



**DURHAM CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
*Learning and Living in Faith*

## **Memorandum**

To: Board of Trustees

From: Tracy Barill, Director of Education

Date: February 27, 2023

Subject: **Black History Month Highlights**

Origin: Kayode Akomolafe, Human Rights and Equity Advisor  
Mike O'Neill, Superintendent of Education – Academic Services

Please find attached a copy of the Black History Month Highlights Presentation.

TB/KA:MO/br

Attachment: Black History Month Highlights Presentation

# **2023 Black History Month – Celebration of Black Excellence in Canada: Yesterday and Today**

Presented to the DCDSB Board of Trustees, February 27, 2023

# Introduction

- February is celebrated as Black History Month in Canada
- This year marks the 47th edition
- Celebrates the contributions of people of African descent or Black origin to Canada's development and
- Black excellence in the Canadian context
- The theme this year is "Ours to tell"
- Emphasis on recognition beyond February



# Black History Month and DCDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Activities for Black History Month are aligned with Discovery 2023 strategic priorities of Excellence, Equity and Engagement.

## Excellence

*“Let us not tire of doing what is good, for at the right time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” —GALATIANS 6:9*

### We are committed to:

- Learning about and using current, research-based best practices.
- Nurturing a culture of high expectations and individual accountability for continuous growth.
- Encouraging and celebrating collaboration, curiosity and creativity.
- Creating a culture that fosters inquiry and innovation.

## Equity

*“A new commandment I give you, love one another, as I have loved you...” —JOHN 13:34*

### We are committed to:

- Cultivating a positive sense of self and belonging for each individual by respecting and responding to diverse identities and strengths.
- Providing access to a broad range of programs, pathways and vocations.
- Providing opportunities for all staff to engage in learning to support culturally responsive and relevant practice.
- Walking the path together with our Indigenous partners to increase understanding and commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.

## Engagement

*“The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ.” —CORINTHIANS 12:12*

### We are committed to:

- Enhancing relationships with our students, staff, families, parishes and community partners through ongoing communication.
- Facilitating meaningful consultation opportunities which allow for input from a broad range of voices, perspectives and cultural diversities.
- Ensuring transparent decision-making processes.
- Providing opportunities to increase authentic student voice and ownership in their learning.

# School Presentations

## Notre Dame CSS

### "Friday Night Drummers"

- Delivered an interactive presentation through music, dance and storytelling highlighting some of the rich African culture that forms a part of African Diaspora collective history with a selection of rhythms used in West African Nations such as Guinea, Mali and Sierra Leone.

## St. Paul and St. Theresa

### "Testament" (Tanika 'Insight' Riley and Matthew Jones)

- Tanika was honored as one of 100 Accomplished Black Women in Canada for 2020. They spoke and rapped about peace, love, unity, the power of words and shared a brief history on rap in Canada.



# Interactive Displays For Students Celebrating Black Excellence

This is just one of the many posters that are displayed in our schools to celebrate Black Excellence

THE 29TH EDITION OF **LEGACY** THE LEGACY COLLEXTION.COM CELEBRATES *Black Excellence*

**Debbie DOUGLAS**

Black excellence is a force for change! Black Excellence can compel individuals to recognize and channel their power. It also acknowledges their brilliance and resilience in the face of countless systemic barriers. An individual who has done so in a powerful way is Debbie Douglas.

As Executive Director of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, Douglas' work in the NGO sector has consistently addressed issues of equity and inclusion. She was the co-editor of *Maka Juku: Writings by Queens of African Descent*. As a community worker, Douglas co-founded Zami, a political and support group for LGBTBI Black and Caribbean people in the early 1980's. As a writer, she co-wrote and produced Canada's first docu-drama on women and AIDS. Douglas has promoted the creation of safe, welcoming spaces within the immigrant settlement and integration sector. Douglas has utilized her many talents for the benefit of the African-Canadian community.

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**Kwame DELFISH**

Black excellence is unique! Its uniqueness lies in the ability of individuals to obtain a high level of achievement, success, or demonstrate rare ability that makes them the exception to the rule. Artist, Kwame Delfish epitomizes this definition of Black excellence as he has achieved incredible things with his talent.

Delfish marched his way into history as the first Caribbean Canadian to design a coin illustrative of Canada for the Royal Canadian Mint. Delfish received a rare second opportunity to create a coin for the Mint. The coin was a limited edition \$20 tribute to Black History and The Underground Railroad. Like the circular endless journey on the coins Delfish has produced, there is no end to the affect his contribution to Black history in Canada has made.

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**Karen HUDSON**

Black excellence is powerful! It is a type of power that can be felt in individuals that are not only exceptional themselves, but have the ability to compel others to be the same. This power is felt by those who have been in the presence of educator Karen Hudson.

