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SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS PROGRAM

The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) has been welcoming Mexican women to Canada ever since it first began. In 1989, this labour mobility scheme brought 37 female workers to Canada, a figure that by 2010 had risen to 609.

In 2019, the number of female seasonal agricultural workers reached a record 774, most of whom were stationed in the regions of Niagara and southwestern Ontario.

As of the end of August 2022, more than 11,000 workers have arrived under the SAWP this year, at least 4 percent of whom have been women. The number is expected to rise in the next agricultural season.



The contributions of Mexican female SAWP workers to the operation of the agroindustrial subsectors of floriculture and horticulture are particularly important, especially considering the long periods of time they work in greenhouses, their dedication, and the quality of their work.

The Consulate General's efforts to promote and protect the rights of female seasonal workers include raising awareness about their rights and obligations, respect for their general work conditions, and health and social security issues in the context of Canadian labour mobility programs.

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Ontario receives more Mexican female seasonal workers than any other province in Canada, most of whom work in the areas of growing flowers, tending trees, and preparing Christmas ornaments and arrangements.

The Consulate General, in collaboration with civil society organizations and the female workers themselves, has been committed to improving worker hiring practices, eliminating any kind of discrimination against women in the workplace, and ensuring they have separate housing and washrooms.

Women are an essential part of the operation of the SAWP.



CULTURAL AFFAIRS

CANADIAN NATIONAL EXHIBITION (CNE)



The Canadian National Exhibition's International Pavilion featured cultural expressions of its guest countries, particularly Mexico.

This iconic venue hosted various performances by the Puro México Folk Dance Ensemble, which offered beautiful dances representative of Mexico's cultural diversity over the two-week period. These events formed part of a broader program that included air shows, cultural displays, exhibitions, parades, rides, and concerts.

The economic impact of the CNE is estimated at around CA\$950 million per year for Toronto and CA\$125 million for the rest of Ontario.

August 19 marked the opening of the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE), Toronto's most emblematic forum for trade and entertainment, with a history stretching back more than one hundred years..

This year's CNE was opened by Toronto Mayor John Tory, who noted that after two years of suspension due to COVID-19 restrictions, the return of the event was being anticipated by the general public with "great enthusiasm".

Mexico made its presence felt at the CNE this year by showcasing its rich culture, cuisine, and traditional products. Mexican entrepreneurs participating in the event had the opportunity to reach out to nearly 1.5 million visitors. The CNE continued through to September 5.



PAN AMERICAN FESTIVAL OPENING RECEPTION



On August 12, the Pan American Food and Music Festival was opened in Toronto. Consul General Porfirio Thierry Muñoz Ledo took part in the opening events and offered his best wishes to the festival's Executive Director, Daniel García Herreros, on the occasion of its tenth anniversary.

Restaurants, food vendors, and renowned chefs from all over the Americas took part in the Pan American Food Festival to promote the rich cuisine of their respective countries.

The festival program also featured live music, dance shows and food contests.

Around 50,000 people attended the event over the course of the weekend at Toronto's Yonge-Dundas Square, where close to 40 presentations were offered by more than 600 artists from different countries and communities.

Over the past decade, the festival has promoted the best of Mexican music, dance, and cuisine in Toronto, contributing to the enrichment and cultural diversity of the city. In 2015, Mexico was the festival's guest of honour.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

“FRAGMENTS AND FICTIONS” GARDINER MUSEUM

Consul General Porfirio Thierry Muñoz Ledo was invited to the opening of the magnificent exhibition “Fragments and Fictions” at the Gardiner Museum in Toronto.

The exhibition features works of painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, and mixed techniques by the Z'otz* Collective, which brings together the Honduran artist Nahúm Flores, the Mexican Erik Jerezano, and the Mexican-Canadian Ilyana Martínez.

In their individual and collective works, these artists display a surrealist aesthetic based on a spontaneous and innovative collaborative process. The name of the collective is taken from the Mayan word for bat, an animal associated with vision, dreaming, and intuition in the Mayan culture of southeastern Mexico.



