

# NACCA

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## Chairperson's Report

*Annual General Meeting - Year Ending December 31, 2020*



**Jerisha Grant-Hall**

Chairperson

Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association

## INTRODUCTION

I would like to acknowledge our amazing volunteers. Special thanks to our ongoing volunteers Karen Mell, Gavin Gunter and Ashley Arkeveld to name a few; student volunteers, event specific volunteers, program specific volunteers, new volunteers and members of the Board of Directors, here at NACCA, who are asked to give of their time, attention, expertise, and resources. They represent, champion, and serve our organization and community well, and I thank them for their dedication and commitment to serve in order to break down barriers and build inclusive spaces.

Three years ago, Black community residents from Newmarket and Aurora came together to build on an idea to build and connect communities. There was consensus when we gathered at the table; we all wanted more opportunities for Black youth and Black families. We wanted to define, name, create and speak for ourselves. We wanted to create new pathways. We wanted to share and celebrate our stories – the stories that form the foundation of our collective history. We also wanted a space where Black youth could develop safe identities. On September 1, 2021, that vision was realized when NACCA acquired Hollingshead House through a lease with the Town of Newmarket, becoming the first Black-led community centre in York Region.

Since its inception, what has distinguished NACCA is its focus on delivering programming from an Afrocentric lens, with a specific emphasis on resisting anti-Black racism and oppression. This approach has enabled us to respond to daily challenges from a historical and cultural perspective. We place value on the wisdom of our ancestors, honoring their bold strength and leadership, while creating a path for Black youth that sees them stepping boldly into the future.

There have been many committed individuals who have given unreservedly of their time, expertise and resources to ensure that NACCA's vision of building a strong and connected community, right here in Newmarket and beyond, is realized.

Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association recognizes Paulette Henry for her significant contribution and leadership, and celebrates her three years of excellence in community service as secretary and her contribution as a founding member of NACCA. During her tenure, Paulette has chaired the organization's social committee and supported major events, while fulfilling her obligation of record keeping and assisting the board in upholding its fiduciary responsibilities.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS



2020 has been a year like no other. George Floyd's tragic murder at the hands of a former Minneapolis police officer woke the world to the brutal injustices that Black communities have always known. The ever-present racial trauma has been challenging, especially for Black families, Black men and women, children and teens.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a very real and present rupture in society, amplifying and magnifying inequities and redefining what it means to be vulnerable. The violent and insidious legacies of colonialism, racism and anti-Black racism have been on full display on mainstream television and social media.

As we reflect on all that we have accomplished in 2020, in spite of the pandemic and public health crisis of anti-Black racism against historical and ongoing inequities and social injustices, we see where we've gathered strength, resilience and resolve. Thank you to our executive team, volunteers, donors and sponsors who stayed with us on our journey.

1. We are 155 members strong.

2. On February 8, 2020, NACCA organized and delivered a rich celebration of the diverse heritage of African Canadians with our themed “The Heart of Africa: Retracing Our History” activities. We featured a pre-colonial to postcolonial Afro-Caribbean food workshop with York Region Food Network which booked out so quickly that we had to start a waitlist for subsequent workshops. We partnered with the Newmarket Public Library to host author, Zalika Reid-Benta, and we had a successful Ujamaa Marketplace and reception at Old Town Hall which brought visibility to a vibrant Black-owned Business community. We delved into precolonial African history education with Sean Mauricette and delivered the first ever Building Beyond Sculptural Lego Workshop for youth with Ekow Nimako. Children and youth engaged with the artist to build their legacy by using their creativity to tell their own story.
3. We presented our first community award.
4. We awarded scholarships to 7 deserving Black students pursuing postsecondary education for the first time. To date, we’ve distributed 24k in scholarship funds to 21 deserving students across York Region.
5. We pivoted in August 2020 to deliver fresh produce, grocery gift cards and mental wellness support in response to a York Region wide survey which saw food security and mental health as top priorities for Black communities.
6. On September 21, 2020 NACCA applied for charitable status.
7. We supported a youth-led community cleanup, delivered a robotics summer camp for students ages 9-14 with First Canada, two physical and mental wellness workshops and increased financial wellness in our community through a 6 weeks workshop on financial education.
8. On October 23, 2020, We partnered with AFIWI Groove School to bring the first Djembe Drumming workshop to Newmarket’s Environmental Park to connect youth to their roots so that they could feel pride in their identity while being supported by each other, especially during a time of heightened uncertainty and social isolation.
9. With contributions from Neighbourhood Network, we supported 10 NACCA families with a Christmas drive gift.
10. We sat at community tables, worked on dismantling anti-Black racism strategies, delivered confronting anti-Black racism workshops to Town of Newmarket Council and York Region MPs and supported Newmarket schools with resources to dismantle anti-Black racism and create Black affirming spaces.