Karen Hudson took her belief in the power of Afrocentricity to make Black students believe in themselves and thrive within the public-school curriculum. Karen Hudson has been and remains a powerful force in the education system for close to three decades. Currently, Hudson is the Principal of Auburn Drive High School in Cole Harbour, NS. As the creator of the first Afrocentric Cohort within the Province of Nova Scotia, Hudson was recognized nationally as one of Canada's Outstanding Principals in 2019.

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**Warren SALMON**

Black excellence is a mindset, backed by continuous action that progresses the Black community. This definition clearly describes the mindset of Warren Salmon and his dedication to the Black community.

Thirty years ago, prior to anyone even thinking about merging Black history and technology, Salmon founded Black Board International (BBI). BBI is an online educational platform with content that features contributions of people of African descent. Salmon also founded First Fridays (FF), a monthly networking event for African-Canadians. FF has provided a venue for African-Canadians to be empowered in parts of Canada and internationally. In addition, Salmon co-founded the Ontario Alliance of Black School Educators, giving a voice to Black educators. Salmon has historically acted towards the benefit of the African-Canadian community in various ways, unlike any other.

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FOR 2024... **LEGACY** CELEBRATES ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY!  
Sign up for our newsletter and order more posters on our website:  
[www.thelegacyposter.com](http://www.thelegacyposter.com)  
Contact us at: [orders@thelegacyposter.com](mailto:orders@thelegacyposter.com)

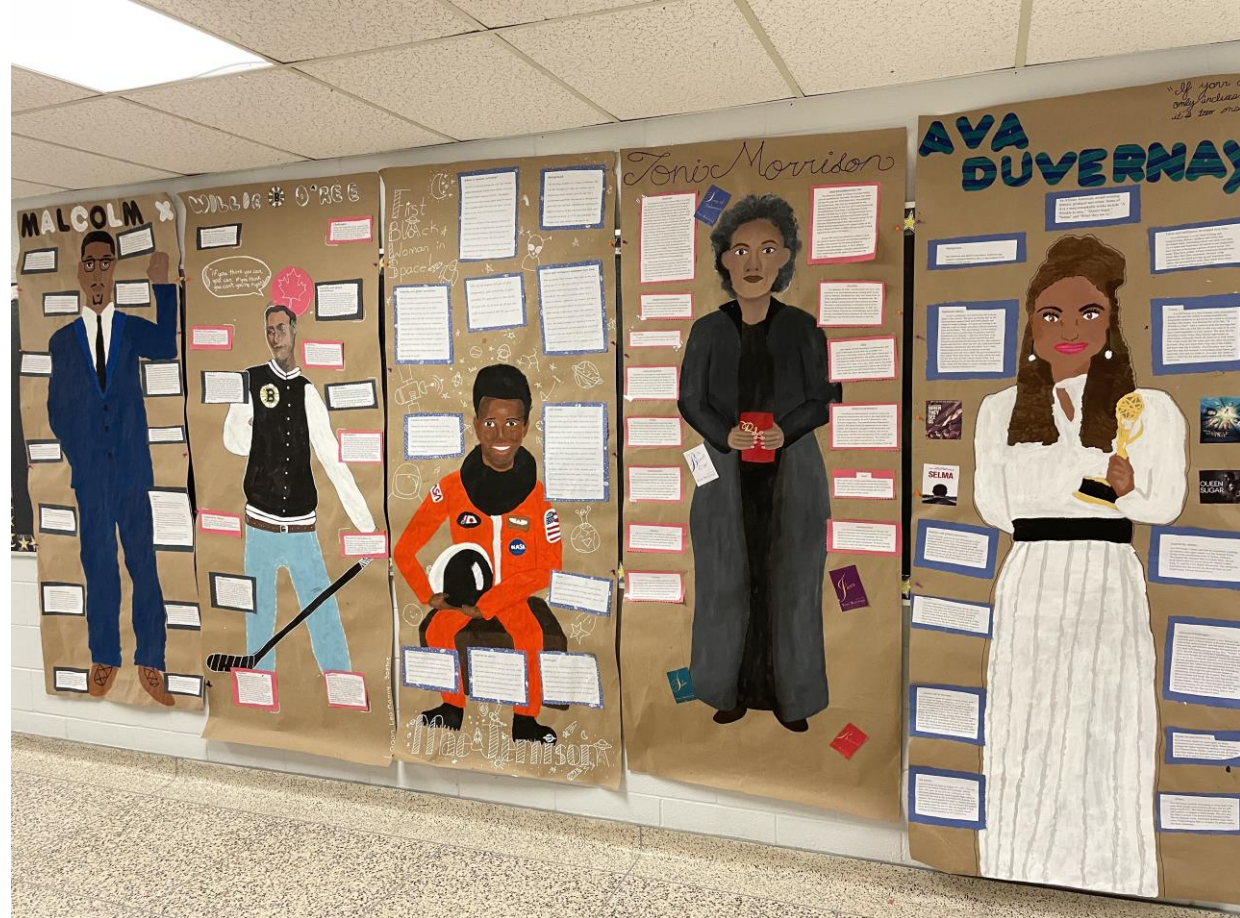
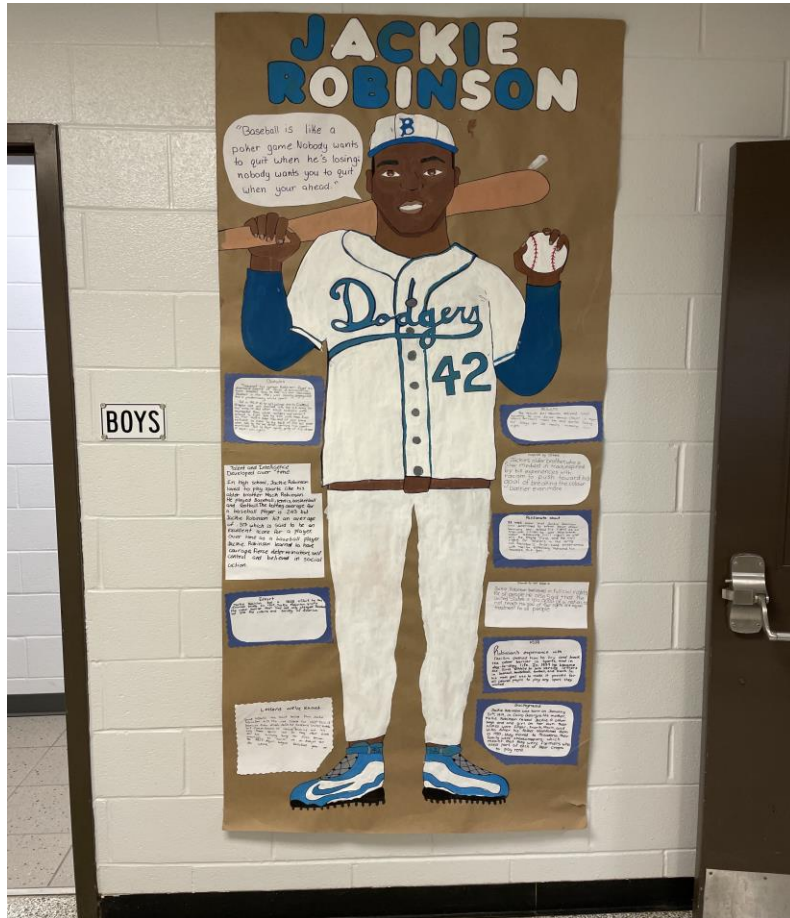
**MOVERS & SHAKERS** **FLOW98.7** **PROTEXXA**

