



## THE IHLA NEWSLETTER

**Dear Friends and Colleagues of IHLA,**

***I write this message to you all with a smile as I think of IHLA's 20<sup>th</sup> Year celebrating Mother Language Day in our city and in our Province!***

***With over 600 participants and attendees, over 20 IHLA Member Schools participating in the Showcase, our day was a glorious celebration of what happens when, as a collective, we all work together in the name of harmony, mutual intercultural and multilingual understanding and open hearts.***

**VOLUME 20  
ISSUE 2  
EDITOR: MARINA  
CASTRO**

March 19, 2023

***A sincere and heartfelt thanks to all who attended and participated, from the beautiful showcases to performances by our heritage language students and their teachers. A HUGE THANK YOU from EVERYONE to our amazing and dedicated volunteers without whom MLD wouldn't have been as well executed as it was. Thank you, thank you.***

***This year we had the wonderful honour of having two guests, Member of the National Coalition for Community Based Heritage Language Schools, Ana Lucia Lico and Member of the National Commission on International Languages and creator of the podcast, "It's All About Language", Norah Lulich Jones from Washington DC, and our own Professor Olenka Bilash to provide words of motivation, inspiration and validation of the work to which we are dedicated and passionate—our heritage mother languages and cultures.***

***In celebrating 20 Years of Mother Language Day, as a collective of like minded people dedicated to the support, promotion and sustainment of multilingualism, multiculturalism and above all, mutual respect***



***and appreciation of diversity in all its shapes, sounds, colours and ways of doing and being, we must not ever rest on our laurels—our work continues.***

***This year, I have been re-reading a text gifted to me by a colleague many moons ago and a quote that in these weeks came back to me as I reflect upon our IHLA Mother Language Day 2023, celebrating its 20th Year:***

***“No one leaves his or her world without having been transfixed by its roots, or with a vacuum for a soul. We carry with us the memory of many fabrics, a self soaked in our history, our culture; a memory, sometimes scattered, sometimes sharp and clear, of the streets of our childhood, of our adolescence; the reminiscence of something distant that suddenly stands out before us, in us, [...].”  
(Freire, 1992, p.24)***

***These words by Paulo Freire in his book, Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed, speak to our collective resilience and to the appreciation of our important moments as heritage language speakers. That we help highlight each other and allow spaces to recount our unique stories that are the fabric of IHLA and the places and spaces we occupy on a daily basis. We should never underestimate the power of how important it is that we be joyful in all ways of who we are and how we express our multilingual and multicultural identity(ies). It is in this way that we celebrate and embody Mother Language Day everyday.***

***In solidarity,  
Antonella Cortese  
IHLA President 2022-2023***



## NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

(Edmonton Marathi Shala)



Holi is a two-day festival. It is celebrated with great joy in India and other countries. It is a colourful festival with people of all religions celebrating with joy. After burning the Holika idol, people gather and daub colours at each other.

The word 'Holi' derives its name from 'Holika'. According to Hindu mythology, Holika was the sister of demon King Hiranyakashyapu.

As per the legend, Prahlad, a staunch devotee of Lord Vishnu, Prahlad was born to Hiranyakashyapu. Prahlad's devotion to Lord Vishnu did not go down well with his father. As a result of this, Hiranyakashyapu tried to kill his son several times, but the Vishnu devotee escaped unhurt every time, frustrating the demon king.

After numerous unsuccessful attempts, the demon king thought of taking help from his sister, Holika, who had a boon by Lord Brahma which said she would not be burnt in a fire.

As per the myth, Holika had a shawl which would protect her from the flames of a fire. The demon king asked her sister to take Prahlad on her lap and set the two on fire. Prahlad kept chanting the name of Lord Vishnu and as the fire got intense, a gust of wind removed the shawl from Holika and went on to cover Prahlad, killing the enchantress in the flames.

Also, Holi is the symbol of love of Lord Krishna and Radha. It says that Lord Krishna used to play Holi with Gopikas in Vrindavan.

Another powerful life lesson Holi communicates is equality. People celebrate the festival with colors. Once color is applied on the face everyone is the same. The skin color of all becomes the same and we all are equal in all manners.

Edmonton Marathi Shala children have celebrated the Holi festival in a unique way. Teachers told them the mythological story of Holika Dahan, Krishna and Radha. Children have learnt the names of colours in Marathi. They created different sentences and expressed their views on Holi. May this Holi bring colours of Happiness, success and satisfaction in each and everyone's life!

