



African and Caribbean Philanthropy in Ontario

In October 2013, the Association of Fundraising Professionals Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada hosted a conference that brought together charity leaders, donors and volunteers to explore the philanthropy of the African and Caribbean communities in Ontario. Here is a collection of insights from the conference and beyond.

AT A GLANCE

- 1 000 000 000+ Total population of Africa
- 40 000 000+ Total population of the Caribbean
- 1 000 000+ Population of Canadians who identify as Black
- 85 Percentage of the Caribbean population who are Christian
- 45 Percentage of Africans who identify as Muslim
- 40 Percentage of Africans who identify as Christian
- 85 Percentage of Jamaican-Canadians living in Ontario

TERMINOLOGY

Ubuntu: A pan-African philosophy or belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humans.

CASE STUDY

In 1982, the Black Business and Professional Association (BBPA) wanted to recognize the achievements of the six Black Canadian athletes who excelled at the Commonwealth Games that year. Organizers of the dinner invited Harry Jerome, Canada's premiere track and field athlete of the 1960s, to be the keynote speaker. Harry Jerome tragically died just prior to the event and it was decided to turn the occasion into a tribute to him. The first Harry Jerome Awards event took place on March 5, 1983 and is now an annual national event that honours excellence in the African Canadian community. The Harry Jerome Scholarship Fund provides financial support to young African Canadians. In 1996, an endowment was established with support from individual and corporate donors. Today, the Fund offers approximately thirty scholarships each year.

WISE WORDS



"Ontario's African and Caribbean communities are very distinct – both with respect to their histories and their relationship with Canada. The mistake the philanthropic sector could easily make is treating these groups as a single, homogeneous community. What is most remarkable is the concept of ubuntu – or "human kindness" – and that faith in both of these communities is very strong and discussed openly. Rather than shy away from this fact, fundraisers can make meaningful connections with individuals through discussions about faith, spirituality and our shared humanity. Further, a successful fundraiser will approach these communities with the mindset of "friendraising" first. Making authentic connections takes time. While you may not get the financial donation you want immediately, individuals can point you to others in the community. Instead of aspiring to have one or two "major gift" donors, try reaching out to a broad range of people in the community, so that you can engage and build long-term relationships with many people of different interests and means. As a result, the gifts to your organization will have significant personal meaning and enduring impact for your donors."

— Hamlin Grange, Diversity Expert and Chair, African and Caribbean Philanthropy Conference

FREE BLACKS, BLACK BRITISH LOYALISTS AND AMERICAN SLAVES: BLACK SETTLEMENT IN CANADA 1600 - 1865

Black Canadians have various geographic roots and have taken diverse journeys to Canada. The first Black person in Canada was a free man who served as an interpreter in 1605. Some, like Harry Jerome, were born in Canada and descended from Black people who have been in Canada for many generations. While other Black Canadians immigrated more recently to Canada or are the descendants of immigrants.

During the American Revolution in the late 18th century, slaves were brought to Canada with their white Loyalist owners. Black Loyalists in America were promised freedom for supporting the British and thousands made their way to Canada.

Under the French, and subsequently the British colonial rule in Canada, there were African slaves in Canada until the abolition of slavery in the British colonies effective August 1, 1834.

In the 19th century, prior to the end of the American Civil War, tens of thousands of refugee slaves sought freedom in Canada through the Underground Railroad. The US Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 promoted the hunt of fugitive slaves within free states and encouraged the capture and return to the south of suspected slaves. This led to vast movements of not only refugee slaves but also free Blacks into to Canada.

In the 1960s, Canadian immigration policies which had previously given preference to European immigrants were abolished and the following decades saw increasing numbers of immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean.

Those are the historical trends underlying the narratives of Black Canadians who are a fundamental part of the fabric of Canadian society. Philanthropy and fundraising has for generations been expressed through self-help and mutual support initiatives beginning often in places of worship and community-based associations formed to mobilize and support Black communities.

~ The Amherstburg Freedom Museum

INSIGHTS FROM THE EXPERTS

Conference presenters and participants shared many great examples and tips about giving within the African and Caribbean communities. Here is what we heard:



FOR A FULL LIST OF REFERENCES, VIDEOS AND RESOURCES, PLEASE VISIT:

www.afpinclusivegiving.ca

The African and Caribbean Philanthropy Conference was part of a series for fundraising professionals, donors, and volunteers to develop a greater understanding of the giving traditions and charitable interests of several diverse communities in Ontario. Organized by the AFP Greater Toronto Chapter and the AFP Ottawa Chapter, this initiative was generously funded by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Partnership Project and the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada.