



PSAC TORONTO RACIALIZED MEMBERS COMMITTEE

October 2025

Toronto Racialized Members Committee Newsletter

We are back with our third edition of the Toronto Racialized Members Committee Newsletter! We hope that you have enjoyed reading each edition. We want the content to bring you value and insight, so, if you have ideas, suggestions, or topics you'd like us to cover, we'd love to hear from you! [Contact us](#)

Save the Date!

October 2nd – [Latin American Heritage Month](#) virtual celebration

October 22nd – In-person [Diwali](#) celebration

October 31st – Deadline to apply for [PSAC Ontario 2026 Racialized Members Conference](#)

November (TBD) – Holiday Dinner and Dance

November (TBD) – Toronto Racialized Members Committee Meeting (Special Election)

Thank you, Aswani!

The TRMC Committee announces that our Secretary, Aswani Cherukuri, has stepped down for personal reasons. We are truly grateful for his dedication and contributions and wish him all the best in the next chapter of his journey.

Special Election

A meeting will be held in November to elect a new Secretary. Contact [TRMC](#) or [Nicole Wall](#) to submit advanced notice to nominate and second a member in good standing.

In this edition:

Emancipation Day Recap

Hear from the winner of our raffle for Carnival Day tickets and from Michelle Spencer on Panorama

Labour Day Parade

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EMANCIPATION!



Straight-Talk Cultural Pride

As a Trinidadian, Carnival is in my DNA — the costumes, the music, the rhythm — so watching Caribana's (Toronto Caribbean Carnival) Grand Parade from the sidelines was like asking a chef to eat at someone else's restaurant: fun, but you notice everything. My Caribana memories have always been from the road as a masquerader, so this year felt like the Universe saying, "Take it easy, I go do d work."

From that vantage point, a few challenges stood out. The stage was far too short, making it difficult for onlookers to see, and the placement of the music trucks and fences often blocked the view for those in the official stands. The music was a mixed bag — DJs bouncing from high-energy hits to unexpectedly dated tracks depending on the band. At one point, they played a song so old I swear the costume feathers started shedding in protest.

But there was plenty to love. The King and Queen costumes were nothing short of breathtaking (I even managed a photo with one on my way in). The atmosphere was electric, and the crowd was a beautiful cross-section of humanity — young, old, parents with babies in protective ear gear, and even a couple of dogs happily basking in the sun. The food alone could have been the main event: smoky Jamaican jerk chicken, my first-ever Haitian patties (Sak-Pate), all made even better by the Toronto summer sky.

At its heart, Carnival — whether in the Caribbean, North America or anywhere else — is an expression of freedom, unity, joy, and emancipation. It's more than rum, soca music, or wining down low - it's about people coming together to celebrate culture, creativity, and life itself. For anyone who's never experienced it, the Grand Parade is a feast for the senses — one you will remember long after the feathers settle.

Chris Fitzpatrick

Panorama

Toronto Panorama was another unforgettable night!

Sharing the stage with my daughter, family, and friends brought a pride and joy that never gets old.

The excitement of performing, the energy of the crowd, and the camaraderie with fellow competitors made every moment electric. Placing third this year was an incredible honour, a testament to our dedication and teamwork, but the true reward was performing together with the people I care about.

With Panorama's rich history of celebrating music, culture, and community, each performance feels timeless and deeply meaningful, reminding me why I keep coming back year after year.

Michelle Spencer, Vice-Chair TRMC
'Woman on de bass'





LABOUR DAY

Labour Day, observed on the first Monday in September, honours the contributions and achievements of workers across Canada. Its roots go back to the late 19th century, during a time of rapid industrialization when workers faced long hours, low pay, and unsafe conditions. Inspired by the American labour movement and the push for an eight-hour workday, Canadian labour activists organized rallies and demonstrations to demand fair treatment. The first official Labour Day parade in Toronto took place in 1872, following significant labour struggles such as the Toronto Typographical Union strike. Over time, Labour Day became both a celebration of workers' progress and a reminder of the ongoing fight for equitable wages, safe workplaces, and workers' rights.

