



# Institute of Research & Training

## Special Edition Newsletter International Women's Day

Vol 4 Issue 9

International Women's Day. March 8<sup>th</sup> is designated as the day to recognize and celebrate women's and girls' social, economic, cultural, and political achievements. It is also a time to raise awareness of the progress made towards attaining gender equality and the work remaining to be done in this area.

The beginnings of International Women's Day can be traced back to the early twentieth century. It emerged from the activities of labour movements in North America and Europe and reflected a growing call for women's equal participation in society. International Women's Day first took place on March 19, 1911, in Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland. On that day, over a million women and men attended public events to show their support.

Other countries began to observe and celebrate this day in the years that followed. The United Nations recognized 1975 as International Women's Year and began celebrating March 8 as International Women's Day.

In this newsletter, we want to take this theme and acknowledge the contributions made by women to enrich Canadian society.

More specifically, we look at the lives of Black women and girls in the Region of Peel and view how their distinct experiences as being both, Black and girls, shape them.

Today, International Women's Day is a day of unity, celebration, reflection, advocacy, and action and is celebrated in many countries worldwide.

## The theme for this year's International Women's Day is Every Woman Counts.

PIRT's recent study *"The Impact of Racial Microaggressions on Black Youth in the Region of Peel: A Literature Review"* (2023) touches on this year's International Women's Day campaign, especially as it highlights the need to examine the unique experiences of Black girls within the Region of Peel. The research study shows how gender adds another layer of vulnerability when viewing the challenges experienced by Black girls, brought about by racial microaggressions and stereotypes. It also examines how Black girls are penalized for behaviours that may be overlooked when the behaviour is committed by girls of other races. Overall, the well-being and futures of Black girls' lives are affected by differential treatment, especially within the education system. We found several examples of Black girls relating stories of times when they were punished for certain behaviours, while their white peers escaped punishment for similar actions. If they spoke out against their unjust treatment, they were further reprimanded to the point of being publicly humiliated and even suspended from school. At a very young age, Black girls face challenges in the form of racism, discrimination and microaggressions that shape their development and identity.

Collective action and further research are necessary to uplift all women, specifically Black women, and girls, to ensure that their voices are heard. In this issue, we highlight the achievements of Black women in the Region of Peel. Join us in celebrating International Women's Day by recognizing Black women's ongoing contributions to our society. Let's celebrate their strength, resiliency, courage, and grit to thrive, despite the multiple adversities they may innocently encounter on any single day.

# Meet our Community Leaders and Innovators



**Reni Odetoyinbo**

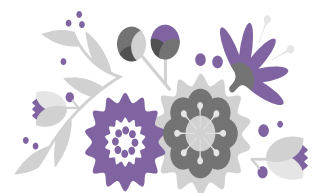
Reni Odetoyinbo is a content creator, marketing consultant, and finance coach based in Mississauga, Ontario. At the age of 23, she purchased her first home using proceeds from investing in the stock market and started to share her knowledge with others online with the hope of helping Black women become more financially literate. Over the past two years, Reni has built a community of over 60,000 individuals across her platforms and has encouraged women to get smart with their money, start investing, purchase homes, develop financial independence, negotiate their salaries, and much more. Reni hosts intimate workshops to delve into women's individual situations and help them overcome everything holding them back from achieving financial literacy. In 2022, Reni launched an accountability group that helped 100 people save over \$950,000 and this is just the beginning.

Michelle Muir is a storyteller, writer, poet, and elementary school teacher in the Region of Peel. Inspired over 20 years ago to begin teaching in Peel in response to the lack of diversity in teachers in schools, she has since developed a classroom and teaching approach that is immersed in social justice, intersectionality, and anti-Black racism. Her classroom, aka "Muirland", is a space where students of all backgrounds can find a sense of safety and belonging. Guided by a set of community agreements, Muir encourages critical thinking, open communication, collaboration, accountability to self and others, and self-reflection amongst her students. Students are taught how to safely express themselves, how to resolve conflict, how to work in teams, and how to challenge problematic norms and ideologies appropriately and effectively.

Muir integrates art, poetry, music, storytelling, and her own cultural heritage into her teaching of the curriculum, highlighting how learning occurs in numerous ways. Her classroom has a Zen corner where students can go when they need a mindful moment. Students can choose to use a 'do not disturb' sign when they would prefer to work independently. Further, Muir engages her students in important conversations about classroom rules and expectations to ensure they understand and have space to ask questions. Muir co-facilitates one of the only African, Black, and Caribbean Associations in an elementary school in Peel, where young Black students learn to engage with their heritage, to feel empowered by who they are, and learn how to express themselves in creative ways regardless of your background or ethnicity!



