

REDI, Set, Go!



Centre for
Human Rights
Centre des droits
de la personne

MARCH 2015 NEWSLETTER



International Womens Day York celebrates some of Canada's amazing women!

"International Women's Day is celebrated in many countries around the world. It is a day when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political. International Women's Day first emerged from the activities of labour movements at the turn of the twentieth century in North America and across Europe."

<http://www.un.org/en/events/womensday/history.shtml>

1 Susan Gapka - A trans activist recognised for her work in empowering transsexual and transgender communities.

2 Zanana Akande - First black woman elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and the first black woman to serve as a cabinet minister in Canada.

3 Rosalie Silberman Abella - Appointed in 2004 to the Supreme Court of Canada, becoming the first Jewish woman to sit on the Canadian Supreme Court bench. Justice Abella presided over the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment, where she coined the term 'employment equity'.

4 Jean Augustine - The first African Canadian woman elected to the Parliament of Canada. She also served three terms as Chair of the National Liberal Women's Caucus.

5 Dr. Lillian Dyck - Well-known for advocating for equity in the education and employment of women, Chinese Canadians and Aboriginals. She is the first female First Nations senator and first Canadian born Chinese senator.

6 Dr. Vivienne Poy - The first Canadian of Asian descent to be appointed to the Senate of Canada. Vivienne is an author, entrepreneur, community volunteer, fashion designer and historian.

7 Winnie Ng - A labour rights activist and scholar. For over three decades, Ng has championed the rights of workers through her involvement with various labour organizations and networks.

8 June Callwood - A Canadian journalist, author and social activist. June was made a member of the Order of Canada. In 2004, the City of Toronto noted its intention to name a street in Callwood's honour. Callwood requested that it be a new or currently unnamed street near a school or a playground.

9 Alessia Di Virgilio - Alessia Di Virgilio, a Disability Services officer at Humber College in Toronto, filed an application with the human rights tribunal four years ago, in attempt to amend the passenger Bill of Rights and ensure equal access for those wishing to take a taxi.

10 Charlotte Edith Anderson Monture - Charlotte Edith Anderson was born in 1890 on the Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve in Southern Ontario as a part of the Iroquois Nation. She was one of 14 Native women who served as members of the Army Nurse Corps during World War I and one of two who are known to have served overseas.

International Day for the Elimination of Racism

March 21

Theme: “Learning from Historical Tragedies to Combat Racial Discrimination Today”

LET'S REFLECT

Coming to terms with our Canadian Sharpevilles: A reflection for “Learning from historical tragedies to combat racial discrimination today”

By Yvonne Simpson, Research Assistant, Centre for Human Rights

From the eloquent words of Nelson Mandela (1918-2013), we are inspired to reflect on the significance of their meaning and the events which sparked the turning point in dismantling the vestiges of the racist laws of apartheid. On March 21, 1966 the world received news of the aftermath of the violence which was enacted on a crowd of peaceful demonstrators who were protesting South Africa's apartheid “pass laws”. As a university community the historical event which led to the UN Declaration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, (UN Resolution 2142 XXXI A/6484 26 October 1966), resonate with us on many levels, given that many of the protestors on that fateful date were students.

Six years after these atrocities, the United Nations General Assembly designated March 21 as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UN Resolution 2142 (XXXI A/6484 26) October 1966) and in doing so, called on the international community to not only commemorate the day, but also to fight all forms of racism wherever it exists. Following his 1990 release, after spending 27 years in prison, Mandela went on to become South Africa's inaugural Black African President, elected in the country's first multiracial elections of 1994. Within two years of his leadership, Mandela signed South Africa's new constitution on December 10, 1996. His speech and the place chosen for the official signing served as a strident reminder of the sacrifices in the struggle for human rights in South Africa.

As we turn our attention to “learning from our own historical tragedies” we discover that our own Canadian history is haunted by slavery and racism which were

well established in culture, law (exemplified by the ‘Prevention’ of Slavery Act, July 9, 1793) colonization and stark infringement of human dignity. From The taking of lands from Aboriginal peoples to the critically acclaimed historical account, The hanging of Angelique, the untold story of Canadian slavery and the burning of old Montreal, by Dr. Afua Cooper's, we are reminded that “slavery is Canada's best kept secret, locked within the National closet”.

March 21st is a day for us all to engage on the important issues of race and inclusion which is essentially a reflection on our common humanity. Together, we can make a change. As outlined by the Navi Pillay, (2001) United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights:

“Racism and racial discrimination attack the core of a person's dignity, for they seek to divide the human family, to which all people and individuals belong, into categories, some of which are considered more worthy than others. History has proved time and again that, when allowed to take root, discrimination, racism and intolerance shatter the very foundations of societies and damage them for generations”.

While Canada is identified as a nation known for multiculturalism and diversity, our history provide sobering thoughts of our progress and milestones yet to be achieved in order to overcome the manifestations of racism, injustice and human rights abuses. From York University, Centre of Human Rights, Please join in the commemoration for the Elimination of Racism Day and engage in taking a stance against all forms of racism wherever they are encountered.



