

News & ANNOUNCEMENTS

February is Black History Month

Every February, Black History Month is commemorated in Canada. It is important to acknowledge that despite the fact that people of African and Caribbean descent have been present in Canada for approximately 400 years, Canadian history books have often been silent about their longstanding journeys and contributions to Canada.

In the past, there has often been very little, if any, mention of the fact that slavery once existed on the very land that is now Canada. There is also much silence about important history that documents that Black Loyalists settled in what are now the Maritime provinces after the American Revolution. In addition, as early as the War of 1812, Black Canadian soldiers made valuable contributions and sacrifices in the Canadian interest. Black History Month is a dedicated effort to recognize these contributions and continuing contributions, and to promote the recognition of these contributions beyond just the month of February.

Black History Month originated in the United States with the work of historian Carter G. Woodson, who first suggested that the country honour the accomplishments of Black Americans through an official observance. In 1926, Negro History Week was established, and February may have been chosen as a time of commemoration due to the birthdays of former President Abraham Lincoln (February 12) and abolitionist Frederick Douglass (February 14). Negro History Week was renamed Black History Week in the early 1970s, and in 1976 the week was expanded into a month of observance.

In Canada, Black History Month was only officially recognized by the House of Commons in December 1995 through a unanimous motion. The motion was introduced by the Honourable Jean Augustine, the first Black Canadian woman ever elected to Parliament.



SIGNIFICANT DATES IN CANADIAN BLACK HISTORY

1604

Mathieu Da Costa, potentially the first person of African descent to set foot on the territory that is now Canada, likely arrived with the French explorers Pierre Du Gua De Monts and Samuel de Champlain. Da Costa, a free man, worked as an interpreter, providing a link with the Mik'maq people and the Europeans.

1779

In an effort to win the War of American Independence (1775-1783), the British invited all black men, women and children to join the British cause and win their freedom for doing so. As a result, 10 percent of the United Empire Loyalists coming into the Maritimes were Black.

1800-1865

Approximately 20,000 black people escaped to Canada via the Underground Railway.

1833

The British Imperial Act abolished slavery throughout the British Empire, including Canada. The British Imperial Act abolished slavery throughout the British Empire, including Canada.

1628-1833

The first known slave, Olivier LeJeune, was recorded in 1628. Slavery existed freely and openly in Canada until it was abolished throughout the entire British empire in 1833.

1793

The Abolition Act was passed in Upper Canada, now known as Ontario. This law freed slaves aged 25 and over and made it illegal to bring slaves into Upper Canada. The Abolition Act also made Canada the first jurisdiction in the British Empire to move toward the abolition of slavery. However, slavery still continued to exist in Canada despite the passing of this legislation.

1807

The Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade received Royal Assent and became law throughout the British Empire.

1858

Nearly 800 free black people left the oppressive racial conditions of San Francisco for a new life on Vancouver Island. Governor James Douglas had invited them to settle in British Columbia. Though still faced with intense discrimination, these pioneers enriched the political, religious and economic life of the colony.

1914-1918 (WW1)

Black Canadians attempted to join combat units but were prevented from doing so. However, they still contributed to the war effort. In 1916, a segregated battalion made up of black Canadians, the Number 2 Construction Battalion, was formed. It was responsible for crucial work building bridges, digging trenches and clearing roads.

“Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed”

- Booker T. Washington

2000

Ceremony in Saanichton, B.C. to honour the arrival of the Black Pioneers to British Columbia.

Late 1880s

Railway porters emerged as leaders of black communities in Montréal and other urban centres. Through their unions, such as the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the Order of Sleeping Car Porters, they gained recognition for black workers. After the Second World War, the porters made important contributions to the campaign for human rights, particularly through their struggle to end discrimination in railway employment.

1939-1945 (WW2)

Black Canadians' persistent efforts to join the armed forces was rewarded with success and they went on to serve with distinction in all branches of the military.

2008

Canadian Senator, Donald Oliver, the first black man appointed to the Senate, introduced a motion to have the Senate officially recognize February as Black History Month.

