

# Transitions

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## **BLACK LIVES MATTER**

The history of Anti-Black Racism in Canada and what it means to be an ally

## **A PANDEMIC IN AN A PANDEMIC**

Modifying services to meet the growing need

## **PROVIDING THE ESSENTIALS**

Our donors and volunteers meet the challenge

## **RUN FOR THE CAUSE**

Running for survivors in your community

## **JOIN THE TEAM!**

You can make a difference



# Black Lives Matter

## Working Together to Address Anti-Black Racism

The US police brutality against African Americans and the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and others propelled a global outcry about Anti-Black Racism (ABR). Women's Habitat's Anti-Racist, Anti-Oppression Committee organized a meeting with our staff and Board members to engage in a conversation about ABR, how it manifests in society, communities and workplaces. The meeting was held on July 9th, 2020 via Zoom and started with the Land Acknowledgment and recognition of how racism has impacted the First Peoples of Canada. During the meeting, participants heard from Black employees who presented the historical origins of ABR including Canada's role in the enslavement of African people, the oppressive structures that ensued and the spheres and ways in which ABR is experienced by Black people including those that work and seek service at Women's Habitat. Areas of impact included the education, immigration, income security, employment, health care, child-welfare, and justice system. A list of Black People (primarily Black youth and men) who have lost their lives to Canadian police brutality was reviewed including the names of Black People murdered by the police in the GTA: **D'Andre Campbell, Kwasi Skene-Peters, Andrew Loku, Abdurahman Ibrahim Hassan, Marc Ekamba-Boekwa, Jeramine Carby, Ian Pryce, and Regis Korchinski-Paquet** to name a few.

The meeting culminated with an activity where all participants engage in discussion about how we can work together to address ABR and what it means to be an ally. As we move forward in this work we know we will be held accountable by every one of our stakeholders as we put our time, energy, resources into confronting ABR at the individual, organizational, and societal level.



# Anti-Black Racism in Canada

Canada's history of slavery has been swept under the rug, removed from its historical chronicles and erased from its memory.

- **1600-** The colony of New France was founded (Canada). Slavery was a common practice in the territory.
- **1759-** New France was conquered by the British. There were approximately 3,600 enslaved people (majority were Indigenous but also Black enslaved people from the transatlantic slave trade).
- **1763-** Slavery continued and the territory was renamed British North America, and Black enslaved people came to replace Indigenous enslaved people.

Canada's racial hierarchy manifested itself in segregated communities (housing), schools, churches, and places of entertainment.

- **1946-** Viola Desmond challenged racial segregation at a cinema in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia by refusing to leave a whites-only area of the Roseland Theatre.



# Guidelines for becoming an ally



Here are a few guidelines for white and other non-black people to remember when addressing Anti-Black Racism.

- Listen, listen, listen
- Understand that feelings of guilt and shame are not helpful
- Avoid defensiveness
- Break the invisibility of privilege
- Always speak up when witnessing oppression
- Recognize that you are not the experts of other peoples' experience of oppression
- Never take credit or public attention from an oppressed group's empowerment
- Do not expect homogeneity
- Be responsible for your own learning
- Stay connected with members of the oppressed groups
- Meet your own emotional needs
- Be authentic and genuine

Keep learning:

<https://www.greatbigstory.com/guides/how-to-become-a-better-black-lives-matter-ally>

# A pandemic within a pandemic

## Women's Habitat's Outreach Centre pivots to meet the need

### Modifying Services

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic our outreach centre was partially closed and face-to face supports such as individual and group programming and services were suspended to ensure the health and safety of our participants, employees and community. While our shelter remained open and in full operation, the outreach centre closure meant staff began working from home with very limited access to the resources they needed such as phones and laptops. They used their own equipment to provide virtual support and considerations for safety, privacy and confidentiality stayed at the forefront of our work.