Gauri Lahurikar  
Teacher  
Edmonton Marathi Shala

## NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

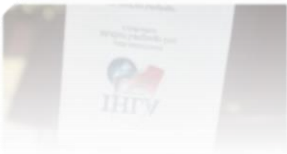
(The Czech Heritage Language Society of Edmonton)

### NEWS FROM THE CZECH HERITAGE LANGUAGE SOCIETY OF EDMONTON

It has been a busy time since the start of new year at Czech school. We were learning food vocabulary. Children liked the story “O Otesánkovi”, a fairytale about a tree stump that looked like a little boy. So a wife and husband who did not have any children brought him to their house and took care of him as a real child. But Otesánek was hungry all the time “Mámo, já mám hlad!” and ate everything around him including his mama and tata (but no worries, they were saved at the end) Popular part of learning about food was “blind testing”. Children closed their eyes and tasted samples of fruit and vegetables and had to guess what they were eating. Children also played to visit a restaurant and order drinks and meals.



And of course, the celebrations of Mother Language Day were coming up. We were busy practicing and getting ready for our first performance with IHLA organization. The theme selected for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of MLD was “My Heritage Language from the Past, Today and Looking Towards the Future”. We chose to present folk songs that connect the Czech language for many centuries. These songs were passed down orally from generation to generation. They were sung by mothers to their children or by grandparents to their grandchildren. Older kids sang them during games, for joy and pleasure, sometimes even during the light work they had to do to help their parents. These songs, popular among the people, also helped to keep alive the Czech language, which had been suppressed many times in the history of the Czech nation.



Children and teachers had so much fun to perform these four songs to the audience: a song about a happy dog, about how children herd sheep, a whimsical song about a mosquito wedding and about an earthworm that likes to dance. Czechs living in Canada teach their children all these songs that will always remind us of all of our childhood, our family, and our country.

Thank you, IHLA, for organizing this beautiful event that connects heritage schools in Edmonton and that also reminds us how important for individuals and families is to keep their mother tongue.

## NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

(St Philip Italian Language Program)



On Tuesday, February 21, 2023, **St. Philip School** celebrated the beginning of Lent with a “Carnevale”!!! As the season of our Catholic Ordinary Time ends, Lent begins. Shrove Tuesday marks the last day before Jesus’ departure into the desert for 40 days and 40 nights. Lent is a time for all of us to change our hearts and to prepare for the death and resurrection of Jesus. Being part of “Carnevale” allowed the students, staff, and community of St. Philip School to have an authentic Italian experience.

The students engaged in many different activities that provided them the opportunity to experience and celebrate Italian Culture as it is done globally. These stations and activities included mask making, gelato tasting, games, face painting, baked goods and many more.

## Mother Language Day review

### Reflections on IHLA's MLD on February 25, 2023

Coming to IHLA's Mother Language Day celebration was an amazing and inspirational opportunity for me!

Inspirational on a personal level because it gave me an opportunity to reflect about and connect with my own mother language and how I live that with my sons, with mixed feelings of missing home and finding home. Inspirational on a professional level because it showed beautiful ways to bring together people from such diverse and enriching backgrounds. I came home full of ideas to share with my colleagues from the Coalition of Community-Based Heritage Language Schools as well as with a few Brazilian associations in the US and beyond.

Being in the audience, watching and even helping a little bit here and there with the backstage preparations, showed me just how much strength there is in bringing people together to promote the value of diversity in perspectives and cultures for both adults and children. That strength has a ripple effect over participants and those close to them well after the event is over.

Being a speaker in the event expanded my view of our roles as heritage language advocates wherever we are. Several people, such as parents and teachers, approached me to chat a bit about my speech reinforcing how much we need to unite to remain strong and to reach more. It was warming to my heart to, once again, realize how many similarities we have with each other, and that we share more common values than we realize, regardless of where we were born or call home.

On a more personal level, coming to Edmonton was also heartwarming for the chance to be closer to dear Antonella and to get to know Mrs. Norah Jones. How precious!

My perception of IHLA's work is that the association is all about recognizing, valuing, and multiplying, from the individual, groups, schools all the way to the city and province level. I was very surprised to see so many students, especially older ones, engaged in and excited with the chance to show a bit of who they are. To me, that was also very motivating, especially with my research being focused on the connection of teenagers with their heritage language, which I had the pleasure to share a little bit of during that special dinner you offered us.