VISIT TO UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



In the context of the 5th Binational Education Week, the Mexican student travel agency Estudia Viajando invited Consulate General staff to the graduation of 100 Mexican high school students who took part in a summer course at the University of Toronto to improve their English language skills.

Most of the participants were from high schools located in the State of Mexico, and all had the opportunity to exchange their experiences with students from other parts of the world.

The Consulate General promotes academic exchanges between educational institutions in Mexico and Ontario and encourages students interested in pursuing their education in this province to check the universities’ calls for applications.

BOOK BY CECILIA FUENTES MACEDO

As part of a Canadian tour, the Mexican writer Cecilia Fuentes launched her new book, *Mujer en Papel* (Woman on Paper), in the first week of September in Toronto. The book is based on the unfinished memoirs of her mother, the famous actress Rita Macedo, which Cecilia took on the arduous task of compiling, organizing, and editing.

The disjointed narrative of *Mujer en Papel* reveals the fascinations and tribulations in Rita Macedo’s life and her extraordinary legacy in the Golden Age of Mexican cinema, interspersed with previously little-known anecdotes with prominent artists and intellectuals such as the filmmakers Luis Buñuel, José Luis Ibáñez, and Ismael Rodríguez.

The book compiles intimate family stories about the actress, along with touching letters and drawings dedicated to Cecilia by her father, the renowned Mexican author Carlos Fuentes. We welcome our dear and beloved Cecilia to Toronto and encourage members of the Mexican community to read her indispensable new book.



COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

EDUCATION WEEK

From August 22 to August 29, the Consulate General hosted its Fifth Education Week, under the title “La educación para un mejor futuro” (“Education for a Better Future”). In his opening address, Consul General Porfirio Thierry Muñoz Ledo highlighted the importance of education in our lives and the priority that the Mexican government has given to ensuring education for all.

Education is a universal human right and that it needs to be inclusive and of high quality, as defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Consulate General offered a wide range of workshops, forums, and presentations of local educational options for the benefit of Mexicans living abroad. Through a series of messages on social media and through strategic partners in education, our communities were invited to take part in various activities offered in the context of the Fifth Education Week, including open forums, workshops, exhibitions, and orientation sessions about educational issues and pedagogical methods.



CELEBRATION FOR WORKERS AT THE ANDREWS FARM MARKET



On August 14, the Andrews Farm Market in southern Ontario held a celebration for its agricultural workers, in recognition of all their hard work.

The Consulate General was invited to the event and celebrated together with the members of Mexican communities who support and direct these events, such as the organization Enlace Community Link.

The Consulate General staff talked with the seasonal agricultural workers and took a tour around the fields of the farm, accompanying the fruit pickers and inspecting their general work conditions.

The celebration featured a musical program offered by the México Amigo mariachi band, who brightened the evening with some rousing Mexican traditional songs.

VISITTO LONDON, ONTARIO

As part of the expansion of consular services in our jurisdiction, Consulate General staff visited a group of enthusiastic Mexicans who are organizing the Mexican community in London, Ontario, to offer a Mobile Consulate in that city.

The meeting was held at West Park Church, which is being considered as a possible site for the Mobile Consulate. It was attended by Pastor Mario Vaquedano and the project leader, Daniel Salazar, among other Mexicans interested in bringing consular services to the city, which is located 192 km west of Toronto.

Various requests for the services needed were discussed, as well as the need to connect the London community with different activities and programs offered at the Consulate General's head office.



INTERVIEWS WITH MEXICANS: RAMIRO ARTEAGA

His origins: Ramiro was born and raised in Acapulco, in the state of Guerrero. He studied business management at Loyola University of the Pacific. Ramiro is a man who has always been surrounded by women. He was the third in a family of four children, and the only son. He later married Erika and had five daughters. He worked for a few years in Acapulco, until an opportunity presented itself that would change his life.

His path to Canada: His younger sister had come to Canada with her husband as part of the Agricultural Workers' program, through which Canada offers seasonal work to Mexican labourers. His sister encouraged him to look for an opportunity in the Great White North, and Ramiro's curiosity was piqued. Lacking better contacts or options, Ramiro began looking for job opportunities online.