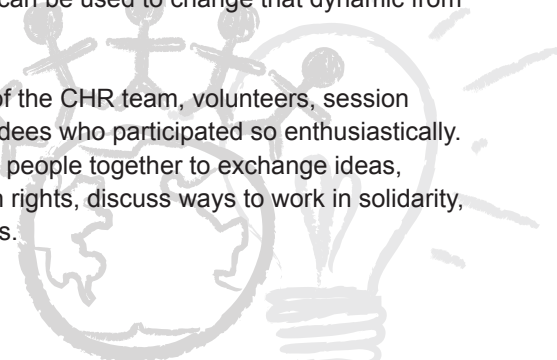
Past Event Highlights

Inclusion Day

The Centre for Human Rights 3rd annual Inclusion Day was a big success with keynote address by Peter Dawson and student group leaders Samantha Lampert (Sexual Assault Survivors Support Line), Ayesha Zubair (United South Asians at York), Brendan Wilson (queer/trans activist), Sarah Khan (Glendon Women & Trans Centre, Muslim Students Association), Janine Manning (Aboriginal Students Association at York). They spoke about how they work on developing ally relationships and act as allies to other groups advancing social change.

There were 10 sessions run over the afternoon that brought together members of the York community as well as Toronto-community members, to discuss historical and ongoing discrimination facing Aboriginal communities, mental health self-advocacy and development of new non-medicalized models, examining how language can be used to further exclude individuals and groups and approaches that can be used to change that dynamic from excluding to including.

Thanks to the coordinated effort of the CHR team, volunteers, session presenters, and conference attendees who participated so enthusiastically. In the day, the event truly brought people together to exchange ideas, participate in dialogues on human rights, discuss ways to work in solidarity, and develop new ally relationships.



Upcoming Events

Harriet Tubman Institute's Performing Diaspora 2012 Workshop Series - Register Now!

The Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global migrations of African peoples cordially invites you to join in the celebration of the Performing Diaspora 2012. The theme for this year's celebration is: Sharing the Africana Experience with the Global Community.

Registrations are now open for the Workshop Series of Performing Diaspora 2012. Limited spots available! Participants will have a first hand learning experience with African and African Diaspora artists: M'Bemba Bangoura, a renowned and virtuoso Guinean Master Drummer and Dancer, based in the United States, who will lead the Mande: Malinke, Susu and Baga music and dance session.

Sani-Abu Mohammed, a renowned Nigerian master dancer and drummer who will lead Hausa and Yoruba music and dance session. Sani-Abu performs with the Ijo Vudu African Dance group.

Akua Dentah Acheampong, a renowned African American Hip Hop instructor and school teacher (originally from Ghana) who will lead the African American Hip Hop dance and music session.

Venues

York University, Accolade East Building Studios C, D and E. Dates and Times

Sat. Feb 11: 9:30 AM - 7:00PM
Sun. Feb 12: 9:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Workshop Series:
 FOCUSING ON MANDE SUSU AND BAGA, YORUBA, IBO HAUSA AND AFRICAN AMERICAN HIP HOP TRADITIONS

TWO DAYS WORKSHOP @ \$100.00 ONE SESSION/WORKSHOP @ \$20.00 ONE DAY WORKSHOP @ \$60.00

Sat FEBRUARY 11TH
 9:30-11:30AM Hip Hop Dance LED BY AKUA ACHEAMPONG
 11:30-1:30PM African Dance LED BY SANI ABU MOHAMMED
 1:30-3:00PM BREAK
 3:00-5:00PM African Drumming/Dance LED BY M'BEMBA BANGOURA
 5:00-7:00PM Session 1: Hip Hop Dance Session 2: African Dance Session 3: African Drumming/Dance

Sun FEBRUARY 12TH
 9:30-11:30AM Sani Abu Mohammed
 11:30-1:30PM Akua Acheampong
 1:30-2:30PM BREAK
 2:30-4:30PM M'Bemba Bangoura
 4:30-6:00PM Prep for finale performance
 6:00-10:00PM Final Performance

ACCOLADE EAST STUDIOS C, D & E

register online @ YORKU.CA/TUBMAN or call 416.736.2100 EXT 33038

York United Black Students Alliance (YUBSA) Events to Commemorate Black History Month

Thursday Evening Film & Discussion Series

YUBSA will be showing a few films in commemoration of Black History Month, After the film, there will be a short discussion to examine the various themes and symbols illustrated by the films. Each film will be shown in Room 313 in the Student Centre, and refreshments will be provided.

