

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Councillor Cheng

WILLOWDALE NOWRUZ CELEBRATION

**Join us for Willowdale Nowruz Celebration on Sat, March 9th,
Celebrating Iranian Culture and the Beginning of Spring
for Community Connection and Family Fun**

(Toronto, ON) March 6th, 2024 – Councillor Lily Cheng and Tirgan - a charitable organization producing cultural programs - have jointly organized a celebration of festivities for the community to celebrate Nowruz. This indoor event will take place at North York Centre and North York Central Library from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, and will include engaging family arts and crafts, a must-see Persian Bazaar of vendors and artisans, an authentic Persian teahouse serving complimentary tea, and captivating cultural performances.

The annual Persian festival, Nowruz, celebrates the vernal equinox (one of two moments in the year when the sun is exactly above the Equator and day and night are of equal length), heralding the arrival of spring and the Persian New Year. For 2024, this moment occurs on March 19th at 11:06 pm.

From 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm, **Yonge North York BIA** and the **Iranian Fire Festival** will host Enchanted Lights, a Celebration of Culture at Mel Lastman Square. This outdoor portion of the celebration will include live stage music and a variety of entertaining dance performances, ranging from folkloric to contemporary, as well as Iranian food vendors offering a wide range of tasty cuisine.

INDOOR FESTIVITIES

Date: Saturday, March 9th, 2024
Time: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Location: **North York Centre Atrium & Food Court**
North York Central Library
Hosted by: Councillor Lily Cheng and Tirgan

OUTDOOR FESTIVITIES

Date: Saturday, March 9th, 2024
Time: 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm
Location: **Mel Lastman Square**
Hosted By: Yonge North York BIA & Iranian Fire Festival

Those interested in attending should RSVP [here](#). Posters and details can also be found on Councillor Lily Cheng's [website](#).

Attendees:

- Mayor Olivia Chow (Toronto)
- City Councillor Lily Cheng (Willowdale)
- Member of Parliament, Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale)

Performances and workshops by:

- Cyclic Yoga
- Hoor Dance
- Toronto Zen Music
- Dena Books - DenaSchool.com
- Toranj - Carpet and Kilim weaving workshop
- Manaron Clothing
- Local artists

The indoor celebrations will kick off at North York Centre, featuring a marketplace showcasing vendors and artisans, as well as family-friendly arts, crafts, and games designed to highlight cultural traditions within the neighborhood. Attendees can also enjoy a Persian teahouse, offering complimentary Persian tea, a carpet and kilim weaving workshop, and the opportunity to try on traditional dress for a photo op with the Haftseen display (see attached photo from Willowdale Nowruz 2023). We encourage people to RSVP through Councillor Cheng's website at <https://www.lilycheng.ca/nowruz>

Performances by individuals of all ages are scheduled from 12 pm to 4:45 pm. Mayor Olivia Chow, Councillor Lily Cheng and MP Ali Ehsassi will bring greetings in the early afternoon.

The festivities will transition outdoors at 5:30 pm, with the Yonge North York BIA's Enchanted Lights, Cultural Saturday event in collaboration with the Iranian Fire Festival. The stage at Mel Lastman Square will host a variety of music performances and various cultural folk dances.

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About Councillor Lily Cheng

Lily Cheng is a Toronto City Councillor representing Ward 18 Willowdale. She is a community mobilizer who has been building a connected community in Willowdale for almost a decade. She founded the North York Moms Facebook Group that has almost 12k members. She is Co-Founder of We Love Willowdale, a movement created after the tragic van attack to help the

community grieve and heal. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she started the Willowdale COVID Response Network to support the community through difficult times by creating easy access community food pantries for those who had fallen on difficult times, and setting up a volunteer network to help those most vulnerable with grocery shopping. Through her previous role as Executive Director of NeighbourLink North York, she spearheaded the 415 Food Hub - a local food bank that continues to feed over 120+ local families.

For more information, visit: LilyCheng.ca or follow her on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) or [X](#).

About Tirgan

Tirgan is a non-partisan, non-religious Canadian registered charitable organization. Tirgan is committed to promoting cross-cultural dialogue between Iranian-Canadians and the global community at large through year-round productions of cultural programs. For more information, visit Tirgan's website at: www.tirgan.ca.

About Yonge North York BIA

The Yonge North York BIA is formed by a group of volunteer Board of Directors who own or operate businesses in the Willowdale area. Our main area of focus is improving the local economy within the BIA area.

The BIA Board of Directors acts as a liaison between local businesses and government, to express the interests of businesses and have an impact on policies made with respect to the Willowdale area.

For more information, visit: [Yonge North York BIA](#).

Iranian Fire Festival

The Iranian Fire Festival is a nonprofit organization, which was formed by a group of active community members, to celebrate two of the greatest Iranian Festivals, called Chahārshanbe-Suri, and Nowruz.

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