



Social Service Network of Sarnia-Lambton Updates Community on Anti-Racism Commitments

Learning and listening are the first steps in addressing racism.

Sarnia, ON – June 29, 2021 – Based on the knowledge that colonialism and racism continue to negatively impact people in our community, members of the Social Services Network of Sarnia-Lambton (SSNSL) have committed to equity and anti-racism work as announced in March 2021.

"In follow up to that commitment, the SSNSL is pleased to share its first report card to the community on the work it has undertaken," says Carrie McEachran, Chair of the Sarnia-Lambton Social Services Network. "This update is intended to be the first of many updates to our community on the work we are doing to recognize and interrupt racism and colonialism."

Learning to recognize the impact that centuries of colonialism and racism have had on our society is an important first step in calling-out and addressing the power structures that enable and support systemic racism. All members have made progress in this area to varying degrees and are supporting one another through shared resources.

McEachren notes that, *"As expected, this work has been hard – appropriately so. SSNSL member organizations have been challenged to listen and learn from employees with lived experience and to better understand how to make changes that address the systemic issues so ingrained within each members' organization."*

This report card provides an update on the actions taken and provides readers with the ability to access many of the resources that SSNSL members are using. The public is encouraged to use these resources to learn more about how systemic racism has shaped our society and actions we can all take to move forward together.

As part of its commitment, the Social Service Network of Sarnia-Lambton will continue to release updates outlining its anti-racism efforts and changes made within the context of this work with candid feedback on these efforts.

About the Social Service Network of Sarnia-Lambton

Social Services Network of Sarnia-Lambton is a voluntary affiliation of charitable human service organizations working together to strengthen the capacity and promote the values of community-based health and social services throughout Sarnia-Lambton.

For more information on this work, please contact:

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ANTI-RACISM STATEMENT & COMMITMENTS

Members of the Social Services Network of Sarnia-Lambton fully acknowledge that systemic racism, and specifically anti-Indigenous racism and anti-Black racism exists. We recognize the impacts that centuries of racism and colonialism have had on Indigenous and racialized people. It is a public health crisis.

As leaders of social service agencies that collectively serve thousands of people in our communities, we have a strong responsibility and desire to be actively dismantling the white and colonial power structures that enable and support systemic racism.

We are committed to equity and being anti-racist. We have been working on this and there is much more to be done. Over the next year, we commit to the following:

1. We will continue to immerse ourselves in learning and ensure that our employees and Board of Directors have opportunities to learn more about white privilege, racism and colonialism. We will report to the public in June 2021:
 - What we have done individually as leaders to educate ourselves;
 - The training and education we have provided to employees and Boards of Directors and
 - The changes we have made to support Indigenous, Black and racialized employees which includes listening and learning from them.
2. We will support each other and the organizations we lead in anti-racist and anti-colonial work. This includes things like sharing resources, learning from each other, and having honest conversations about what has worked and what has not worked.

We recognize that these commitments are only a start and that other forms of oppression exist. We hope other leaders will join us in taking concrete steps and actions to make lasting and meaningful social change.

INSERT JUNE 2021 REPORT CARD HERE