



News release

For immediate release

Monday, April 29, 2024

Kitchener kicks off summer events season at WelcomeFest

Kitchener, Ontario – As the weather gets warmer and days get longer, the sounds of summer festivals, drinks on patios, and weekend celebrations across the city add a buzz to the air – but Kitchener residents anxious for the first big outdoor event of the year won’t have long to wait! The City of Kitchener, Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest, and the Downtown Kitchener BIA are excited to launch the 2024 summer events season in style at WelcomeFest, coming to Downtown Kitchener May 24 and 25.

“Kitchener residents love being outside in the summer months and get excited about all the awesome events that take place in Downtown Kitchener and throughout our community,” said Kitchener Mayor, Berry Vrbanovic. “The vibrancy and energy of our city that comes to life in the warm-weather months inspires us in planning a busy calendar of events, and I am sure that both residents and visitors alike are going to feel as excited as we are as we kick off another season of great events!”

Starting at 5 p.m. on Friday, May 24, the celebration will launch with a free concert in the heart of downtown. Carl Zehr Square will come alive with music from our headliner, Country singer-songwriter Alli Walker; timeless chart-topping hits delivered by The 99’s; Caribbean jazz ensemble Saint O; UN Jefferson; and The Golden Keys. Kitchener Mayor Berry Vrbanovic will announce the City of Kitchener’s 2024 events and festival season, accompanied by a keg tapping from K-W Oktoberfest. Food by ChefD and a licensed bar area will also be on-site all evening.

“We are super excited to host WelcomeFest in Downtown Kitchener this year,” shared Tracy Van Kalsbeek, Executive Director of K-W Oktoberfest. “The festival is free to attend, and we have an incredible line-up of local entertainment. Not to mention all the great activations happening on Saturday with the BIA’s Palette x Palate – there’s something for everyone!”

The festivities will continue Saturday, May 25 with the Downtown Kitchener BIA’s Palette x Palate festival. Celebrating local arts, culture, and food, this brand-new event kicks off the season with a fantastic celebration of summer, delicious eats and creativity, where every brushstroke, note and flavour adds to the palette of our community's identity.

"We are thrilled to present Palette x Palate as an opportunity for our community to come together and celebrate the warmer weather through the creativity, diversity, and vitality of Downtown Kitchener," said Linda Jutzi, Executive Director of the Downtown Kitchener BIA. "This event encapsulates the essence of what makes our downtown unique – art, culture, and culinary experiences."

WelcomeFest is free to attend and open to all ages. Come celebrate the season with your community and help get the party started! To learn more about WelcomeFest and plan your weekend of fun, visit kitchener.ca/WelcomeFest and welcomefestkw.ca. Thank you to Heritage Canada for their support of this initiative.

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For more information, contact:

Tracy Van Kalsbeek
Executive Director
K-W Oktoberfest
tracy@oktoberfest.ca
519-616-0793

Shawn Falcao
Manager, Corporate Communications
City of Kitchener
shawn.falcao@kitchener.ca
519-741-2200 ext. 7094

Linda Jutzi
Executive Director
Downtown Kitchener BIA
ljutzi@kitchenerdowntown.com
519-577-2071