



Defining Diversity

Diversity is commonly understood in terms of dimensions that include but are not limited to race, age, place of origin, religion, ancestry, Aboriginal status, skin colour, citizenship, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, disability/ability, marital, parental or family status, same-sex partnership status, creed, language, educational background, literacy level, geographic location, income level, cultural tradition and work experience. (Source: Ontario Healthy Communities).

Have a comment, question or story idea?

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Trillium Project Keeps Building Capacity For Diversity

By Ilaneet Goren, Diversity Specialist

As we mark a halfway milestone for the Trillium-funded project, it is a good time to acknowledge the progress we've made. Working collaboratively with the Developmental Services Toronto (dsto), the goal is to increase capacity and sustainability for diversity and inclusion in the Developmental Services sector. This has included: (1) ethno-culturally specific outreach and community engagement; (2) research to identify strategies for improving cultural inclusivity within DSO-TR Access process; and, (3) training and resource development to support the work of service providers. Let's look at some of the highlights from the project over the summer:

A new collaboration with ANNISAA, an organization that promotes social and economic opportunities for Muslim women, has allowed us to expand our outreach and build relationships within the Muslim community. We are currently exploring a partnership focused on intellectual disability education and awareness to help reduce stigma that still exists and to connect families to the services they need.

The IDEA (Intellectual Disability Education Ambassadors) project created more opportunities for

newcomers to participate in outreach across diverse communities. In August we took part in the Toronto Mela 2015, a celebration of South Asian culture and diversity held in Scarborough. IDEA participant Salma Banu volunteered at our booth and helped make connections with local community members.

Interviews with immigrant caregivers conducted by our Diversity research assistants Melissa Turner and Andi Yumansky are helping to shed light on the role of cultural inclusivity while accessing the DSO-TR. We expect the research activities to wrap-up in the fall, with results to be made available in the spring of 2016 in various formats.

Bridging Diversity Toolkit, a new online resource created in partnership with self-advocates and with ConnectABILITY.ca, continues to grow. It features resources, activities, and video testimonies by individuals speaking about their experiences around diversity and inclusion, and sharing tools for making spaces more welcoming and inclusive. Check out the toolkit at:

www.connectability.ca/bridgingdiversity

Connecting Community Living Toronto with a Diverse and Inclusive Street Procession

By Melissa Turner, Diversity Project Assistant

Religious, Cultural and National Observances

- Sept 5** ♦ Hindu celebration of Janmashtami
- Sept 7** ♦ Labour Day
- Sept 11** ♦ Paryushan festival celebrated by the Jain community
- Sept 13-15** ♦ Rosh Hashanah, Jewish New Year
- Sept 19** ♦ Oktoberfest celebrated by German community
- Sept 23** ♦ Yom Kippur, Jewish Holy Day of Atonement
- Sept 23** ♦ Eid-ul-Adha Muslim festival concluding the Hajj
- Oct 12** ♦ Thanksgiving
- Oct 17** ♦ Int'l Day for Eradication of Poverty (UN)
- Oct 23** ♦ Ashura day of mourning for Shi'ite Muslims
- Oct 31** ♦ Halloween
- Nov 11** ♦ Diwali festival celebrated by Sikh and Hindu communities

To learn more about the Ring of Fire art project and see photos and videos from the event visit:

www.theaguisoutthere.org/rofire

On Sunday August 9th, a 300-person procession known as “Ring of Fire” danced from Queen’s Park along University Avenue to City Hall. Designed by Trinidadian artist Marlon Griffiths and curated by Emelie Changur from the Art Gallery of York University, the event was a coming together of many of Toronto’s diverse groups, including the individuals we work with at Community Living Toronto.

Community Living Toronto’s inclusion in this event is thanks to the efforts of Dawn-Marie Maiato, an Individual Support Worker II in Central Region. Dawn-Marie first heard about Ring of Fire through an Occupational Therapist who works with one of the individuals she supports. Dawn-Marie realized the event could offer new opportunities for many people supported by Community Living Toronto. She mentioned the idea to her supervisor, Patricia Araya, and from there, the agency’s role in this diverse and meaningful event grew.

Dawn-Marie explained that while she thinks the project has been great for Community Living Toronto and the individuals we support, it was also a learning opportunity for the whole city. While the procession was a celebration, it also offered a way to learn about Anishanabe teachings and Canada’s Anishanabe history, as individuals were invited to attend teachings by Elder Duke Redbird. Dawn-Marie noted the procession gave visibility to so many groups often treated as invisible and showcased the diversity of Toronto. Along with Anishanabe community members, spoken word artists from Jane and Finch, Malvern, and Regent Park also took part in the procession. All spoken word artists were paired with ASL interpreters to ensure the event was as accessible to as many as possible. Thank you, Dawn-Marie, for connecting Community Living Toronto with this great event. Your understanding of the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in our work is valuable and inspiring!



Merissa, Dawn-Marie and Krista at the Ring of Fire information session at Sketch studio.



On the day of event, getting ready to march in the procession.

Creative Village Studio Artist Designs New Bridging Diversity Logo

By Melissa Turner, Diversity Project Assistant



Peer group for LGBTQ people with an intellectual disability over the age of 18. Meets every second Monday of the month at the 519 Church St. Community Centre 6 - 8 pm

**Call to register:
416-222-1153 ext. 138**

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION RESOURCES:

Bridging Diversity Toolkit
www.connectability.ca/bridgingdiversity

Canadian Centre for Diversity & Inclusion
www.ccdi.ca

Harmony Movement
www.harmony.ca
Workshops and resources on equity, diversity and inclusion.

OCASI Positive Space Initiative
www.positivespaces.ca

TRIEC (Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council) www.triec.ca

You may have noticed that Bridging Diversity has a new logo. The artwork in the logo, "Diversity Pop Culture," was created by Conrod Skyers, an artist who is working out of the Creative Village Studio. He created the piece as part of a contest that asked artists to draw what diversity means to them. While many beautiful paintings were submitted, "Diversity Pop Culture" was chosen to be incorporated into our new look.

In early August, a small celebration was held to recognize all of the artists who contributed work to the contest and to congratulate Conrod on his winning artwork. At the event, Conrod shared that his artwork was inspired by music and pop culture.

Specifically, he was thinking of Aaliyah and Beyonce when he created the piece.

While we chatted about the many different faces that can be seen in the artwork, Conrod mentioned that he wanted everyone who looked at the painting to see something of themselves reflected back. For example, when Conrod looked at the piece, he discussed not only his Jamaican culture but also his extended family from England and China. The different skin tones, eye colours, hair colours and facial shapes create one cohesive image that truly represents Bridging Diversity.



Pictured from left to right: Dillon, Donna, Lisa, Melissa, Ilaneet, Conrod, Neil and Andi posing with Conrod's painting "Diversity Pop Culture."

Conrod working on a new masterpiece at the studio...



NEW! - #BridgingDiversity Bulletin

#BridgingDiversity Bulletin is a biweekly collection of resources, community news and events relating to diversity, equity and inclusion. To subscribe please email: ilaneet.goren@cltoronto.ca or tweet us at [@cltoronto](https://twitter.com/cltoronto).