I wish IHLA's team the best in keeping up the excellent work not only attending the communities of Edmonton but also serving as an example for other provinces in and beyond Canada, hoping the partnership with the Coalition can remain strong. I'm also hoping a couple of board members can come to our conference this year in October!

Once again, I want to say a big thank you for making it possible for me to attend IHLA's Mother Language Day. It was both a privilege and an honor that I'll carry with me for a long time.

**Ana Lucia Lico** Co-Founder and Executive Director, *Brazilian Association for Culture and Education (ABRACE)*

### *What does joy look like to you?*

Here's a visualization of joy I'll share:

Joy is arriving at the Mother Language Day Festival of the IHLA with roads and sidewalks filled with snow and ice and temperatures well below zero and drinking in that these elements are no match for the energy of the young celebrants who arrive clothed in their cultures' heritage clothing and carrying foods, props, and elements of their cultural showcases.

Joy is the pride and delight with which they wear and carry the outward symbols of an identity and history that they embrace along with that of their Canadian identity.

Joy is youth happily nervous in preparation for presentation of their heritage culture and language through song, dance, or recitation. Joy is having peers to share the nervous practice with ahead, all while eating snacks and running around in the basement set aside for their energy, whooping and playing and talking with peers who come from a multiplicity of heritages – a basement reflecting the world: all one, all together.

Joy is running upstairs to set up showcases filled with colorful cloth, crafts, photos, and stories, all carefully arranged to tell the story the young people themselves want to tell of their heritage, their identity, their lives and that of their families.

Joy is young people being on stage, frightened yet exuberant, sharing one small but important cultural and language production before an audience of adults and peers of multiple cultures.

For all of us, and for each participant in Mother Language Day, joy is realizing that our own stories are unique. That we have a voice. That we have something beautiful to share. That we're part of a world where we can receive the uniqueness of others with joy.

The joy I experienced at MLD 2023 welled up from my recording for podcast the excited voices of small children and adolescents, and watching and recording music and dance from the showcase balcony perch provided for my work. My joy expanded as I watched youth self-discovery unfold in the celebration.

What an honor it was for me to address the assembled families and educational leaders that made this journey of joy and self-discovery possible.

The world needs joy. The world needs the confidence plus humility that multilingualism and multiculturalism bring to human beings.

The world needs many more anniversaries of your Mother Language Day.

**Norah Lulich Jones** Owner Fluency Consulting Host, *It's About Language* podcast  
Board Member, JNCL-NCLIS

*MLD Comments – Filipino Language and Culture School of Edmonton*

On behalf of the FILIPINO LANGUAGE AND CULTURE SCHOOL OF EDMONTON, I wish to give my most appreciative and sincerest CONGRATULATIONS to IHLA for a very SUCCESSFUL and CREATIVE CELEBRATION of the 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY of MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY.

After going through years of uncertainties due to COVID-19, IHLA has proven its Resilience in the PRESERVATION and RETENTION of our Mother Tongue. A Legacy that will be kept and be treasured by many generations to come.

It was so uplifting and inspiring to hear two keynote Speakers, namely – ANA LUCIO LICO, a Brazilian by heritage and a co-founder of ABRACE (Brazilian Association for Culture and Education, a community – Based School in Virginia, USA. Presently, also, taking her master’s degree in Linguistics focusing on Heritage Language. And, NORAH JONES, a Croatian by heritage and an Independent Educational Consultant. Her goal is to bring to a challenging world and era the voice and stories of human beings through the lens of language but creating and hosting of podcast.

And, last but not least, is our Dearly Beloved Friend and Mentor – DR. OLENKA BILASH, co-founder of NAHLA (Northern Alberta Heritage Language Association), former name of IHLA. Dr. Bilash, for over 40 years, is the ROCK and PILLAR and a Frontier of several fields of practice in Education, Immersion, Bilingual Pedagogue, Aboriginal Language Education, and many more. She recently retired from her position as Professor in the Faculty of Education, at the University of Alberta, but continues as the Director/Advisor of the Ukrainian Language Education Centre at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies.

Our fifteen (15) Heritage Language Schools in Edmonton without exception, have showcased the importance of each of their Mother Tongue through music, dance, poetry, drama, and fashion show of their traditional costumes / attires, and display of arts, and culture. Creatively, Joyfully, and Proudly each and everyone ECHOED – “MY HERITAGE LANGUAGE: FROM THE PAST, TODAY, and LOOKING TOWARDS the FUTURE! “

TO EVERYONE, THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR AN EXCELLENT CELEBRATION!