# Student Voice

The St. Mary's "Unity Team" delivered a workshop called "**The Power of Words**" to 3 elementary feeder schools (St. Monica, St. Wilfrid and St. Elizabeth Seton) over February. Students spoke about the importance and power of the words we use.



# Student Learning





# Board Office Events

- Staff led BHM events for Catholic Education Centre and Operations, Maintenance & Admin (OMAC) staff
- A liturgy and presentation held on February 3 at the Pope Francis Center. Approx. 150 staff attended



St Augustine



# Black Leadership History Event



## Four Hundred Years of Black History in Canada: Celebrating the contributions of Black Canadians to Canada

Vice President, Ontario Black History Society, Black history consultant, education and community advocate, speaker, facilitator, and author Channon Oyeniran will be presenting on the rich and expansive history and experiences of people of African descent in Canada over 400 years. Attendees will have the opportunity to think critically about the various experiences and contributions of Black people in Canada.

Refreshments and appetizers from local Black-owned businesses will be provided following the presentation.



### Meet the Speaker: Channon Oyeniran



Channon is the co-founder of Oyeniran Education Support (OyES), an educational organization established to consult, teach and empower. OyES, is an educational organization that helps individuals and institutions identify and align with their intrinsic values, gifts and nurtures them to greatness. Channon uses the OyES platform and others, to teach people about Black history. To learn more about OyES and Channon, please visit: <https://oyeseducation.org/channon/>

**Monday, February 27, 2023**

**2:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

**Pope Francis Centre**  
652 Rossland Road West  
Oshawa, ON L1J 7C4

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# Communications – Black Excellence, Celebration, History Lives Here

## Webpage

[Black Excellence Celebration, History Lives Here webpage](#)



During the month of February, the DCDSB, like many organizations across the country, celebrates Black History Month. As a Catholic learning community, we are committed to promoting equity and inclusion in all our schools and workplaces by recognizing the diverse backgrounds of all members of our community.

