

New name, same focus: Anti-racism

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THE City of Thunder Bay Anti-Racism Advisory Committee has been developing strategies to combat racism in our community since 2010. We remain committed to our ultimate goal of eliminating racism and discrimination in Thunder Bay and although we are proud of the work that we have done, we recognize that there is still much more to do.

In order to continue to pursue our mandate, we have spent considerable time evaluating our current structure and looking at how we can do things better. In November, city council approved the changes we proposed and we would like to share those with the community.

The name of the committee will now be the Anti-Racism & Respect Advisory Committee, reflecting the city's proactive efforts to raise awareness of respect as a human right, while maintaining the anti-racism focus.

The structure of the committee will also change and starting in 2016, the smaller committee will consist of 11 members, including the mayor, two members of council, five community representatives as well as one appointee each from Thunder Bay Multicultural Association, Re-



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Thunder Bay's Anti-Racism Advisory Committee produces this monthly column to promote greater understanding of race relations in Northwestern Ontario.

gional Multicultural Youth Association and the Urban Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

The committee will meet twice yearly with a Roundtable against Racism, consisting of representatives from various agencies and organizations committed to diversity and anti-racism work.

The committee's vision is stated simply and clearly: "Diversity is valued and racism is not accepted."

We continue to be guided by the principles that are the best practices from the Ontario Human Rights Commission. These include recognizing that racism exists in our society and our role in combating it by implementing specific measures and engaging in actions to eliminate it.

We also assert that we recognize and value the racial diversity of our community.

We could not do this important work without a carefully thought-out action plan, including specific timelines, key priorities, measurable objectives and success indicators.

The committee's four year action plan will be implemented through the development of partnerships with community organizations, specifically through the Roundtable Against Racism. The primary objectives include:

- Monitoring racism in the community through the development of an online resource centre for anti-racism information and tools. This will be followed by the implementation of a 211 line for incident reporting.
- Promoting the respect initiative by working closely with the crime prevention council and major employers in the community.
- Improving the housing situation through community workshops on issues related to housing and becoming an advocate on housing issues.
- Providing equal employment opportunities by consulting with the City of Thunder Bay human resources division on current hiring practices as well as providing corporate aboriginal and cultural aware-

ness training. The committee will also promote diversity in the workplace and will utilize community forums to develop strategies to increase workplace diversity.

• Educating stakeholders, partners and the community about racism issues and anti-racism initiatives. This will be accomplished through a variety of activities planned for 2016, including a youth engagement activity in partnership with Leadership Thunder Bay as well as Diversity Thunder Bay's 10th anniversary breakfast on March 22, hosted by renowned humanitarian, Stephen Lewis. The committee will also formulate a community welcoming initiative and continue with this column, developed to recognize the many voices of this city.

We will be measuring our success with each goal as we move forward and if needed, additional measures may be added. Through tracking our progress, we will be able to acknowledge our challenges and celebrate our successes along the way.

We continue to appreciate and be grateful for the hard work of the many committee members and partners who have helped us achieve our goals to date and look forward to further collaboration and success.

14-12-15
Amina Abu-Bakare chairs the advisory committee on anti-racism.