**Michelle Muir**





**Kishauna  
Taylor-McKoy**



My name is Kishauna Taylor-McKoy, I'm a fourth year Bachelor of Science in Nursing student at York University. I've been volunteering since elementary school in the local community while maintaining honour roll and Dean's List. I have worked on annual Black History Month events, a HelloFresh Program that distributes food to the community weekly, "I Help Stuff the Bus" clothing drive, annual community clean ups in Spring and much more. I'm a member of Nursing Student Association of YorkU (NSAY) as well as Canadian Black Nursing Alliance of YorkU (CBNA) as a program and events committee member. Through these initiatives and along with working with Family Services of Peel on the Anti-Black Racism project, I've been allotted the opportunity to provide resources, education, and safe spaces for individuals.

My biggest motivation throughout the years has been my mother. I am a first-generation Canadian with roots hailing from Jamaica. My mother has always encouraged me to use my free time to give back to those we can help. She reminds me that no deed goes unpunished and no matter how big or small the act is, it will make a difference. Often when I would lack motivation, she would draw on a quote by Henry Wadsworth, "The Heights by Great Men" which I have used throughout my life to remember why I continue to be an active member of the community. It is gratifying when I see the gratitude and impact on people's lives, I've made which keeps me motivated. Although I don't always see the fruits of my work, it is important for me to continue as my work can set the foundation for other members of the community to succeed and participate in community work.

I am an RSW and I have worked in many programs at Family Services of Peel, and I do what I love doing to the fullest. I became a group facilitator in the Families and Schools Together Program where I facilitated a group intervention that is designed to build protective factors for children and empower parents to be the primary prevention agents for their own children. I then began to work in the Youth Opportunities program where I developed, implemented, and provided employment/skills development workshops for youths facing barriers to employment. After that I worked on the Active Parenting Program where I facilitated an engaging 4-week program for parents/caregivers that assist with bringing families together to spend quality time, learn parenting tools and resources.

I currently work in the Supported Independent Living Program for clients with developmental disability and for those that are dual diagnosed with developmental disability and mental health. I believe that with all these experiences that I have worked in has helped me to make an impact in the community in a positive way. I stand by FSP's commitments and Values to "Transforming Lives in Peel", I try my best because I personally want to make a difference to positively impact people's lives within the community. Even if I help one person or impact one person in the community, I know that it will go a long way. I have seen many lives changed throughout my time and have seen family bonds grow stronger. Hearing positive feedback gives me affirmation that I am making an impactful difference in the lives of others.



**Renée McMillan**





**Zariah Walker**



I am a business development and marketing consultant with a passion to empower small business owners. I graduated from Toronto Metropolitan University's Law and Business program in 2020 during the pandemic and noticed a gap in the market for services to help business owners pivot to make it through the pandemic I knew that I wanted to be there for entrepreneurs that needed a helping hand to make it to the finish line. This prompted me to start my business consulting practice, Avesbury Consulting. My goal with Avesbury Consulting is to support business owners and entrepreneurs in every stage of their business lifecycle from ideation to expansion by offering all the services a business would need to thrive such as, Business Plan Writing, Marketing Plan Development, Website Design, Social Media Management, Virtual Assistance, Digital Marketing, Business Coaching and Branding. Avesbury Consulting strives to support, educate, and elevate our clients by providing ongoing assistance helping businesses reach their full potential and ensuring they understand how to use the tools necessary to grow their businesses. Avesbury Consulting has served businesses of all sizes both within Canada and internationally in a variety of industries such as media, fashion, real estate, food services, financial services, transportation, employment services, hospitality and more!

Book a free no-obligation consultation by visiting [www.AvesburyConsulting.ca](http://www.AvesburyConsulting.ca) to find out how Avesbury Consulting can help you take your business to the next level.

I am a Community Service Worker, a Personal Support Worker and a Medical Office Assistant. I currently work with youths in my community, the elderly, and people with disabilities or that are developmentally delayed. I also work at two hospitals based in Ontario. While getting a Community Service Worker diploma, I concluded that it is very easy for a Black woman to face discrimination, challenges and difficulties while growing up as a youth within the community. This often leads to Black youth not wanting to achieve success or work to become a successful person in life, thereby allowing them to believe that they can never achieve greatness or survive within society. I didn't want that for my children. Being a mom of two beautiful girls, I need to show them that having goals is very important and that constant learning is one of the most important keys to moving ahead in life.

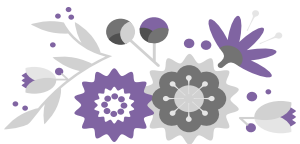
I am on the path of upgrading my transcript as I intend to return to school to study nursing. My long-term goal is to have a centre that young Black girls/women can go to for growth and advice on achieving both their short-term and long-term plans. This centre will showcase the cultures of individuals. It will loan out helping hands to these women and have a supportive environment within the community. *"Being a different colour within a society that is working against Black woman, but having the tenacity to keep climbing higher gives a Black woman one more edge against a system that's set-in place for her failure."*



**Iyabode Ojelabi**



**Nebilah Ronke  
Igiebor-  
Ogunbunmi**



Nebilah Ronke Igiebor-Ogunbunmi is a Business Administration graduate, an Event Planner & Designer Certified by the Wedding Planning Institute of Canada (WPIC), Mexico Destination Wedding Specialist Board, Preston Bailey Signature Wedding & Event design (PBSWED), Corporate Event Planning (CEP) and the Wedding & Event Planning (CWEP) from Lovegevity Wedding Planning Institute (LWPI). She is also the Education Director and a certified member of the Association of Professional Planners and Event Managers of Nigeria (APPOEMN). I am also a certified Medical Assistant who has worked full time in the Operating Room, Emergency Room and currently, the Labour and Delivery unit of a hospital based in Ontario.

