queries like "International Day of Women") is a global celebration observed annually on March 8. It honors the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women while serving as a call to action for accelerating gender equality, women's rights, and ending discrimination.

The day has roots in early 20th-century labor movements and women's suffrage efforts. It began with events like a 1909 "Woman's Day" in New York and was formalized internationally in 1911, with the United Nations officially recognizing March 8 in 1975.

For 2026, International Women's Day falls on Sunday, March 8.

Many events and activities are planned around that date (or nearby days like Friday, March 6, for practical gatherings).

2026 ThemesThe official IWD campaign theme is "Give To Gain", emphasizing that generosity, collaboration, and investing in women lead to shared progress and gender equality.

The UN/UN Women theme is "Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls", focusing on dismantling barriers like discriminatory laws, weak protections, and harmful norms to ensure equal justice and rights for women and girls worldwide.

It's celebrated worldwide with rallies, events, workshops, social media campaigns (often using #IWD2026 or #GiveToGain), and advocacy. In some countries, it's a public holiday; purple (justice/dignity) and green (hope) are common symbolic colors.(Note: There's also a related UN observance, the International Day of Women and Girls in Science on February 11, which promotes women's participation in STEM fields. For 2026, its theme involves synergizing AI, social science, STEM, and finance for inclusive futures—but your query aligns most closely with the March 8 event.).

Women's Month typically refers to Women's History Month, which is observed every year in March (March 1–31). This is the most common recognition in the United States and several other countries (like Germany and Australia), where it's dedicated to celebrating women's contributions to history, society, culture, and more.Key Details:Why March? It aligns with International Women's Day on March 8, which has been a global observance since the early 1900s (officially recognized by the UN in 1975). Women's History Month originated from efforts in the 1970s–1980s, starting as a week in March and expanding to the full month in 1987 via U.S. Congressional action and presidential proclamations.

In 2026 (since today is February 20, 2026): Women's History Month runs from Sunday, March 1 through Tuesday, March 31. International Women's Day falls on Sunday, March 8.

Celebrating the voices and leadership of women in our community on International Women's Day

Whitby, Ontario – The following statement is being issued on behalf of John Henry, Regional Chair and Chief Executive Officer for The Regional Municipality of Durham:

"Today (March 8), we celebrate International Women's Day—a global tradition now 115 years strong—recognizing the leadership, creativity and innovation of women and girls whose contributions inspire progress and strengthen communities.

In Durham Region, women are leading, creating, problem solving and driving change in every corner of our community—in their homes, workplaces, businesses, community organizations and local government. Their ideas, skills and passion make a real difference every day, and our region is better because of them.

International Women's Day is also about looking ahead. It's about building a community where girls grow up confident in their abilities, supported in their goals and encouraged to follow their interests.

While progress has been made, we know there's more work ahead. Support, opportunity and well-being remain essential for women and girls to thrive. By working together, we can help create the conditions that empower women and families across Durham Region to succeed.

Today and every day, let's recognize and celebrate the women in our lives, listen to their stories and thank them for the many ways they contribute to our community."