

Raise the flag, show your pride

Canadians are known for being a demure lot, but as our Olympic athletes make their presence felt on the medal podium, it's a reminder of all that should be a source of pride.

Many residents already get this — witness the display of the Canadian flag making its presence known in the windows of homes on residential streets to local businesses, all in support of our Olympians at the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi, Russia.

For those who need a reminder, there is much to be proud of, not just in Sochi, but here at home and around the world.



February is Black History Month and nowhere is the pride more evident than in Oakville, which served as a stop on the Underground Railroad as blacks fled slavery in the U.S. to freedom in Canada.

Check out the displays and special events being hosted this month in local schools, Town Hall and the local Oakville Museum in honour of that pivotal role. Captain R. Wilson Public School is named after the Oakville mariner, who smuggled slaves from the U.S. to freedom in Oakville.

As controversy swirls around the human rights affronts being levelled at the LGBT communities at the Games in Russia, venues in Canada are standing up for those communities, their rights and flying the rainbow flag as a display of that support.

In both respects, Canada has led globally in the respect for human rights and shown its colours in being a supportive, inclusive country and people.

While we may all get a little grumpy as winter wears on and wears on us, we should reflect on all that being Canadian and being residents of this nation means to each of us.

It means our athletes are excelling at winter sports.

It means we are well ahead in establishing respect of all races. We are global leaders in our respect of all cultures, religions and lifestyles.

Does it mean everything is perfect? No, not by a long shot.

Just like those athletes who every day push themselves to be at the top of their game, stretch farther, reach higher, if even to set a new standard for themselves, we do the same.

However, when you stop for a breather, when you take a moment to measure where you are, where you've been and where you're headed, Canadians, like our athletes in Sochi, we have much to celebrate.

Let the flags fly, hoist the Canadian colours, be proud and sing out the praises.

There is no better country to call home.

POWERFUL PLAN



From left, Chloe Reelis, 12, Tegan Orr, 12, Maddy North, 11, and Lauren Collett, 12, hold up words of inspiration during the fourth annual Me to We yoga class fundraiser at Power Yoga Canada Oakville Saturday. Maple Grove Public School student Jaime Dalby, 13, attended We Day in Toronto three years ago and was inspired to host a yoga fundraiser for Craig and Marc Kielburger's Me to We cause — a charity that allows local children help youths in Africa and other Third World countries facing hunger, poverty and health issues.

Since its inception, Dalby's event has raised more than \$3,900. This year, the goal was \$1,000.

| photo by Nikki Wesley - Oakville Beaver (Follow on Twitter @halton_photog or facebook.com/HaltonPhotog)

My View

St. Jude's celebrates with concerts

Doug Field

St. Jude's Celebration of the Arts
Artistic Director



Music in a church, as a part of worship, goes back many centuries, but using a church as a concert venue is a more recent phenomenon.

In Oakville, the longest continuous church-sponsored concert series is St. Jude's Celebration of the Arts.

Since 1991, COTA has presented at least three concerts a year, beginning as a showcase for the parish choir, organist and guest soloists.

But a wider representation of the Canadian musical community quickly became part of the mix, including young artists who are now household names: Quartetto Gelato, True North Brass, Cecilia String Quartet.

Today's Celebration of the Arts offers an eclectic mix. While choral music is still at the heart of the series — most of Canada's finest choirs have performed in Oakville — jazz, baroque and chamber music are frequently featured along with vocal and instrumental recitalists.

Over its 23 years, COTA has had a number of artistic directors from varying backgrounds, but each has recognized the 'COTA brand' has stood for artistic excellence and has resisted the temptation to fill the house with obvious crowd-pleasing acts, proving there is an audience for a wide range of music that is well-performed.

Celebration of the Arts is offered as a community service by St. Jude's Church at a cost of \$30.

The 2014-15 season will be announced in the spring, and the following season will be our 25th anniversary, for which big things are planned.

Meanwhile, we look forward to the Montreal Guitar Trio on March 1 and Fugues & Fanfares: music for organ, brass and percussion on May 10.

For more information, visit www.oakvilleconcerts.com.

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