



Oshawa Public Libraries Statement on Anti-Black Racism

Recent events in the United States and Canada have challenged us to take a critical look at the structure of our society, systemic racism, and racial insensitivity. Oshawa Public Libraries (“OPL”) stands with the Black community, and all communities in Canada, who have been divided and hurt by racism, social injustice, ignorance, and hatred.

Oshawa Public Libraries mission is “to enrich the lives and potential of the people of Oshawa by connecting them to the world of information and to each other”. It is the right of every resident to feel welcome in Library spaces, to find the information they want and need, and to lend their voice to productive, meaningful conversations to surmount prejudice in all its forms.

Diversity is one of Oshawa Public Libraries core values. At OPL we believe that we can learn and grow from our differences and that a diverse and pluralistic society is central to our community’s identity. The Library is committed to enhancing workplace diversity and fostering a workplace that is representative of the population it serves. The Library will endeavour to identify and remove barriers for all employees and potential employees and foster the value of individualized uniqueness.

We have a shared civic, social, and moral responsibility to do what we can to help eradicate systemic racism and promote universal acceptance through our collections, resources, services, and programs. We are committed in anchoring ourselves in this role in our community.

This starts with educating ourselves, our staff and our Board members about the legacy of racial injustice in Canada and our local community. For example, we have demonstrated our commitment to staff by providing annual training opportunities by offering diversity training sessions at the Library’s Annual Staff Development Day, annual policy reviews, and opportunities for continuous learning throughout Black History month. We know we have much more work to do and our annual business plan includes developing a diversity and inclusion strategy, which will include staff training with 2020's focus on anti-black racism. We pledge to continue to provide ongoing staff education, implement best practices, procedures, services, programs and resources with aim to eliminate systemic racism and promote equity and inclusion for all.

OPL has endorsed both the Canadian Urban Libraries Council's Statement on Race and Social Equity, as well as the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Diversity and Inclusion.

Our hope is that we can come together to learn, listen, grow and be better.

With warm hearts and gratitude,

Oshawa Public Library Board