The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) has been an active participant in Labour Day parades, highlighting issues affecting public service employees, including workplace safety, collective bargaining, and the protection of workers' rights. Through banners, speeches, and engagement with the community, PSAC demonstrates solidarity with the broader labour movement and ensures the voices of federal, provincial, and territorial public service workers, as well as those in private sectors are heard.

Today, Labour Day is a statutory holiday and a time to reflect on the achievements of workers while honouring the legacy of those who fought for fairness, dignity, and equity in the workplace. PSAC's involvement continues to uphold this important tradition.

This year, members of the Toronto Racialized Members Committee were proud to stand in solidarity with our union siblings and take to the streets of Toronto!

This year's Labour Day Parade in Toronto was one to remember! On September 1st, the PSAC Toronto Racialized Members Committee, alongside the Greater Toronto Area Council (GTAC), joined unions and families from across the city to celebrate workers' rights, equity, and solidarity.

The parade route stretched from Queen Street and University Avenue down to the CNE grounds, and the streets were alive with music, chants, laughter, and community pride. Marching with our committee felt powerful—our flags flying, our voices united, and our message clear: workers' rights are human rights.

PSAC, loud and proud handed out free T-shirts and fun giveaways, which added to the excitement and made sure everyone had something to remember the day by. The vibe was joyful and welcoming, and families from all backgrounds came together to stand in solidarity.

The streets were vibrant, and the message was clear: when workers stand together, we can make change happen. Labour Day isn't just about a day off—it's about remembering the struggles of workers before us and carrying the fight forward for fairness, dignity, and equity today.

Then, the highlight: free access to the CNE! My family and I had an absolute blast inside the fairgrounds. For once, I was the “cool mom” to my teenage son and his friends, who couldn't believe their luck. We rode rides, enjoyed the food, and soaked up the festival energy, it was a perfect way to end the day.

A big thank you to PSAC and CEIU for making our participation possible and supporting the Racialized Members Committee in lifting up workers' voices. This year's parade reminded us that while we march for justice, we also build community, joy, and unforgettable memories along the way. Can't wait for next year! 🙌

Deneka Green, Chair TRMC



LATIN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Celebrating Latin American Heritage Month is an important way to honour the contributions of Latin American communities to Canada's social, cultural, and economic life. This month highlights the rich histories, traditions, and achievements of people from diverse Latin American backgrounds, while also acknowledging the challenges they have faced and continue to face in workplaces across the country. Latin American workers have been integral to advancing labour rights, advocating for fair wages, safe working conditions, and equity, often navigating systemic barriers and discrimination.

For PSAC and the broader labour movement, Latin American Heritage Month provides an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the leadership, resilience, and solidarity of Latin American members. Many continue to navigate exploitative systems such as the migrant farm worker programs, the live-in caregiver program, and migrant construction worker programs. These are transnational and structurally racist programs that provide little to no labour protections and subject workers to harsh and often unsafe conditions here in Ontario. By highlighting their voices and achievements, unions reinforce the importance of equity, inclusion, and representation in all workplaces. It is also a chance to educate members and the public about the historical and ongoing struggles for workers' rights within Latin American communities and how these struggles intersect with broader labour activism in Canada. A donation has been made to Justice for Migrant Workers ([Harvesting Freedom | Justicia for Migrant Workers](#)) as a show of support and solidarity with the Latin X community and in honour of Latin American Heritage Month

Ultimately, Latin American Heritage Month is not just a celebration of culture and identity. It is a reminder of the shared commitment to justice, solidarity, and collective action that strengthens the labour movement and ensures workplaces are fair, inclusive, and respectful for all.