After contacting and applying for many vacancies, the long-awaited day finally arrives: Ramiro is contacted by The Daily Bread Food Bank, an organization based in Toronto that provides food to the population that requires a bilingual person willing to move to Toronto.

The arrival: The landing of Ramiro and his family is quite smooth. The company that hires him from Mexico processes the papers for him and his wife. His prior familiarity with English helps him land the job and adjust to his role quickly. Erika, his wife, takes a little more effort to find her place in Canada. She dedicates some time to the care and adaptation of her daughters, and later she seeks to place herself in the restaurant industry. The first four girls arrive in Canada as small children and quickly adapt to their new country. The youngest was born here, and they all feel at home in a few months.

His work: Ramiro works after 17 years in that food bank that opened the doors of this country to him. He has been climbing the job ladder with several promotions that today allows him to be the Programs and Services Coordinator of The Daily Bread Bank. Ramiro works with people of all nationalities, recently serving a number of people never seen before due to conflicts in the world, particularly in Ukraine and Afghanistan and inflation, which makes it increasingly difficult to survive in Toronto. The organization collects food and money and separates and distributes it through different organizations and programs.

At some point Ramiro finds that many of his newly arrived compatriots do not know Canada. They migrate to work and ignore the beauty of Canadian landscapes. Ramiro proposes to an agency to gather groups of Mexicans for tours around Toronto, and his idea is a great success. Today Ramiro rarely goes on trips, but he makes that those who participate in them have a pleasant experience.

His contributions: Ramiro gives his all to his position at The Daily Bread Food Bank. He is a good man who helps whoever he can. He is interested in help reaching as many people as possible.

Travel is not just a simple source of income. Ramiro is passionate when he talks about uniting the Mexican community. Offering Mexicans the opportunity to travel and get to know the landscapes and history of Canada is a pretext to lend a hand to all those who are alone, those of us who miss relatives, food and climate of our country. Ramiro's trips offer the opportunity to go out in a group, talk and be able, at least for the duration of the journey, to feel closer to home. Ramiro knows it is not difficult to leave behind the family and the country. He knows about loneliness and harsh winters, and joining loneliness, experiences and speaking the same language is what makes us forget problems, depression and boredom for a moment and take a breath to continue.

What he likes most about Canada and what he misses about Mexico: Ramiro likes that nobody messes with you in Canada. It is a safe country surrounded by nature. What he misses the most are those heated talks in which people get excited, get angry and argue with hot blood in their veins: with passion.

What migrants need: Ramiro thinks a mentoring program would be critical for him. A program in which a person, who already knows life in Canada, can help the newcomer to be clear about their situation: How expensive are the rents, the zones, the subway, where to start looking for a job, accessories for the winter, and especially the services can be accessed such as those offered by food banks or public libraries.

Useful info: In this league, all those who need help with food can be registered. Today The Bread Food Bank does not ask questions. It simply helps those who require it. www.dailybread.ca



UPCOMING EVENTS



Mexico will participate in the 47th edition of the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF22) with "Amor y Matemáticas" by Veracruz director Claudia Sainte-Luce. Tape starring Diana Bovio and Roberto Quijano; under the photograph of Carlos Correa.

The film is part of the Contemporary World Cinema section, having the first of four screenings scheduled for September 10 and 12.

The festival also presents "El Suplente" by Argentine director Diego Lerman in co-production with Mexico, Spain, Italy, and France.

"El Suplente" is with notable reflection on the social tensions that many students and teachers in different corners of the Americas face on a daily basis. Performance on September 10 and 15
Information: <http://tiff.net>



Toronto International Festival of Authors



World in Other Words: Spanish Writers in Conversation



Salvador Alanis



Martha Bátiz

Harbourfront (Stage in the Park) September 25
2:30pm ET.

USEFUL LINKS

Presidency of Mexico:

presidencia.gob.mx

Visas and consular services:

<https://consulmex.sre.gob.mx/toronto/index.php/en/>

New appointment service:

<http://citas.sre.gob.mx/>

Tel. 1 424 3090009

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: www.sre.gob.mx

Mexican Embassy in Canada

<https://embamex.sre.gob.mx/canada/index.php/es/>

Information:

www.gob.mx/trámites

Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Mexico: cancham.mx

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