Our focus is to move beyond Black History Month, and to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions, culture, history, and achievements of Black students, staff, families, and communities every day. While the importance of Black History Month cannot be over-emphasized, we are looking forward to the day when Black excellence and Black History is seen as Canadian History and we can celebrate our collective achievements and contributions as Canadians- diversely created and uniquely gifted. This webpage marks our commitment to achieving this objective.

The following resources have been created to provide students, families, and community members with additional information on the history, culture, and influences of Black Canadians.

### Students

[Black Excellence, Celebration, History](#)

[Assistive Technology](#)

[Athletics](#)

[Bullying Prevention and Intervention](#)



Black Excellence



Book Suggestions



Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy



Celebrating and Supporting Black Excellence at DCDSB



Did You Know?



Resources

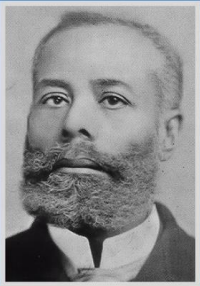
# Communications – Black Excellence, Celebration, History Lives Here (Cont'd)

[Focusing on Black Students Without Borders at Archbishop Denis O'Connor Catholic High School](#)




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# Communications - Social Media



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## Elijah McCoy



### Culturally Relevant Community Supports and Services

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### Take Action on Anti-Black Racism in Pickering! Notice of Taskforce Vacancies

The City of Pickering is seeking passionate and committed residents and stakeholder representatives to sit on the Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce (PABRT).

Comprised of up to 20 diverse community stakeholders who identify as Black, the PABRT works in partnership with the City, residents, service providers, businesses, and other stakeholders to enhance the shared experience of diverse Black communities in Pickering.

Each term of four years presents the opportunity for residents to apply to sit on the Taskforce, and lead the critically important work of striving for an equitable, diverse, and inclusive community.



cityofpickering /BoardsAndCommittees




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## Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré



DURHAM CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
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## Mary Ann Shadd Cary



CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS ART GALLERY INC. PRESENTS



## focus

LOOKING IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

Sat. Feb 4, 2023  
Sun. Feb 5, 2023

16th Annual Durham Black History Month Celebration

Hosted by Charles Duncan Waterman with keynote delivered by Channon Oyeniran and performances by Afwi Groove among others.

Sat. Feb 4, 2023  
J. Elaine Richardson Collegiate  
1555 Harwood Ave N, Ajax, ON

Sun. Feb 5, 2023  
LIVE STREAM AT  
durhamblackhistorymonth.com


In Partnership With: PEX PICKERING, BATA, DSSS, CIBC, CMC, CJC, CJC, CJC

durham\_bhm

### Excellence Through the Arts

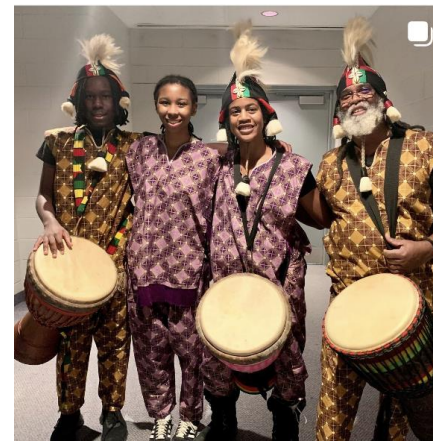
Featuring keynote speaker Cameron Bailey, CEO of Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF)

Performances by singer, Leah Samuels; steel pannas, Rasheena Cumberbatch; spoken word poet, Greg Frankson; dance group, Afwi Performing Collective; and artist and author, Nadine Williams.



Register here: [http://bit.ly/3p11111](#)

Thursday, February 2, 2023 from 6 to 8 p.m.



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## Sharmarke Dubow



# Durham Black History Month

- DCDSB partnered with Cultural Expressions Art Gallery Inc., who presented the 16th Annual Durham Black History Month Celebration on Saturday, February 4, 2023
- Durham's longest running and most extensive, free Black History Month event
- The event featured community networking, performances by local artists, presentation of the annual Madiba award, and a keynote presentation in the Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School/J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate auditorium.



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH...



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# Looking ahead...

- Planning for 2024 Black History Month starts from March this year
- Events planned to incorporate students and staff participation
- Increased community involvement
- Ongoing learning on Black history and excellence in Canada