PSAC Racialized Members Committee and the Greater Toronto Area Council present: Stories, Flavours & Moves of Strength

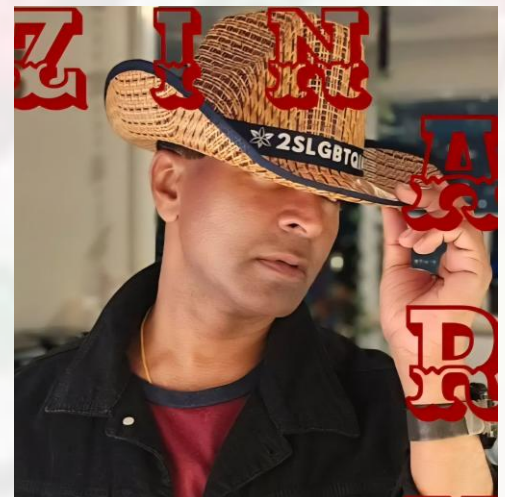
On October 2, 2025, PSAC Toronto RMC and GTAC hosted: Stories, Flavours & Moves of Strength in honour of Latin American Heritage Month. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who joined us and to our incredible guest speakers and performers. Carlos Alegria, for sharing their story and their powerful message of advocacy, representation, and pride. Fernanda Yanchapaxi, for sharing not only their culinary skills and rich traditions, but also stories of resilience. Also, our very own Arun Pillai, who shared not only incredible energy and talent through dance, but also the importance of perseverance. To the organizers and all who came together to honour this special occasion, we thank you.



Carlos Alegria



Courtesy of:
Fernanda
Yanchapaxi



Arun Pillai

Happy Diwali

Diwali, the Festival of Lights, is one of the most important celebrations for many people of South Asian heritage, symbolizing the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil. It is a time for family, community, reflection, and renewal, marked by rituals, gatherings, and acts of generosity. Beyond its cultural and spiritual significance, Diwali also carries meaningful lessons for the labour movement, emphasizing resilience, hope, and the collective pursuit of justice. For millions of workers across the world, these festivities can also offer an opportunity to come together across differences and build an inclusive community.

For workers and unions, Diwali serves as a reminder of the power of unity and solidarity. Just as the festival celebrates overcoming adversity and illuminating the path forward, the labour movement seeks to overcome inequalities, unsafe working conditions, and barriers that workers face. It highlights the importance of coming together as a community to advocate for fairness, equity, and dignity in the workplace.

This year, the Toronto Racialized Members Committee will be hosting an in-person Diwali celebration at the Toronto Regional Office, providing an opportunity for members to come together, honour South Asian heritage, and build connections across the union. By celebrating Diwali, the Committee recognizes the contributions of South Asian members and reinforces the labour movement's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and collective action, reminding us that solidarity and hope are at the heart of both the festival and the fight for workers' rights.

Join us on October 22nd at the Toronto Regional Office from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm for our Diwali celebration! Register [here](#).

International Day for Tolerance

The International Day for Tolerance, observed on November 16, serves as a global reminder of the importance of respect, understanding, and acceptance across diverse communities. For the labour movement, this day holds special significance, particularly in recognizing the experiences of racialized and marginalized workers who have historically faced discrimination in workplaces and society.

Tolerance is foundational to creating inclusive, equitable work environments where every member feels valued and heard. Unions play a vital role in advocating for anti-discrimination policies, equitable access to opportunities, and fair treatment for all workers, regardless of race, gender, religion, or ability. By promoting tolerance, the labour movement strengthens solidarity among members, acknowledging that unity is not the absence of difference, but the recognition and respect of those differences.

For racialized and marginalized workers, tolerance is not merely a principle but a necessary tool for empowerment. It allows their voices to be amplified within unions, ensuring that policies and collective actions reflect the needs of all members. Observing this day also encourages reflection on the persistent barriers these workers face, including systemic bias, unequal pay, and underrepresentation in leadership roles.

Ultimately, the International Day of Tolerance reinforces the labour movement's commitment to social justice and equity. By embracing tolerance, unions not only build stronger, more inclusive workplaces but also advance broader societal change, creating communities where all workers, especially those historically marginalized, can thrive with dignity, respect, and opportunity.