## MOVING FORWARD



In order to improve our organizational capacity, we will undertake an organizational review with support from a consulting expert in the field with specific expertise in the Black community. We will seek their guidance to conduct an in-depth organizational review. This review will help to build on our strong foundation to develop the way forward for NACCA to better serve our community. In so doing we will engage in an organizational visioning which will achieve the following:

- Create a five-year organizational strategic plan.
- Refine and streamline organizational resources both human and structural.
- Bring focus to existing initiatives and bring focus to those we will continue with.
- Develop the financial plan and fundraising to provide a solid foundation for emerging priorities as determined through the visioning.
- Develop Board capacity to bring these goals to fruition.
- Further develop a communications strategy to build on and increase the opportunity.

We will engage with the community we serve, better understand their needs, and increase our membership. Through these focused activities, we will be prepared to meet the changing landscape and emerge from the pandemic with confidence, be current and relevant to the changing and emerging priorities of the Black community, developing our expertise and setting a pathway for others to follow. Furthermore, we will:

1. Obtain furnishings and equipment for our NEW location: A Black led community centre in Newmarket's downtown core district. The location is critical to the community work ahead.
2. We will continue to develop programs and activities to support Black community members mental wellbeing and connectedness while being strategic and nimble in responding to needs as they change in a pandemic environment.
3. Continue to build stakeholder engagement and advocacy for Black Canadians in Newmarket and surrounding areas – developing meaningful engagement and action on eliminating anti-Black racism.
4. Engage all our communities towards increased inclusion and belonging for all – through a resisting anti-Black racism and equity lens.
5. Source funding and focus on sustainable means to support our work.

In the short term, we look to meet the food security needs of African, Black Caribbean community members during Covid-19 in partnership with York Region Food Network. Also, we will build on existing mental health supports and raise funds for youth scholarships for continued education.

In the mid term, we will focus on building capacity and reach of the organization's work, building towards increased sustainability and increased community impact. This includes looking at funding for staffing, professional support and programming delivery. This also includes completing the charitable status process.

In the long term, we will engage our wider community towards increased inclusion through the recommendations coming from the Newmarket anti-Black Racism Task Force. Work with public education systems, York Regional Police and The Town of Newmarket and continue to hold each one accountable to dismantling anti-Black racism. We will research, design and develop a comprehensive program of mental wellness awareness, education and programming for the Black community members.

## FUNDING 2021-2022

Short term (to end of April 2022) COVID Response, community support during this time of grief and trauma with focus on building resilience and helping our Black community members, and further development of organizational capacity.

\$40,000

Mid and long term (to end of June 2022), a focus on building capacity and reach of organization's work. Building towards increased sustainability and enabling the organization to build on an incredible foundation. This includes project funding and paid resources like staffing, expertise/professional support, programming delivery.

\$120,000-\$150,000

## CONCLUSION



NACCA remains dedicated to continuing to build, engage and act in the following six focus areas:

1. Team building – building the board of directors and its capacity.
2. Relationship building – continued focus on building relationships with key stakeholders,

organizations and partners with shared values and purpose.

3. Strategy building – working with the board to develop a multi-year strategic plan – refining and enhancing mission, vision, confirming focus/program areas and priorities.
4. Developing and refining process, structure, policies.
5. Fund development – raising funds and looking for new ways to generate revenue.
6. Organization structure – moving to charitable status.

In addition to capacity building and governance, continued focus on the execution of programs related to youth and community engagement already in place.