Thurs. Feb 9th : Malcolm X
Thurs. Feb 16th : Sankofa

Monday Evening Black Talk Series

YUBSA will be holding this series in order to highlight a few particularly pertinent issues in the Black community. These talks will be held in Room 307 in the Student Centre.

Dates and topics are;

Mon. Feb 6th - African vs. Caribbean (breaking down the barriers and revealing the stereotypes)
Mon. Feb 13th –Gender roles in the Black community

York Access Presents:

Battle Lines Drawn: Resisting Ableism Through Creative Intervention with Jeff Preston

Access York's Disability Education and Awareness Subcommittee will be hosting disability advocate, Jeff Preston (www.getmobilized.ca), at York University to speak to us about advocacy through creative means. Jeff is most well known for driving his electric wheelchair from London-to-Ottawa, Ontario in order to raise awareness about inaccessible transportation. He also runs "Cripz" a webcomic about disability.

Tues. Feb. 7, 2012 - 12:00-2:00pm

Location: Winters Dining Hall (Room 001 Winter's College [Basement]), York University, Toronto, ON.

In Battle Lines Drawn, Jeff Preston looks at the current myths of disability perpetuated through the mainstream media and talks about creatively resisting these stories through cultural warfare, using tools like online publishing and publicity stunts, such as "stairbombing" and "chair mobbing".

A “Stair Bombing,” which is a form of creative resistance Jeff uses often to raise awareness about disability issues, will be held here. A major stairwell will be blocked with caution tape and there will be a sign stating “Caution: These Stairs are Out of Service - Inconvenient Eh? This is only an example of what persons with disabilities experience everyday.” A description of this art/resistance will be placed beside the stairs.

RSVP requested by February 3rd, 2012 via email to: kaley@yorku.ca

Quote of the Month

Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible.

-Maya Angelou

WORKSHOPS

Feb. 2, 2012
Positive Space (1-4PM)

Feb. 7, 2012
Becoming an Ally (1-3PM)

Feb. 14, 2012
Respect in the Workplace with
Learning and Organizational
Development
(2-4PM)

Feb. 28, 2012
Diversity and Social Justice 101
10AM-12PM

Look out for upcoming Workshops
in March by visiting the Centre for
Human Rights Website

BATTLE LINES DRAWN
Resisting **ABLEISM**
through
CREATIVE INTERVENTION

THEY TELL ME I'M SPECIAL, THAT MY ABILITIES ARE RARE.
THEY CLAIM THAT THEY'RE INCLUSIVE BUT ALL THE DOORWAYS, THEY HAVE STAIRS.

Access York invites you to a conversation with **JEFF PRESTON**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2012, 12-2

WHERE Winters Dining Hall
Room 001
Winters College Basement
York University,
Toronto, ON

INFORMATION & ACCESS
wheelchair accessible
ASL interpreting
computerized notetaking
EMAIL: kaley@yorku.ca

Enter **Cripz: A Webcomic**. Created in 2010 by advocates Jeff Preston and Clara Madrenas, *Cripz* is an online comic strip, telling the story of two high school boys in wheelchairs, that aims to entertain through humour while satirizing typical myths of disability.

In **BATTLE LINES DRAWN**, Jeff Preston explores current myths of disability perpetuated through the mainstream media and talks about creatively resisting these stories through cultural warfare, using tools like online publishing and publicity stunts, such as stairbombing and chair mobbing.

This event would not be possible without the support of the following:
VP Students Office; Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability; Centre for Human Rights

Connect with us virtually to continue building a budding culture of human rights and equity on campus!

Our Website: <http://www.yorku.ca/rights/>



Look for our York University-Centre for Human Rights group page to stay notified about all future events!



Follow us on Twitter! <http://twitter.com/#!/YorkURights>

Find us on York's YU Connect Website.
<http://yuconnect.yorku.ca/>