

MEDIA ADVISORY/ PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

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January 28, 2014

**Vaughan Public Libraries (VPL) Kicks-off Black History Month with
Renowned Author and Master Storyteller - Dr. Rita Cox**

Rita Cox shares stories from the Caribbean, Africa and around the world

WHAT: This Black History Month, join Vaughan Public Libraries (VPL) on Feb. 4 at Dufferin Clark Library as award-winning author and master storyteller Dr. Rita Cox shares captivating stories from the Caribbean, Africa and around the world with Grade 6 & 7 students from Glen Shields Public School.

Additional author visits and programs, as well as art exhibits that explore Black culture, will occur throughout the month of February at various branches of VPL.

WHEN: **Tuesday, February 4, 1 p.m.**

WHERE: **Dufferin Clark Library - 1441 Clark Avenue West**
[Click here for map](#)

WHY: To provide destinations where the citizens of Vaughan can celebrate and share the historical and present contributions of Black Canadians.

ATTACHMENTS:

- VPL's Black Heritage Collection
- Dr. Rita Cox
- Bryan Prince
- Underground Railroad Museum
- Art Exhibits (Celia Wilson & Camille Lauren)
- Program Listings for Black History Month
- Partial List of Recommended Books, Music, and Movies

VAUGHAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES' BLACK HERITAGE COLLECTION

VPL's Black Heritage Collection was started in 1989 and is the first of its kind in York Region. It was established in response to the needs of the local community. While the emphasis of this collection is on Black Canadian and Caribbean literature, history, and culture, it also includes materials about the Black experience in general as well as African literature and Afro-American materials. Books, CD's and DVD's that portray Black culture through its arts, crafts, poetry, drama, and fiction are available for all age groups.

Black Heritage materials are available at all branches of VPL. The main collection is located at the Dufferin Clark branch. Non-fiction items are indicated as "BH" (Black Heritage) in the library catalogue. You can find items either in the library or online, by using an author's name, title of work or subject keywords such as "Black Canada" "Black Canadians" "African Americans" or "Caribbean Area".

DR. RITA COX

Dr. Rita Cox is recognized as a Canadian icon, community activists and admired leader in the Black and Caribbean community. Dr. Cox is a librarian by profession, she joined Toronto Public Library as a children's librarian in 1960, and served there until her retirement in 1995. She is an award winning author and a renowned storyteller who has enchanted and entertained audiences across North America, in Europe, Brazil and the Caribbean.

Dr. Cox has won numerous awards, including the 1996 Canadian Library Association Public Service Award and the Black Achievement Award. In 1997, Dr. Cox was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada for her outstanding work in storytelling and literacy. She is also the recipient of honourary degrees from York and Wilfrid Laurier universities.

BRYAN PRINCE

Bryan Prince is a descendent of slaves who came to Canada prior to the American Civil War and has a profound interest in the history of slavery and the Underground Railroad – particularly in the Canadian involvement. He has authored many works which include the books *I Came As A Stranger*, *A Shadow On The Household* and *One More River To Cross*, the script for the television documentary *A Thousand Miles to Freedom* and was the historical consultant for the PBS television documentary *Underground Railroad: The William Still Story*.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD MUSEUM

The underground Railroad Museum is a Family Museum that was built and is operated by the descendants of John Freeman Walls and Jane King Walls. They travelled on the famous Underground Railroad from Rockingham County, North Carolina to Canada. This historic site located in Puce, Ontario was an actual terminal of the Underground Railroad.

ART EXHIBITS

Art exhibits by Celia Wilson and Camille Lauren explore Black culture and identity around the world. Their work will be on display at select VPL locations throughout February.

Celia Wilson

Celia Wilson is a Canadian-Caribbean artist whose work is inspired by the cityscapes of the Greater Toronto Area. She enjoys painting and drawing in a variety of media including acrylic paint, charcoal, pastel and spray paint. Her exhibit, *Fragmented Habitat of a Cultural Landscape*, includes textured paintings and explores the question of identity in multi-cultural aspects beyond the stereotypical representations of Black culture around the world. It is commonly understood that the architectural design of human environments can influence mood and behavior. How does this constant interchange with our surroundings affect our social behaviour? To continue this concept exploration, Wilson incorporates prominent architectural elements into her work. Wilson is inspired by factors that promote or inhibit local social interaction and group formation.

Camille Lauren

Camille Lauren is an award-winning Visual Artist studying illustration at OCAD University. Born on the breezy island of Curacao to Jamaican parents, Camille's passion is expressed through colour. *Art of Ciel* translates to *Art of sky* in French, and she creates mixed-media artwork inspired by nature, sound and emotion. Her first solo Art Exhibit entitled "ALIVE" debuted on April 29 of 2013 in Toronto with much success. Camille's pieces capture a moment, freezing narratives in a vibrant array of colour and texture.

PROGRAM LISTINGS FOR FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS***African & Caribbean Storytime***

In celebration of Black History Month, join us for stories that explore African and Caribbean history and culture. Fun for the whole family!

