



## A Note from the President

By Sri-Guggan Sri-Skanda-Rajah

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I happen to be a person who regularly listens to AM740. I was quite shocked to hear a conversation between the 740 radio host and the person representing the Anglers Association.

The substance of the conversation went as follows. A young 19-year old man was convicted by a judge in the so-called Asian Canadian Anglers issue, the Ontario Human Rights Commission investigated. I understood from the conversation that someone demanded a fishery license or permit from an Asian Canadian angler. As a result of a complaint laid by the Asian Canadian angler and a police investigation, the young man who had demanded the fishing license was convicted of an offense of personation, that is impersonating a peace officer. I also learned from listening to the program, the 19-year old young man, failed to appear on the 740 program. The member of the Angler's Association's comments can be paraphrased to say that "foreign people" always make excuses about not knowing the law and asking for special considerations. He also went on to say that the young man did nothing wrong in demanding the Asian Canadian angler show his license. The implication of this exchange is that it is okay for the young man to be ignorant of the law, but not so for the Asian Canadian Angler. His

comments also clearly lay bare his assumptions about who can be considered Canadian and that non-white citizens must be foreign born. The most important thing is, that the judge in question clearly understood this and his decision was based on the fact that only a peace officer can demand to see a person's fishing license. Anyone who is not a peace officer making such a demand is breaking the law. My concern is that it is important for people before they come on radio and television shows to really understand what they're talking about, without perpetuating a racist attitude that has been demonstrated by not only that young man and by many others, so found to be by the Ontario Human Rights Commission towards Asian Canadian anglers. I am writing this with a view to sending a copy of our newsletter to AM740 and inviting that radio station to host an education program together with the Urban Alliance on Race Relations on racism towards Asian Canadian anglers.

It is my hope that AM740 news will respond positively to this offer by the Urban Alliance. We continue to offer our services to anyone interested in establishing better race relations through education and participation.

I wish you all a safe and relaxing summer and look forward to our shared work in making Ontario a safer place to work, live and play.

### Highlights from 2007 and 2008:

By Michelle Cho and May El-Abdallah

#### ***Africentric Schools***

Documentation of a 40% dropout rate among Afro-Caribbean and Portuguese Canadian students has become well-known urban folklore here in Toronto. The Africentric school model has been proposed as being one alternative for students who are multiply marginalized. Some see this as being a controversial response to a systemic issue and have responded with charges of segregation. The UARR supports the view that this would be a school which would be open to anyone who the mainstream system is not meeting their needs. This school could offer a diverse school staff that represents their community and a curriculum that reflects the diverse history and richness of their communities. We have presented our views at the board and voiced our opinions that it should be a community-led process.

#### ***Falconer Report***

On Thursday, May 23, 15-year old Jordan Manners was shot dead at C.W. Jeffreys Collegiate Institute. The TDSB commissioned the School Community Safety Advisory Panel which made over 100 recommendations on many issues including: gender-based harassment, alternative programs, school discipline, school/community relations, board governance and funding cuts. The UARR co-sponsored a community forum to bring forward community responses to the Falconer Report which were then presented at the TDSB.

Co-sponsors: Black Action Defense Committee, The Miss G Project, MPP Rosario Marchese, Chris Bolton and the Toronto Coalition for Equity in Education.

#### ***Civilian Oversight and Police Accountability***

This year we supported two campaigns bringing attention to unjustified shootings of two young racialized men by Toronto Police Services — Alwy Al-Nadhir and Byron Debassige. Recently the Special Investigations Unit has cleared the Toronto Police officers involved in both of these fatal deaths. A formal inquest is being pursued for Byron Debassige who struggled with mental health issues.

These deaths illuminate the continued need to reflect on how police respond to survivors with mental

illnesses in crisis situations and the larger structural issues which complicate them: racism, lack of community supports, poverty and the lethal use of force by police.

#### ***Racist Incidents at the Don Jail***

Racist incidents directed at staff at the Don Jail, and other detention centres in the city have been on the radar since as early as 1992. Harassing incidents continued into early 2008 including hate mail directed at African Canadian guards. The UARR used public pressure draw attention to the issue and continues to monitor the situation.

#### ***Youth Organizing***

This year we received funding from the Trillium Foundation for 2 years to do an exciting new youth project with the Freedom Youth Collective (FYC). The FYC is a gathering of youth artists, activists, and leaders committed to the principles of community and personal development. We have begun creating a website as a way to share experiences, showcase positive work done by youth and as a forum to express our views. Participants can share their diverse experiences as young women, newcomers, or as someone excluded from the school system. We're looking for amazing youth or a program in the community that deserves recognition. After registration, people will be able to share their videos, music, news, and ideas! Members include: Asian Arts Freedom School, Arab Canadian Centre of Toronto, Canadian Tamil Youth Development, Collective Dreams, Culture Link, Freedom Cipher (Black Action Defense Committee), Redwood Shelter, Set It Off Ladies Group (Black Action Defense Committee) and the Youth Action Network.

