

# 'WE NEVER THOUGHT THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO DO THIS HERE IN CANADA'

Continued from page 1

Zahid explained how people in the Muslim community became afraid to go to mosque or to walk around in the neighbourhood.

"Now we are scared, who is safe and who is not safe. If we are standing at a stop sign or if a car is coming," she added.

On Monday, federal and provincial crown attorneys laid terror charges against Nathaniel Veltman, 20, after four members of a Muslim family, who were taking a walk in London, were killed after a driver drove into them. The nine-year-old boy survived.

London police allege the driver, who was wearing body armour and swastikas, targeted the family because of their faith. The other founder of the group, Rizwana Amla, lamented, "Our

kids are now asking if we are safe enough if we go out ... We are a visible minority."

"We have to educate our kids now," Amla added, "We never thought that we would have to do this here in Canada."

When asked about ways to stop any such tragic incidents from happening, Amla said it requires acknowledging Islamophobia is real.

On June 10, provincial Liberal Party leader Steven Del Duca tweeted that Premier Doug Ford's Progressive Conservatives blocked a motion from Ontario Liberal MPP Mitzie Hunter condemning Islamophobia.

"Unbelievable," tweeted Del Duca. "To win our fight against Islamophobia and all hateful acts our words must become actions. We should be able to get a motion condemning Islamophobia passed at Queen's Park. It's



Hina Zahid photo

A "Love not hate" sign is seen during a walk organized by Muslim Women of Vaughan.

the least we can do after the act of terror in London."

Safwan Choudhry, spokesperson for the Vaughan-based Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, he said, "We think that the solution is not in politics and policy alone."

He continued, "While there was certainly the solidarity march on Saturday, which invited all people, to be part of the solution. We do understand that this march is one step in the right direction, among many more

steps that need to be taken."

For Choudhury, the solution is to find out the "cause of people who are so filled with hatred that they feel emboldened enough to take an innocent person's life."

"Once we identify what is the true cause of this hatred, we will have no debate, or divisions, about what we want to call it," he said in reference to some people shying away from calling the London attack a terrorist act.

As for the source of the hatred, he said it goes back to a lack of understanding and a lack of education.

"So, it is people that have not taken the opportunity to learn and embrace the multicultural society that we live in, and understand people's different point of views, with a genuine interest of learning more."

He also said the pandemic has created growing mental

health problems for some people.

Reports have shown, especially in Toronto, a spike in hate crimes with Jewish and Black people the most common targets, followed by LGBTQ and Asian/Chinese communities.

Choudhury says Muslims can play an "active role" in eliminating people's misconceptions about Islam and Muslims.

"To this effect, we plan on doing many more events, programs, and even mosque's open house events to invite people."

*STORY BEHIND STORY: On Saturday, June 12, a group of people walked from Vellore Village Community Centre to Rutherford and Weston roads and back to show solidarity to the slain Muslim family in London, Ont.*



## Origins of popular graduation traditions

Graduation is steeped in tradition. Come the day of graduation, many grads-to-be might be focusing on receiving their diplomas and then celebrating after the ceremony. The hard work students put in affords them every right to celebrate in a health-safe way once they're officially anointed as new grads, but before the big day it can be fun to reflect on the many traditions associated with graduation ceremonies.

### CAP AND GOWN

Graduation ceremonies simply wouldn't be the same without caps and gowns. The tradition is anything but new, as Columbia University notes caps and gowns have been linked to academia since the 12th century. Back then, students wore gowns and hoods to emulate the clergy who taught them, but also to stay warm. Many universities dressed their scholars in gowns from the 1700s onward. In 1786, one school, Brown University, even mandated

that degree candidates be clad in flowing robes and caps at commencement ceremonies. Though educators and students may no longer wear caps and gowns when attending class or around campus, the tradition of doing so at commencement ceremonies has endured.

### TASSEL TURNING

The tradition of turning the tassel does not have the lengthy history of the cap and gown, dating back only decades rather than centuries. Graduates typically turn the tassels after everyone has received their degrees during the ceremony. The turn is symbolic

of their transition from student to graduate. Tassels start on the right for high school students and college undergraduates and are then turned to the left, while recipients of master's degrees and doctorates keep their tassels on the left throughout the commencement ceremonies.

### TOSSING CAPS IN THE AIR

The tossing of graduation caps in the air is believed to date back more than 100 years. Prior to 1912, graduates of the United States Naval Academy had to serve as midshipmen for two years before they were commissioned as officers. As a result,

they still needed their graduation caps. But beginning with the class of 1912, graduates were automatically commissioned as officers, so they no longer needed their hats. That led the graduates to throw them in the air, thus beginning one of the more fun and photo-worthy graduation traditions.