Dufferin Clark Library	Feb. 18	7 p.m.
Pierre Berton Resource Library	Feb. 3	7 p.m.
Woodbridge Library	Feb. 27	10:30 a.m.

Art Exhibit

Celebrate Black History during the month of February by viewing artworks from two up and coming artists – Celia Wilson and Camille Lauren.

Bathurst Clark Resource Library	Feb. 1 - 28
Dufferin Clark Library	Feb. 1 – 28
Kleinburg Library	Feb. 1 – 28

Black Foundation of Community Networks

Learn more about this local organization and their annual scholarship to a Canadian post-secondary institution.

Dufferin Clark Library

Feb. 12

3:30 p.m.

Author Visit and Artifact Exhibition

Author Bryan Prince reads from *A Shadow on the Household* and exhibits artifacts from the Underground Railroad Museum.

Woodbridge Library

Feb. 24

6:30 p.m.

PARTIAL LIST OF RECOMMENDED BOOKS, MUSIC and MOVIES

Looking for something to read, watch or listen to during Black History Month? Librarians at Vaughan Public Libraries have selected popular titles related to African and Caribbean culture just for you. Use the list below to find recommended items at VPL branches, or contact a librarian for more information.

Junior Picture Books***Amazing Grace***

Hoffman, Mary / JP Hoffm

Although a classmate says that she cannot play Peter Pan in the school play because she is black, Grace discovers that she can do anything she sets her mind to do.

Available at Bathurst Clark and Pierre Berton Resource Libraries

The Black Snowman

Mendez, Phil / BH JP Mende / JP Mende

Jacob is a young inner city boy who dislikes being black and poor. A black snowman challenges Jacob's outlook by telling him all the wonderful things that are black and by encouraging the boy to believe in himself.

Available at Dufferin Clark Library

Junior Fiction***If I Just Had Two Wings***

Schwartz, Virginia Frances / BH J FIC Schwa / J FIC Schwa

Phoebe, Liney, and two children escape their plantation and set out on the secret passage north to freedom.

Available at Ansley Grove, Bathurst Clark, Dufferin Clark, Maple, Pierre Berton and Woodbridge Libraries

Underground to Canada

Smucker, Barbara / J-PB Smuck

Classic story of two young girl's flight from slavery via the Underground Railway.

Available at Bathurst Clark, Dufferin Clark, Pierre Berton and Woodbridge Libraries

Adult Fiction

Push: A Novel

Sapphire/ FIC Sapph

A self portrait of a black teenager, big, fat and unloved, with a father who rapes her and a jealous mother who screams abuse. For Precious, as she is called, hope appears when a courageous teacher, a young black woman, bullies, cajoles and inspires her to learn how to read.

Available at Ansley Grove, Bathurst Clark, Dufferin Clark, Maple, Pierre Berton and Woodbridge Libraries

Beloved

Morrison, Toni / BH FIC Morri/FIC Morri

Pulitzer Prize winning story of the strange things that start happening when a former slave takes in a girl named Beloved.

Available at Bathurst Clark, Dufferin Clark, Kleinburg and Pierre Berton Resource Libraries

Fictional DVDs

Diary of a Mad Black Woman

DVD FIC Diary

A couple with a good marriage that seems solid begins to crumble when she discovers her husband's intentions for divorce.

Available at Bathurst Clark Resource Library

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner

DVD FIC Guess

Academy Award winning actor Sidney Poitier stars in a film about interracial marriage in the 1960s.

Available at Ansley Grove, Bathurst Clark, Dufferin Clark, Maple and Woodbridge Libraries

***The Help* (DVD)**

DVD FIC Help

In Mississippi during the 1960s Skeeter, a southern society girl, returns from college determined to become a writer, but turns her friends' lives, and a small Mississippi town, upside down when she decides to interview the black women who have spent their lives taking care of prominent southern families. Aibileen, Skeeter's best friend's housekeeper, is the first to open up, to the dismay of her friends in the tight-knit black community.

Available at Ansley Grove, Bathurst Clark, Dufferin Clark, Kleinburg, Pierre Berton and Woodbridge Libraries.

CDs

I Am by Beyonce

CD Popular Beyon

Available at Ansley Grove, Bathurst Clark, Dufferin Clark and Woodbridge Libraries

808's and Heartbreak by Kanye West

CD Popular West

Available at Bathurst Clark, Dufferin Clark and Woodbridge Libraries

VH1 Storytellers by Alicia Keys

CD Jaxx-Blues Keys

Available at Maple, Bathurst Clark and Pierre Berton Resource Libraries

VAUGHAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Vaughan Public Libraries offers welcoming destinations that educate, excite and empower the community. Annually, VPL welcomes over two million visitors making it one of the top leisure and information destinations within the City of Vaughan. Connect with VPL: Find us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter or subscribe to our eNewsletter, *The Buzz!* VPL has many programs and special events each month. To find out what's happening, visit www.vaughanpl.info/programs or read ***What's On***, your guide to programs, special events and using your library either online or pick up a copy at your local library.

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