### Impact

With these service modifications we understand that the need far outweighs the assistance we are able to provide. Some participants have shared that they are feeling more vulnerable now due to their inability to leave their homes and participate in our group programming. Some expressed feeling like they are “walking on egg shells” while quarantining at home with their abuser. We recognize the challenges of receiving crisis counseling over the phone or internet and the isolation so many feel. The pandemic has posed barriers for our team as well; beyond the lack of technological infrastructure is the absence of the day to day in-person interaction and support they used to receive from their team members. And of course they have experienced what so many of us have; the obstacle of working from home while caring for their dependents.



### Our Commitment

While the situation has been daunting, we continue to provide the critical services virtually including crisis counseling and support mitigating emergency housing situations and legal matters. Our youth participants receive daily virtual support geared to the unique barriers they are facing and thanks to our generous donors and volunteers we distribute food and other essentials to many of our participants and their families.

Since mid-March we have supported **74 new participants**. Our counseling services have seen an increase of 44 new women and children needing support and our housing and transitional support workers have assisted 30 new participants.

### Moving Forward

As we prepare for our re-opening, we are mindful of the risks it entails. In the meantime, we continue to support our participants and address their needs the best we can while we use this time to grow, develop and innovate to serve them better.

*To learn more about our outreach centre services visit <http://womenshabitat.ca/outreach/outreach-services/>*