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*“Out of the many Sharpevilles
which haunt our history was born
the unshakeable determination
that respect for human life,
liberty and well-being must be
enshrined as rights beyond the
power of any force to diminish”*
**Nelson Mandela, Sharpeville,
10 December 1996**



King's Decree on Slavery

Image source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1b/An_Act_Against_Slavery.jpg



On March 5, 2015, The Centre for Human Rights presented a donation of children's books in celebration of Black History Month 2015, and was treated to an afternoon of song and dance performed by the children from York's Co-op Daycare Centre.

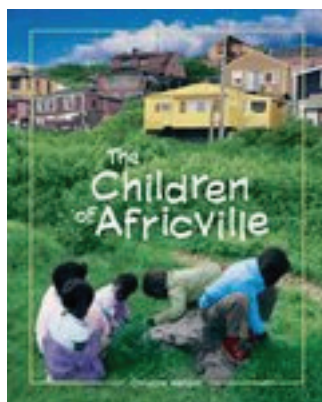
Special thanks to Olia Ciurpita, Executive Director, and her amazing team for making this possible!

Want to know what books we donated? See the list below!



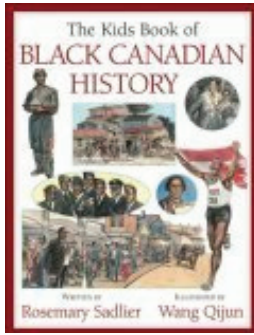
Love Will See You Through: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Six Guiding Beliefs (as told by his niece)

Angela Farris Watkins & Sally Wern Comport
Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

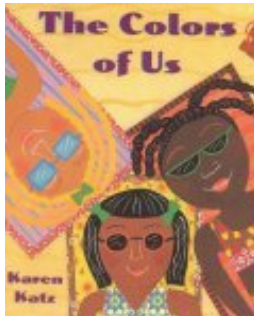


The Children of Africville | 1st Edition

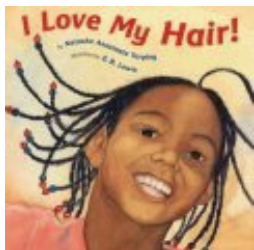
Christine Welldon 🍁
Nimbus Publishing



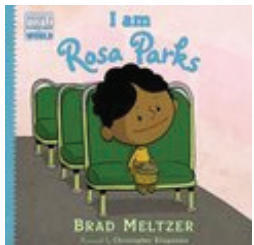
Kids Book of Black Canadian History, The
Rosemary Sadlier 🍁 & Qijun Wang 🍁
Kids Can Press



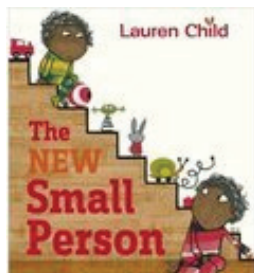
The Colors of Us
Karen Katz & Yehuda Katz
Square Fish



I Love My Hair!
Natasha Anastasia Tarpley & E B Lewis
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers



I am Rosa Parks
Brad Meltzer & Christopher Eliopoulos
Ordinary People Change World (series)
Penguin Young Readers Group



The New Small Person, The
Lauren Child
Penguin UK

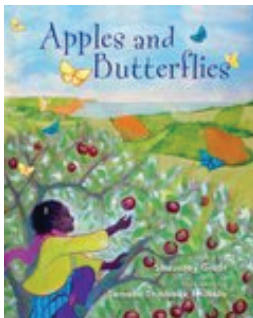


When the Beat Was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation of Hip Hop
Laban Carrick Hill & Theodore Taylor
Roaring Brook Press



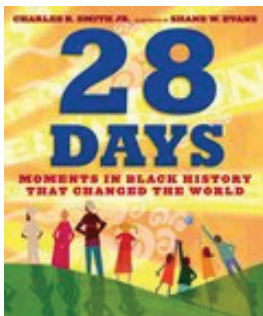
ElRay Jakes Is Magic

Sally Warner & Brian Biggs
ElRay Jakes # 6 (series)
Penguin Young Readers Group



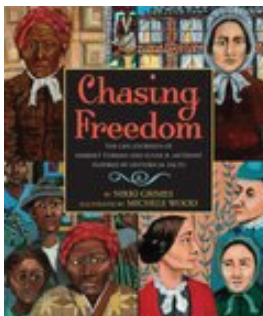
Apples and Butterflies: A Poem for Prince Edward Island

Shauntay Grant 🍁 & Tamara Thiebaut-Heikalo
Nimbus Publishing



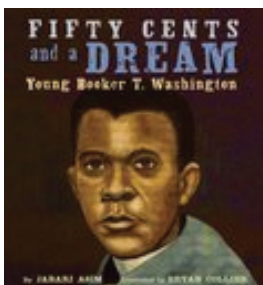
28 Days: Moments in Black History that Changed the World

(Hardcover)
Charles R Smith & Shane W Evans
Roaring Brook Press



Chasing Freedom: The Life Journeys of Harriet Tubman and Susan B. Anthony, Inspired by Historical Facts

(Hardcover)
Nikki Grimes & Michele Wood
Scholastic Inc



Fifty Cents and a Dream: Young Booker T. Washington

(Hardcover)
Jabari Asim & Bryan Collier
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers



**PASSIONATE
ABOUT MAKING A
DIFFERENCE?
VOLUNTEER TODAY!**



Volunteer for the
Centre for Human Rights
Join our Diversity Peer
Education Team

APPLY ONLINE AT YORKU.CA/RIGHTS

Applications must be submitted by 5:00pm on March 31