#### ***Partnerships with the Labour Movement***

Lastly we also participated in the Fair Deal for Our City Campaign, Minimum Wage Campaign and various partnerships with the labour community to highlight issues of labour and equity.

# Black Cultural Programs in Toronto

By Norm Beach and Tam Goossen

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Throughout the long divisive debate on Africentric schools, one fact that is not disputed is that too many African Canadian children are not being engaged by our school system. Black youths are dropping out in frightening numbers, with estimates as high as 40%.

Even after the establishment of the Africentric alternative school, there will still be 30,000 black students in other schools in the Toronto District School Board. There is a broad consensus that these students need more contact with black teachers and more positive black role models in the teaching of history and current events. So it is surprising that an innovative Toronto school program that meets these objectives is still not funded by the province and has to struggle year after year to keep its head above water.

The Black History and Culture program runs in 17 Toronto elementary schools, some during regular class time and some after school. Parents choose to enroll their children in these classes because they want them to know more about the history, culture and traditions of people of African descent, areas they might otherwise learn very little about in school. Most importantly, African Canadian parents want their children to develop pride in the positive contributions black inventors, professional people and politicians have made to our society, counteracting the daily diet of negative media images that increase the alienation of many black youth.

The teaching of Black History and Culture has been a vital part of the International Languages Programs established by the former Toronto Board of Education more than 30 years ago. These programs, especially where they are offered as part of the regular school day, have contributed to more parental involvement and the development of a more inclusive school environment.

The Black History and Culture program helps build students' confidence and motivation. As a high school student, Edward Chin looked back on his experiences in the Black Culture program at Ryerson Community

School and said, "It has given me a different perspective on life ... by thinking of what my ancestors have accomplished. It gives me courage to accomplish my own dreams."

Although students in Toronto public schools are among the most culturally diverse in the world, fewer than half of them learn about other cultures in class, according to a recent Toronto District School Board survey of over 100,000 Grade 7 to 12 students. Seven out of ten are non-white, so it is probably no coincidence that seven out of ten students surveyed said that learning about their own cultural or racial background would make school more interesting. Almost half thought it would help them do better in school.

But only 600 children are served by the Black History and Culture program. Lack of provincial funding makes it difficult for Toronto's cash-strapped schools even to continue offering the few classes that are available now, let alone expand the program as many parents have requested. Two years ago, presented with a petition calling for provincial funding, former Ontario Minister of Education Gerard Kennedy said, "I think for many students, having certainty about who you are and knowing some of your own background and being able to relate better to yourself makes a big difference." He added, "trying to find a certain and dedicated resource is something we would at least consider."

Yet now, as it becomes increasingly apparent that the status quo is not working, there is still no provincial funding for this vital program to link African Canadian children with the positive lessons of their heritage. It is time for Ontario to support the African Canadian community by helping its children take pride in their origins and building their self-confidence and motivation to succeed. Funding the Black History and Culture program would be a good start.

## Arab Youth In Toronto: Seen and Heard!

By May El-Abdallah

This spring, Arab youth in Toronto made their activist presence known through several conferences and events held in the city.

2008 marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “Nakba”, an Arabic word meaning catastrophe, which refers to the period of time when nearly one million Palestinians were forced to flee their homes as a result of the establishment of the state of Israel.

To commemorate this anniversary, local Palestinian activists hosted a hip-hop show on May 15, 2008 which brought together DAM, a Palestinian trio from the town of Lod, and Invincible, a Detroit-based Jewish female rapper who explores issues of race, occupation, gentrification and gender violence in her music. In the spirit of hip-hop, the evening’s festivities also included a B-Boy competition that allowed local dancers to show off their talents.

Just two weeks prior to DAM’s Canadian debut, a diverse group of people met at the North York Centre for the ‘*Arab and Muslim Identities on Trial: Youth Step Up and Speak Out*’ conference. The Urban Alliance on Race Relations’ May El-Abdallah had the opportunity to speak at the conference and brought home the message of the importance of working across communities for social justice. She was also able to highlight the unfortunate death of Alwy Al-Nadhir, an 18-year-old Arab youth, fatally shot by Toronto police officers in October of 2007.

On Halloween night of 2007, 18-year old Alwy Al-Nadhir was fatally shot by a Toronto police officer in Riverdale Park. Prior to his death, Alwy was unknown to the law, and was remembered by friends and family as an outgoing and friendly young man.