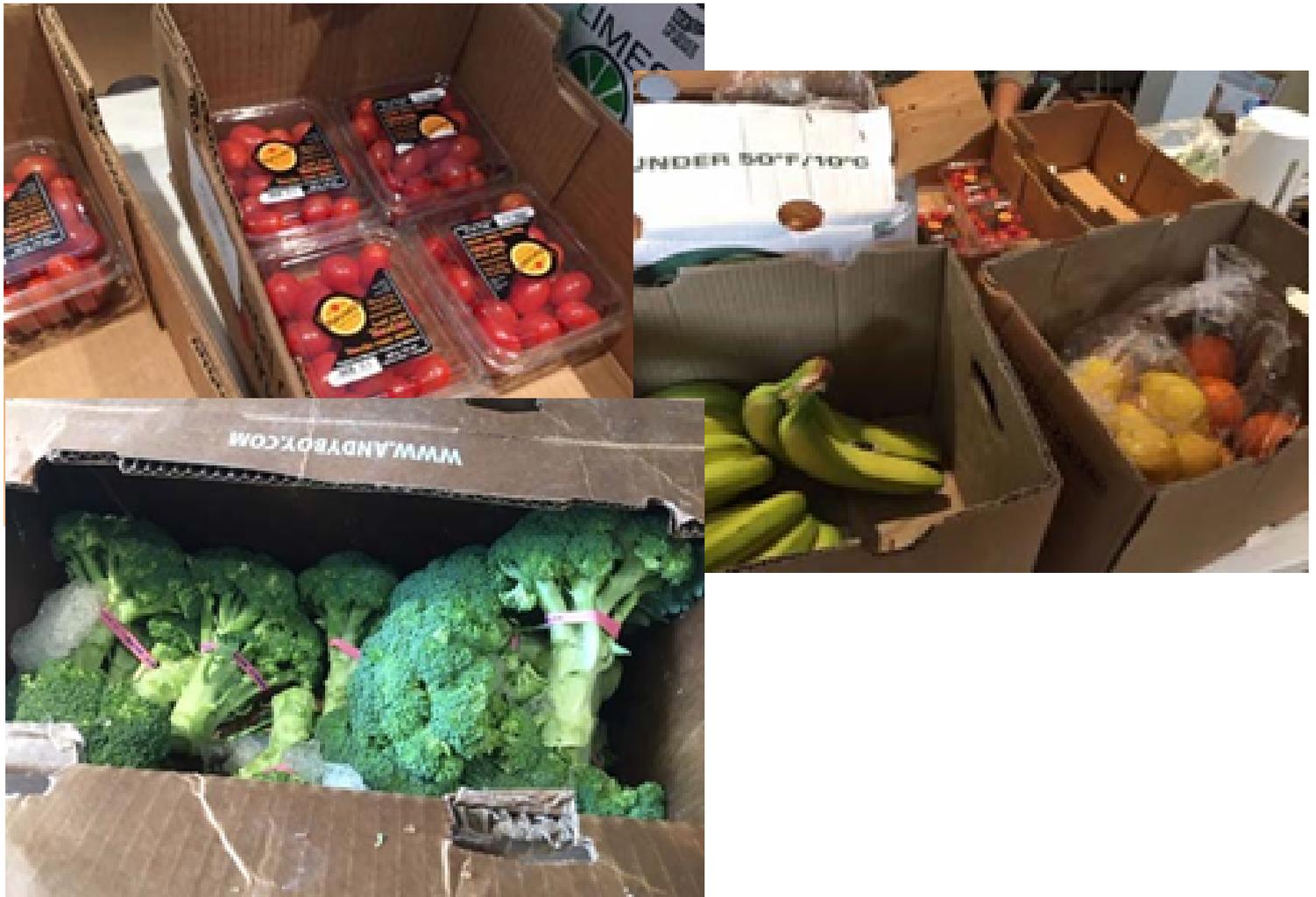
# Providing the essentials

## Critical work in a critical time

Covid-19 has shined the light on many social inequalities and gaps in the system and food insecurity is one of the barriers many of the families we serve face every day. Since the beginning of the pandemic we began hosting “food disbursement days” to alleviate immediate food needs.

It all started as a one-time event and with a list of names of our service users we started planning a different way to distribute food and other essential items. We shared our hopes with our immediate circle of supporters and the response was overwhelming. Every time we asked, the answer was yes! From fresh produce and meats, cooked meals, snacks, gift cards, diapers and formula we were able to provide it all to so many families in crisis. To date we have hosted 8 food disbursement sessions and distributed an average of **280 food hampers** supporting an average of **84 women and children each session**. We'd like to thank our donors and volunteers without whom this would not be possible.

*If you would like to support our disbursement days contact Lina Almanzan at [lalmanzan@womens-habitat.ca](mailto:lalmanzan@womens-habitat.ca)*





# Run for the cause!

We are thrilled to announce The Neighbourhood Run Club ([www.neighbourhoodrunclub.com](http://www.neighbourhoodrunclub.com)) has organized a series of runs and 100% of proceeds will be donated to local charities. This 2020 season will be focused on raising funds for The Frontline Fund and Women's Habitat!

The Neighbourhood Run Club is a collective of hardworking, driven, and inclusive people sharing a common goal of helping the community through running, walking and staying active. The runs bring people together, creating community while showcasing different Toronto neighbourhoods. Nothing is competitive about this run club! All are welcome!

Single Run Tickets are \$20 or you can purchase all 6 runs for \$105. This year's run schedule is:

- **Davisville August 5th**
- **North York August 12th**
- **Liberty Village August 19th**
- **The Beaches August 26th**
- **Leaside September 2nd**

All runs start at 7:30PM. For more information, you can visit the website [www.neighbourhoodrunclub.com](http://www.neighbourhoodrunclub.com) and the tickets are available at Eventbrite. Let's get running!

# Join our team!

## We are recruiting new board members

Looking for a meaningful experience? Want to join our mission to end gender based violence? We are looking for individuals with skills and experience in any of the following areas: governance, strategic planning, program and community development, finance, fundraising, communications, marketing, law, social justice & advocacy, and human resources. We are especially interested in persons who are from the not for profit, charitable /voluntary sector. We are interested in women with lived experiences in poverty, violence and homelessness. Previous Board experience is an asset, but we also encourage those looking to gain Board experience to apply.

Women's Habitat is committed to the development of an organization that reflects the community and the women we serve. Applications from Women with lived experience, Indigenous Women, Women of Colour, Racialized Women, LGBT2S2IA+ Women Identified individuals, Women with Disabilities and Young Women (18 to 35 years) are strongly encouraged.

For more information visit: <https://charityvillage.com/company/womens-habitat-of-etobicoke/#jobs>

## Follow us!



@womenshabitat



**WOMENSHABITAT.CA**

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