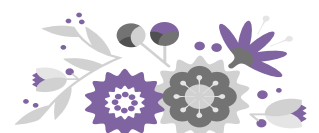
I consider myself a successful serial Entrepreneur with a thriving online boutique business. As a Black woman in today's world, there are more things that work against us than for us. The need to keep my eyes on the goal, to always achieve success, to push harder and set an example to show my daughter that it is possible; is greater than my fear of failure. That is my recipe for success. I am currently working on a personal project that will help bridge the gap for women of colour looking to pivot their careers and start a new life in Canada. I hope to create smooth paths to affordable education, hands on training and resources/funds for these women. As a mother, seasoned traveler, and successful entrepreneur; I continue to drive myself through continuing education and the need to show women of all ages that achieving your dream is possible regardless of your background or ethnicity!

Tomachi Onyewuchi is a campaign manager, model, and social media freelancer based in Toronto, Ontario. Her main job is as a campaign manager at Kensington Grey Agency, an influencer marketing agency. There, she helps amplify the voices and creativity of Black women, men, and people by facilitating partnerships for their brands and supporting their campaigns. At a young age, she saw that Black women had fewer opportunities in this type of work than their white counterparts. She wanted to be someone young Black girls could look up to, which inspired her work as a model and content creator.

Tomachi has done modelling campaigns for Hudson's Bay and various beauty brands. She believes that seeing Black women in positions and industries they have historically been left out of encourages other Black women and girls to believe they have a chance to succeed there too. Tomachi regularly posts about her experiences and struggles with modelling and is always open to having conversations with other Black women who are interested in breaking into her industry. She loves sharing tips and things she's learned along the way to give people the support they need and believes that creating space for other Black people is how everyone will progress.



**Tomachi Onyewuchi**



Racial microaggressions are common and subtle negative messages directed at people of colour because they belong to a racial minority group. It was found that Black youth experience microaggressions daily in the Region of Peel. While mainstream media has the highest presence of stereotypes against Black youth, microaggressions exist across social media, the Peel District School Board (PDSB), in the workplace, housing, healthcare, banks, and other public and social spaces. They have profound negative impacts on the lives of Black youth. Below are some examples of microaggressions that Black women and girls face that demonstrate attitudes about Black people being criminals, disrespectful, lazy, and irresponsible.



**Ahmed Ali**   
 @MrAhmednurAli

If you need to call police on a 4 year old Black baby, you shouldn't be a teacher. Full stop.

10:20 AM · Feb 25, 2022

538 Retweets 57 Quote Tweets 4,236 Likes



**Snoflake** @SafeSnoflake · Feb 25, 2022

Replying to @MrAhmednurAli

You've taken away teacher's ability to discipline you moron. Way easier to make it about race and but all the other kids in danger. Liberals are so dumb.



**Marlon Neil** @marlonneil\_ · Feb 25, 2022

Replying to @MrAhmednurAli

Clear example of Leftist ideology making things worse. If the teacher is not allowed to touch the child, please enlighten us what they should do. How about we blame the parents that at 4 year old has no respect for adults.



**Mississauga News**   
 November 4, 2022 ·

A #Mississauga says she hasn't yet come to grips with a recent big lottery win <http://torstar.co/ygYT50LtlNi>



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'Stop lying!': Mississauga woman wins with OLG lottery draw

6K

345 comments 40 shares



**James R Page**

Pay 🙄 your welfare back to your state you been living off! 🙄

Like Reply 8w



**DEE DEE**   
 @GLDN24k

Finding a place to rent as a single black woman was one of the worst experiences of my life lol. Great credit, salary & references and I was given the run around for multiple units because "they weren't sure I was responsible enough" I was 29 y/o 🤔

**Kaitlyn Lee, CPA, CA** @kaitlynleeRE · 3d

Rental discrimination is super real. And not just in one culture. In all. Just one example: See this tiktok and comments about having trouble renting in Brampton if not of South Asian ethnicity. #ToRE

Show this thread



1:20 PM · 2023-01-06 · Twitter for iPhone



**#endanglophonecrisis in Cameroon**   
 @ety\_17

Taking the transit as a black woman in Brampton is such a blessing because everyone avoids sitting next to you unless they are black too.

8:12 AM · Jan 5, 2023

6,255 Views 4 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 38 Likes



**No Name** @FluentAsFluck · Jan 6

Replying to @ety\_17

People don't want to get shot



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**Peel Institute of Research & Training acknowledges the hard work & dedication of our team**

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