### "POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE"

This tradition marked by the playing of "Pomp and Circumstance" is rooted in the work of William Shakespeare, which makes it seem like a perfect fit for graduation ceremonies. Sir Edward Elgar composed "Pomp and Circumstance" in 1901 and the title for the song was inspired by a line in the bard's "Othello." Elgar received an honorary degree from Yale University in 1905, and during that ceremony "Pomp and Circumstance" was played. The song apparently made a strong impression, as it soon began to be played at various commencement ceremonies, a tradition that continues today. (MCC)





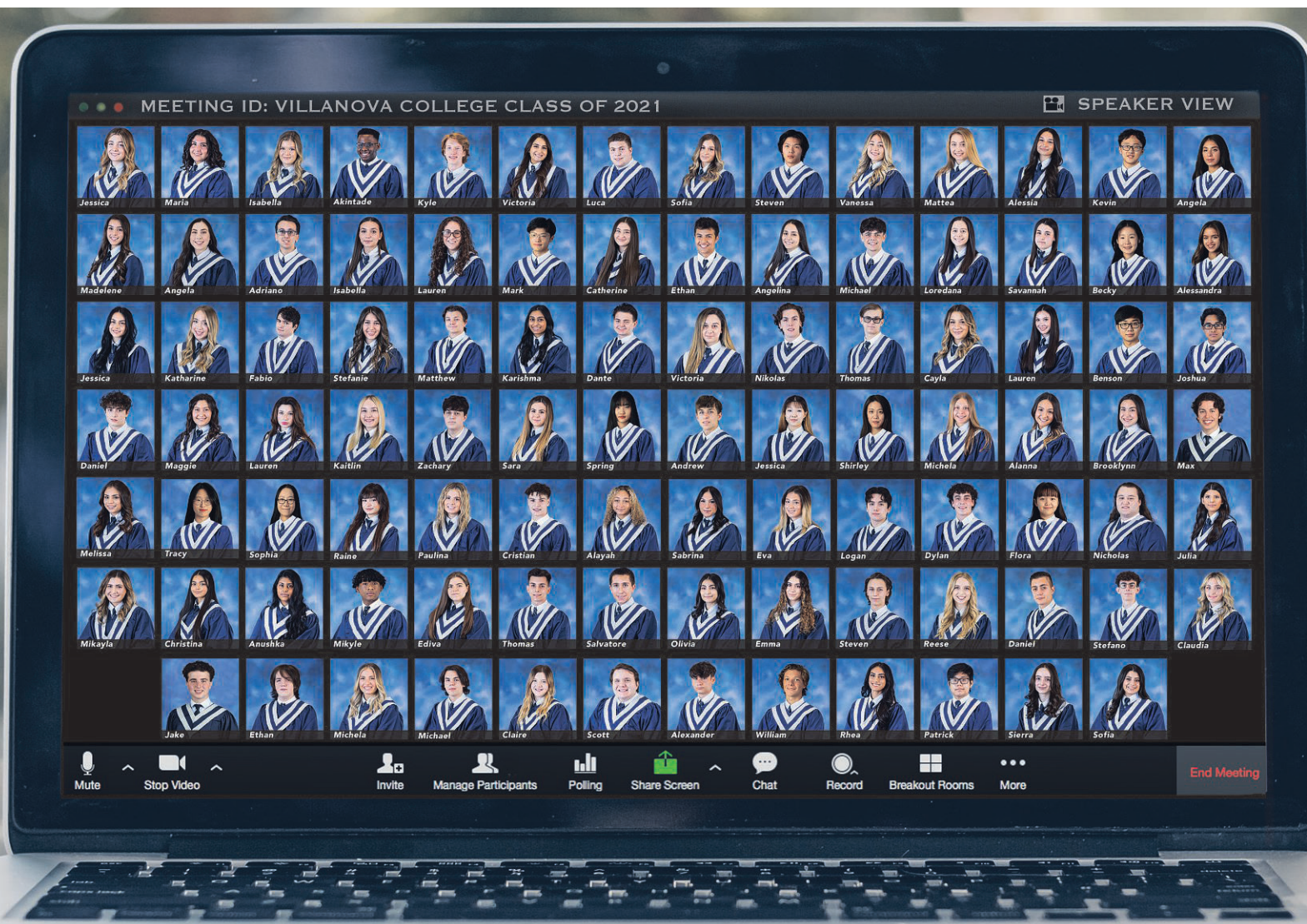


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