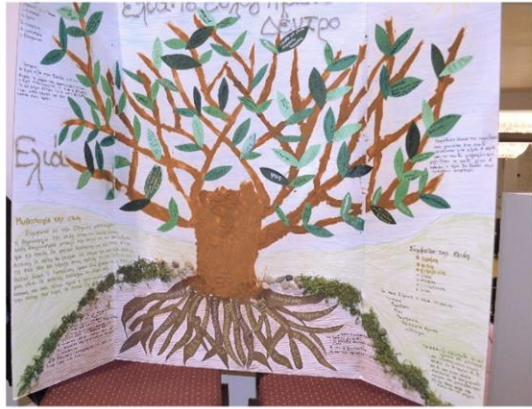
Josephine Pallard  
School Principal  
Filipino Language and Culture School of Edmonton



# MLD PHOTO GALLERY

Photos will be shared with all school principals

Thank you to all our wonderful, volunteers!



*A heartfelt thank you to Juneli School of Nepali Language and Culture for video streaming services.*

## Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the Bangla protest that then lead to the UNESCO declaration of International Mother Language Day in 1998



The Bangladesh Canadian Association of Edmonton



*The idea to celebrate International Mother Language Day was the initiative of Bangladesh. It was approved at the 1999 UNESCO General Conference and has been observed throughout the world since 2000. (International Mother Language Day | UNESCO)*

## Language Project at the University of Alberta!

~ If you're interested in taking part in the research project, please scan the QR code below, or contact Logan Mahoney: [lpmahone@ualberta.ca](mailto:lpmahone@ualberta.ca) ~

### DO YOU SPEAK ANOTHER LANGUAGE AT HOME?



For more information and to sign up:



<https://sites.google.com/ualberta.ca/heritagelanguagesinalberta>

This study has been approved by a University of Alberta Research Ethics Board.  
(Study ID Pro00110765)

**Investigators:**

Dr. Martin Guardado  
Dr. Yvonne Lam  
Dr. Evangelia Daskalaki  
Dr. Rika Tsushima

We are doing a research study with families who speak **Spanish, Japanese, Punjabi, or Portuguese** at home. We would like to invite your family to take part if:

- you have children aged 18 or younger
- you speak one of the above languages to your children
- you want to talk about how you help your children learn your language
- you want to share how you feel about speaking a language that's not English at home
- your children want to do some activities, such as telling a story, in the home language

The study will take about 3 hours over two different days. We will meet online via Zoom on the first day (no account required). For the second day, we will meet in person, and the session will be video recorded. We will give you a \$50 gift card for spending time with us.

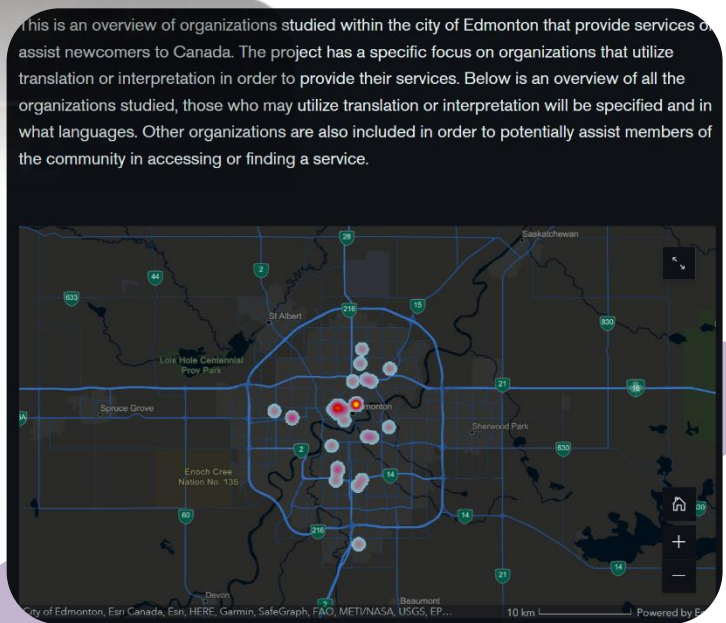
## Spaces of Translation and Interpretation in Edmonton



**Thank you to everyone who took part in the research from the University of Alberta - Mapping Spaces of Translation and Interpretation in Edmonton.**

**To view the website please click on the link below:**

[Spaces of Translation and Interpretation in Edmonton \(arcgis.com\)](https://www.arcgis.com)