The Justice for Alwy campaign has been organizing around the death of Alwy Al-Nadhir. The group consists of Alwy’s family and friends, as well as Arab and non-Arab youth coming together to explore issues of police brutality and systemic racism. Despite the clearance of the officers in question, disturbing questions about Alwy’s death loom large. For more information on the campaign, please visit :

<http://www.justiceforalwy.ca>.

For Arab students at Ryerson University, the organizing continued late into the school year. On May 31, 2008, the Arab Students Associated hosted ‘*Define This! Arab Identity in the Diaspora*’, a day long conference exploring issues such as gender, religion, history, technology, and the making of an Arab identity.

The preceding summary was just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Arab youth organizing in Toronto. What is also important to note is that in all of these initiatives young women have been at the forefront. As the visibility of Arab youth grows, expect to hear more from these passionate agents of change!

You can hear more about Arab community organizing, culture, music and events by tuning in to *Kan Ya Makan*, a community radio show that airs every Tuesday night (8 to 10pm) on CKLN, 88.1 FM.

**Toronto Police Services Board**  
**Deputation Regarding the Toronto Police Services Sexual Assault Protocol**  
**By Michelle Cho and May El-Abdallah**

***Sexual Assault Protocol and the Toronto Police Services***

Following Jane Doe's landmark charter challenge won in 1998, a report by the City's Auditor General called for a host of recommendations, some of which included: the review of all Toronto Police Services trainings on sexual assault, the method of assessment following a sexual assault and for the TPS to work with the Violence Against Women's community to address the many barriers survivors face in reporting an incident. A Sexual Assault Audit Steering Committee was struck to review the TPS practices in investigating an assault and made huge inroads that as far as we know, are landmark in changing police culture for the better in North America. However, this Spring, the committee was shut down much to the dismay of the community members of the committee and many community organizations. The following is a deputation made by the UARR to the Toronto Police Services Board:

Greetings. My name is Michelle Cho and I am speaking on behalf of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations. For over 30 years, the Urban Alliance has been actively challenging systemic racism. We come to you as active allies in support of community policing. Our landmark conference in 2000, *Saving Lives: Alternatives to the Use of Force by Police* was a joint community initiative with collaboration by TPS, the anti-racism community and the mental health community. Our continued commitment to the civilian oversight of police services is one that we don't take lightly.

Today we come to you in support of the April 2008 Community Summary Report released by the Sexual Assault Audit Steering Committee and as allies of the Violence Against Women's movement. Next month, we celebrate Jane Doe's historic charter challenge. As we celebrate, we must also enter into a process of reflection on where we've been and where we should be going. As the Community Report notes, little progress has been made in police training on sexual assault and addressaddressing multiple marginalization, and the re-victimization of sexual assault victims.

There is an opportunity here for TPS to act as a leader in combating sexual assault and yet here we are again. What kind of message is being sent when in 2004, the City Auditor General's follow up report indicates that his 1999 recommendations have not been implemented?

We understand police work is often difficult and complex. However, we must be vigilant in ensuring that all members of society receive equitable services. All women and especially multiply marginalized women (women of colour, disabled women, sex workers, youth, queer/transgender women), face barriers when exercising their right to high quality policing. Responsible policing is a right, not a privilege and when that right is not being met, it is incumbent upon the institution to act and rectify this inequity.

In particular, we would like to draw attention to the Community Report's findings as they relate to:

1. Police Training on Sexual Assault
2. The ViCLAS Assessment Tool
3. The Culture of "Silo-ing" Marginalized Identities

**Police Training on Sexual Assault**

As a community organization, we hear all the time from women that they don't go to the police when they've been sexually assaulted because there is a fear that they will be re-victimized, disbelieved, and/or criminalized. We can't expect a police culture to change if your own trainings:

1. Emphasize rape mythologies and perpetuate the idea that women lie about being assaulted in order to manipulate and lay false charges.
2. Perpetuate racist stereotypes of communities of colour
3. Under-represent the assault of adult women
4. Lack a gendered and anti-racist analysis that acknowledges that most sexual assault crimes are committed by men against women and children.

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victim feel blamed for the assault. How helpful or necessary is it to label a victim as a “partier”, “prostitute”, “drug user” or “transient”? Is this playing into the perception that some women are asking for it?

**The Culture of “Silo-ing” Marginalized Identities**

At the TPSB, we have various committees focusing on issues of homophobia, racial profiling, the lethal use of force by police and until recently, sexual assault. However, we need to appreciate the nuanced experiences of multiply marginalized women who experience discrimination based on the complexity of their identities -- requiring an analysis that takes into account these intersections. When for example a queer, sex worker of colour is assaulted, she doesn't leave any of these identities or the systemic barriers that come with them at the door. These committees should be encouraged to work together to develop this interesectional understanding. However, this progress cannot happen without a clear implementation plan and commitment of resources. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. The work done by the TPSB's Sexual Assault Steering Committee was a courageous step in moving forward the gender violence agenda in community policing. We would like to offer our resources as willing partners in the incredible task ahead of you to create equitable police services. Listen to the people that know best rather than looking at the grassroots as just a bunch of interest groups that need to be appeased. The Violence Against Women's community, anti-poverty advocates, queer community and racialized communities have a vested interested in participating in this dialogue. Toronto has the opportunity to change policing culture and put itself on the map as a leader that delivers responsible, bias-free policing practices as a right and not a privilege to all residents in Toronto.

