

Add your voice to the diversity conversation

BY ROOPA RAKSHIT

MY IDEOLOGIES on internationalism is partly due to my travels and work across continents. They have shaped my contexts favorably in appreciation of outlooks and universal solidarity. Diversity is not an abstract identity for me but a valued sentiment with the underlying conviction that all humans are equal in dignity. I have a healthy pride and feelings for my roots as well as every other country I have made my home or travelled.

However, there is a prudence with expressions and increasingly so, in present times. I observe hesitancy and caution when roots, ethnicities, inclusion, and even, immigration are deliberated. They have distinct references, contexts, and meanings but quite often used interchangeably for different is-



ONE CITY,
MANY VOICES

Thunder Bay's Anti-Racism and Respect Committee and Diversity Thunder Bay produce this monthly column to promote greater understanding of race relations in Northwestern Ontario.

sues and groups. The point is, in our current political climate, these themes are gradually becoming critical and complex for open dialogues and communications.

Our world is home to numerous civilizations, race, nations, ethnic origins, cultures, sexual orienta-

tions, developmental imbalances and socio-economic variances. There are bound to be differing ideas and thoughts. And, there can also be room to carve opportunities, creative possibilities, and prospects. This world can certainly be a place for all to belong and co-exist with "respect" as the core philosophy.

Undoubtedly, unfavorable incidents and actions in global spaces are raising important questions about our collective (in)tolerance and shared understanding of values, as individuals, society, and as a nation.

Responsibility to shape our society and community lies with us. To remain passive observers is detrimental to having open and constructive conversations. To better understand one another, there is an urgent need for open and transparent dialogues, where all forms of diversity are listened to, and

valued.

I have committed to co-ordinating the One City, Many Voices column for the Diversity Thunder Bay and Anti-Racism and Respect Advisory Committee due to their steadfast commitment to merit any forms of diversity and their tireless efforts to bridge barriers across borders.

The essence of diversity is to be inclusive.

Since the inception of the One City, Many Voices column in 2012, pertinent perspectives and distinct voices are shared in raising awareness and celebrating local diversity. The One City, Many Voices column has been receptive and invited authors have championed for an inclusive Thunder Bay community. It is vital that we open our minds and hearts as we read the One City, Many Voices columns and welcome rational, fair and just advocacy and activism, and pro-

gressive ideas.

Every voice counts. Every voice is powerful. Every voice needs and deserved to be heard.

I invite you to share your thoughts, insights, and impressions on equity, diversity, and inclusion. Allow them to remain in the forefront of frequent, open and transparent dialogues in making thriving societies. I also invite you to read past thoughtful articles by our One City, Many Voices authors. Visit the website www.diversitythunderbay.ca to find the columns.

On this positive note, I wish One City, Many Voices readers a wonderful and promising 2020.

Roopa Rakshit hosts Global Vibes on Shaw TV, Channel 10. Articles can be submitted to roopalovesnature@gmail.com. The views and opinions expressed in this column are those of the author.