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Black History Month at Vanier College

Montreal, February 1, 2012. Black History Month at Vanier College starts off with a roar – a roar of laughter that is, with a Black Comedy Show presented by the Vanier College Students' Association on February 1, 2012. But there's more than comedy on the bill with a full line-up of events that celebrate and explore Black History throughout the month of February. Films, theatre performances, music, food, dance, debates and guest speakers will all showcase the richness of Black culture.

Award-winning author, Lawrence Hill, who pre-launched the month-long festival on January 27 when he spoke to students on Black identity and belonging, was the first of a distinguished list of guest speakers. Other authors who will speak include Samuel Pierre, author of *Ces Québécois venus d'Haïti*, who will talk about his life and describe the contributions of Haitians to Quebec society through education, health, science, culture, engineering and politics. Author Rodney Saint-Éloi will add another Literary Haitian voice to the festival.

With moments of comedy, heartache, longing and hope, the drama and pitfalls of a young man and his family starting a new life in Canada will come to life when the Black Theatre Workshop puts on the play, *New Canadian Kid*, on February 8, in the Auditorium (A-103).

The film program features *The Witness from the Balcony of Room 306*, a powerful account of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, as told by the man who was standing next to Dr. King when he was assassinated. Other films to run include: *Race to Execution* – about racism in the judicial system, *The Pathology of White Privilege*, *Prom Night in Mississippi*, and *Black Heritage in Canada* a look at the history of slaves and freed Blacks in Canada.

Contests will give students a chance to show off their knowledge or their creative talents. A Black History quiz will test what they know; the Black History Month Essay Writing Contest will challenge them to write about an important Black history event; and the Black History Month Poster Contest will give them the chance to illustrate the beauty and culture of Black history.

On February 15, at noon, Vanier students will join Fo Niemi, Executive Director of the Centre for Research-Action on Race Relations (CRARR), to explore racism and racial profiling in employment and the workplace and how to recognize and work to eliminate it. Under the microscope: recruitment and selection discrimination, CVs with non-western names, background checks, racial jokes and slurs in the workplace, inappropriate interview questions on religion etc.

Finally on February 29th the **Vanier Soul Call** will present *Gumboots* for a wonderful celebration of Black roots and pride, in the Student Mall, at noon. Food, entertainment, music, drumming and dancing will all bring the month to an energetic close.