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## Spaces of Racism II: Racism at Trent University and in Peterborough, Ontario

Report Produced for the Community and Race Relations Committee (CRRRC) in Collaboration with the Trent Centre for Community Based Education (TCCBE) – Spring 2008

### Executive Summary

Canada's history includes many discriminatory laws and practices, such as slavery in Upper Canada, The Chinese Exclusion Act, Japanese internment, head tax policy, laws prohibiting Asians to own land, Residential schools, and the denial of Jews' entrance to Canada. Contemporarily, we also learn of prejudice and discrimination through the reporting of such acts as: local attacks on Asian-Canadian anglers, defamation of synagogues and mosques, desecration of tombs and cemeteries, hate speech, etc. According to the latest census data, over 5 million Canadians were born in countries other than Canada; our understanding of Canada as a tolerant and multicultural society often leads to an assumption that racism is no longer an issue. Unfortunately, the opposite is the case – we know there are daily incidents of racism in our society. These incidents require academic and community attention, and this report is an attempt to investigate the local manifestations of prejudice and discrimination.

In 2007, the first research report, *Spaces of Racism* was produced. Under CRRRC supervision, the report raised both concern and awareness in the community regarding racism; however, the results were inconclusive. In an effort to find out more, CRRRC commissioned a second study. The current 2008 report, *Spaces of Racism II*, is the fruit of this second research project. The research project was designed and implemented to compile empirical evidence documenting Trent University students' experiences and observations concerning racial and gender discrimination in Peterborough.

Using surveys and questionnaires, the Community and Race Relations Committee (CRRRC) has undertaken this research project entitled *Spaces of Racism*. *Spaces of Racism* combines quantitative and qualitative methods to document the occurrences of racism and sexism / gender discrimination at Trent University and in Peterborough. The study identifies and selects

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specific spaces used by first year Trent University students in their daily lives and it reports on the experiences of racism or sexism/gender discrimination that occur in these spaces. The research project designed a quantitative survey to both collect these experiences and to demonstrate their re-incidence. Some of the 64 students were selected for further interview to enable the study to better reflect these experiences of racism and sexism/gender discrimination. The interviews provided the study with greater understanding of the impact and meaning that these incidents had on individual respondents. The spaces considered by respondents were: downtown bars, public spaces, shopping areas, university library, residences, bathrooms, campus bars, and the bus.

Racism in one of its various forms (including verbal, written, policy or procedure and physical harassment) was reported in every space listed on the survey. Additionally, there was no space on the respondents did not report as having been the site of each of the 5 different types of racial discrimination listed by the survey questionnaire. In the last six months, 2531.5 instances of racism were observed by our survey respondents, with incidents of verbal or written being the primary examples. Reports of physical assault and harassment due to racism are also significant, with a total of 403.5 cases reported, averaging 67.25 incidents per month. This includes 91 reported incidents in downtown bars and 79.5 in public spaces—with these two spaces alone accounting for 42% of all reports of physical assault and harassment. A total of 488 incidents of racial discrimination were reported in Trent University residences within the last six months, resulting in an average of 81 cases each month. This includes 35 reports of physical assault or harassment. There were also 43 reported cases of physical assault or harassment on the bus and 43 in campus bars.

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Our results for reports of sexism and gender discrimination are remarkably similar to those of racism. All respondents reported sexism or gender discrimination in some form, with more than 50% of respondents reporting sexism in every space. Overall 77.76% of respondents reported sexism and gender discrimination in downtown bars, public spaces and shopping areas.

This survey was designed to be adapted to any space and any type or act of discrimination. This research tool is strongly quantitative, but also has a qualitative aspect allowing for respondents to offer examples and further elaboration. Consider that 85.93% of respondents indicate that "discrimination, prejudice and racism" are ongoing problems in Peterborough. We strongly recommend the application of this survey in specific public spaces such as the bus terminal, downtown bars, downtown businesses and public service organizations. As well, sustained local research into prejudice and discrimination will let us know if the numbers of racist incidents are increasing or decreasing. It will also allow us to gauge if public initiatives, which have been put in place to challenge racism, are having an effect. At the same time, this initiative should be supported not only by the CRRC but other organizations that are dedicated to the well-being of members of the Peterborough community. This includes The City Council, Trent University, Fleming College, public schools, social services, and community organizations.

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