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Past contributors for One City, Many Voices attended an event on Nov. 30, 2022, to mark 10 years of the column, and encourage further community discussion on social justice.

# Exploring differences builds community

BY ROOPA RAKSHIT

**T**HUNDER Bay is a city shaped by its people, each with unique stories and experiences that contribute to our shared identity. It is evident that diversity isn't just a buzzword — it's a powerful force that shapes our community.

But diversity is more than just a celebration; it's a challenge. It requires us to examine our attitudes and actions, to listen actively, to respect one another, and to learn from our differences.

The question I pose today is: How often do we pause to reflect on those differences? How often do we make space to share our stories with each other? It's not enough to simply tolerate one another; we must ensure everyone has a seat at the table, creating a true sense of belonging for all.

The One City, Many Voices column, launched in 2012 as a partnership between the City of Thunder Bay's Anti-Racism and Equity Advisory Committee, Diversity Thunder Bay and The Chronicle Journal, serves as a platform for diverse voices. It sparks dialogue, fosters understanding, and highlights the unique experiences that shape our community.

In November 2022, the column celebrated its 10th



ONE CITY, MANY VOICES

**The Thunder Bay Anti-Racism and Equity Advisory Committee and Diversity Thunder Bay produce this monthly column to promote greater understanding of race relations in Northwestern Ontario**

anniversary and brought together the column's authors and the wider community to honour the voices that have contributed to this important conversation.

The mission of One City, Many Voices is straightforward yet profound: to address racism and explore the many dimensions of diversity in our community. Since its inception, more than 140 articles have been written, touching on topics from multiculturalism and immigrant experiences to social justice and reconciliation. These stories are deeply human, often moving, and consistently impactful, helping us see the world through someone else's eyes. They invite us to break down barriers and reflect on how our differences can help us build a more inclusive society.

The One City, Many Voices column addresses uncomfortable yet necessary conversations around discrimination, bias and inclusivity. It reflects how we can create environments that promote respect, understanding and collaboration. There are also articles advocating for social justice and equity, which urge us to speak out, challenge injustices, and work toward systemic change.

These themes highlight ongoing conversations about identity, belonging, equity and justice — conversations that reflect our collective desire to create a supportive, inclusive community

## YOUR voice matters.

If you have a personal experience, project or perspective related to diversity, inclusion or racism, we want to hear from you. Your story can make a difference. Whether you've lived these experiences first hand or simply have a perspective to share, your contribution helps us all move forward together.

Why is this important? Inclusion is not merely about being "nice" to each other; it's about creating a space where everyone feels valued, heard and empowered to contribute. It's about building stronger relationships, solving problems collabora-

tively, and fostering a community where everyone can thrive.

This journey, however, is not without challenges.

Racism, biases and inequities are real, and addressing them can be uncomfortable. But it is through difficult conversations — by challenging stereotypes and confronting misconceptions — that we can build a more inclusive Thunder Bay.

Thanking all our 2024 authors and as we welcome 2025, I invite you to reflect on how we can do better.

How can we support one another in creating a more inclusive Thunder Bay? One powerful way is by sharing our stories, listening to others and embracing the diversity that makes our city unique.

Together, we can shape a future that truly reflects the beauty of a diverse and inclusive Thunder Bay.

The OCMV articles are archived online ([diversitythunderbay.ca](http://diversitythunderbay.ca)) on the Diversity Thunder Bay website.

*Roopa Rakshit is the co-ordinator of One City, Many Voices and you may forward your articles to [roopalovesnature@gmail.com](mailto:roopalovesnature@gmail.com). The views and opinions expressed in this column are those of the author.*