~ Professional Development 2022-2023 and important dates ~

*(Please check our website [www.ihla.ca](http://www.ihla.ca) for updates as well as our Facebook page)*



*\*\* Please make sure to register for workshops so that you are able to have access to that PD session\*\**

- **March 2023 – Rika Tsushima: Language assessment for teachers of heritage schools (POSTPONED)**

Date & Time – TBC, details will be sent by email at a later date

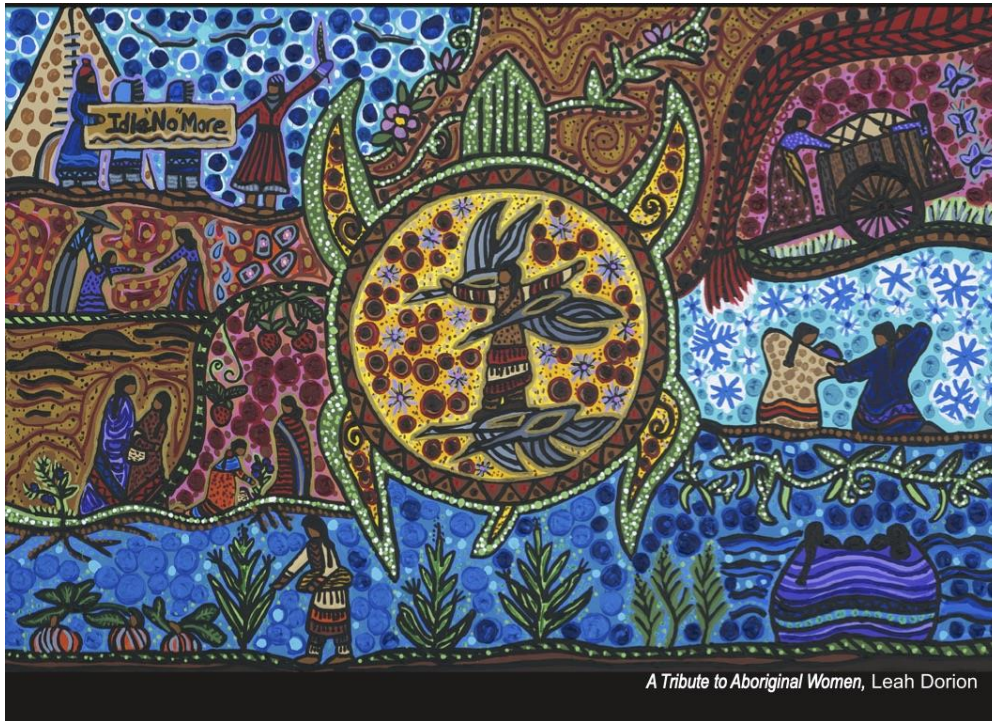
- **April 2023 – FIRST AID & CPR COURSE**

Date & Time – TBC, details will be sent by email at a later date

- **April 2023 – Karren Wikkerin**

Date & Time – TBC, details will be sent by email at a later date

## ~Free Indigenous Courses at University of Alberta~



Subtitles: Arabic, French, Portuguese (European), Italian, Vietnamese, German, Russian, English, Spanish

***Indigenous Canada is a 12-lesson Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) from the Faculty of Native Studies that explores Indigenous histories and contemporary issues in Canada. From an Indigenous perspective, this course explores key issues facing Indigenous peoples today from a historical and critical perspective highlighting national and local Indigenous-settler relations. Topics for the 12 lessons include the fur trade and other exchange relationships, land claims and environmental impacts, legal systems and rights, political conflicts and alliances, Indigenous political activism, and contemporary Indigenous life, art and its expressions. (University of Alberta website) For more information about the course and to enrol, please follow the link below: Indigenous Canada | Coursera.***

[Indigenous Canada | Coursera](#)

~Being a member in good standing~

*To be an IHLA member in good standing your school needs to:*

- a) complete a registration form, b) pay IHLA membership fees,*
- c) participate at MLD through a table (and a book or presentation),*
- d) volunteer at IHLA fundraising events, and e) participate in at least 3 IHLA sponsored professional development sessions.*

~Follow us on social media~

Please follow us on our Instagram @edmontonihla and International Heritage Language Association our Facebook page for more updates



International Heritage Language Association @edmontonihla

Website:

[www.ihla.ca](http://www.ihla.ca)

Contact:

780 – 760 0700