



Mayoral Debate at Tropicana Community Services

Operation Black Vote Canada in collaboration with Tropicana Community Services and other community partners hosted the Black Community Mayoral Debate on October 1, 2018. Tropicana was at capacity with 250 people in attendance to hear the platforms of mayoral candidates John Tory, Jennifer Keesmaat, Saron Gebresellassi and Knia Singh. Garvia Bailey moderated the 90-minute debate where candidates were pressed about employment, policing, transit and affordable housing. The last minutes of the debate allowed for questions from the floor, where community members expressed concerns about gun violence and anti-Black racism. The City of Toronto municipal election took place on October 22, 2018.

The Sew 'n Learn Group - Rip the Runway...



The **Women Empowering Women Support Network** concluded its latest Sew 'n Learn series in September 2018 with a fashion show. The four-week program was led by local seamstress Paulette Massey, who volunteered her time to support the ladies in learning how to develop patterns, conduct measurements, and how to complete alterations. The women also supported one another based on their individual skills. They were able to complete dresses, pants, tops, skirts and bags. To celebrate their achievements, the women participated in a fashion show for staff and each other as they modeled their individual projects. Their hard work and dedication was evident as each woman took centre stage and was admired and cheered on by their peers. *The next series is set to begin on January 30, 2019.*

PAST PRESIDENT, CARMEN JAMES-HENRY COMPLETES TENURE

This summer was bittersweet for Tropicana. We were sad to say goodbye to Carmen James-Henry as she left the board of directors after serving for 14 years as a board member and three years as president. While it's sad to say goodbye, we are grateful for the dedication and leadership that Mrs. James-Henry brought to Tropicana.

Have you ever been in the presence of a natural educator? Mrs. James-Henry exudes a passion for helping people realize their potential. She first became involved with Tropicana through her work as a public health nurse. She was invited to volunteer and began tutoring students on Saturday mornings. She enjoyed engaging students in learning about themselves, developing self-esteem and building healthy relationships. Mrs. James-Henry often talks about supporting youth to make healthy life choices and achieve their goals, "I advise them to focus on education and a career vs a job, and to find something that they are passionate about as I do believe that knowledge is power".

In Mrs. James-Henry's opinion, the most important programs that Tropicana runs are those that help youth and their families and ultimately the community. "We have to support them so that they can live up to their potential. These are our future leaders. Tropicana truly is a Centre of Excellence because we are motivating people to be successful, which creates a healthy community." As an example, Mrs. James-Henry highlights the ManUp program which helps young men to make positive changes in their behaviour and attitude. "This program can prevent them

from doing drugs or ending up in prison." She would like the focus ultimately to be on helping these young men to aspire to higher education. There is nothing more rewarding than having a person who participated in a Tropicana program come back and say "You helped me."

When asked about her most significant contributions to Tropicana, Mrs. James-Henry lists: "Promoting Tropicana in the community to people and organizations outside of the Caribbean culture and getting people excited about the work that Tropicana is doing; raising funds to benefit Tropicana and to make it more financially self-sufficient; and developing relationships with the staff and supporting them in achieving their own goals."

Although she has left the Tropicana Board of Directors, Mrs. James-Henry is enthusiastic about Tropicana's future. "It's always good to have new energy at an organization. We never want to get stuck in the status quo. It is important that we are continually looking at the changing demographics and evolving needs to evaluate what supports are needed for our community to be healthy- physically, emotionally, and socially and financially."

In these uncertain times, we often worry about what the future holds for us. However, when you meet someone like Mrs. James-Henry who will spend countless hours advocating to improve the lives of people, some of whom she has never even met, you know that we will endure. Thank you Mrs. James-Henry; you have made more of an impact than you will ever know.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

TREVOR HILLS



Trevor Hills has been volunteering as a tutor with Tropicana's Increase Your Success Tutorial Program for the past 6 years. Prior to joining Tropicana's tutoring team, he was a part of the Scarborough Black Education Organization where he advocated for students in the school system.

As a youth, Trevor enjoyed all subjects, but math was the easiest for him. His father was a History teacher and his mother, who also gave lessons at home, taught both English and Mathematics. He credits them for instilling a love of learning. For him, mathematics is logical. He remembers taking another student under his wing and explaining concepts to him. Since that time, he realized that learning is about the

way something is presented to someone and recognized that he is able to take a concept and break it down to someone so that they can look at it from a different perspective.

Trevor currently tutors students in grades 9 to 12 and is able to get the students to be comfortable with following the logic. He is a firm believer that everyone can learn and that it's about the speed at which you take people through the problems. He is passionate about what he does, and talks to them in a way that makes the problems real to them. He gets excited when he sees the "light bulb go on".

He enjoys working with the diverse group of tutors at Tropicana and as he continues to assist the students through the program, he would love to see more parents getting involved and see the parents and kids getting excited as they bond over learning.



TROPICANA EMPLOYMENT CENTRE (TEC) OPEN HOUSE EVENT

Tropicana Employment Centre (TEC) was buzzing on Thursday, September 20th at our Open House Event. We invited our community partners to come and learn about the programs and services that are available at TEC. In addition to roughly thirty of our community partners, we welcomed City Councillor Jim Karygiannis, Judy Perpose who was representing City Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker, and we were presented with a congratulatory letter from MPP Vincent Ke by Noah Ng. This event was particularly significant for TEC because we are celebrating our 30 year anniversary. It meant a lot for us to celebrate this accomplishment with the people and organizations who make it possible for us to do this important work in our community. Here's to another 30 years!

On Friday, October 26th, 10am to 11am there will be a Better Life Counselling Centre Information Session at TEC. The Better Life Counselling Centre provides free counselling sessions to refugee claimants and discounted sessions to seniors and newcomers to Canada.

On Wednesday, October 31st, 10am to 12pm there will be an HBC/People's Store Job Fair at TEC hiring for general labour positions. On November 20th and November 21st, TEC will be offering a Hospitality Training Session for people who are currently unemployed or underemployed and who are not currently registered with Tropicana Employment Centre. Participants who successfully complete this free two day session will be certified in ServSafe (Food Handling) and Smart Serve (Alcohol Serving).

Anyone interested in attending these events or training sessions should contact Tropicana Employment Centre.

RICKY DAVIS STOPS BY YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

This past July, retired NBA basketball players Ricky Davis, Mario West, Dion Glover and basketball player physician, Dr. Stanford dropped by the Toronto Youth Job Corps program to encourage participants to “never give up your dreams and passion for something you love”. The surprise visit provided mentorship to the youth and gave the participants a boost in confidence in the path they are currently on. Many of the youth served in the Toronto Youth Job Corps program have identified a lack of mentorship in their lives, so an opportunity like this, points them in the right direction.



Each retiree had an opportunity to share some insight into the paths they took and where it brought them. Dion Glover encouraged the group to give back to their community in positive ways. Glover said “as a volunteer, the experiences you gain teach[es] you a lot about your environment and in turn you better understand community issues and even more realize your passion and skills.” Dr. Stanford also encouraged the group to not shy away from the hard work it takes to accomplish your goals and dreams. At the end of the session, participants were left smiling and appreciative of the messages the players shared with them. One participant expressed what he learned was, “change your thinking and be positive about your dreams/purpose in life, don't follow those who cannot help you to your dreams/goals.”



CLASS OF 2018 – TROPICANA’S PRE-APPRENTICESHIP GRADUATES CELEBRATE

Tropicana Community Services’ Pre-Apprenticeship - Auto Body and Damage Repairer program now in its ninth year, held its annual graduation ceremony on September 21, 2018 at Tropicana’s Centre of Excellence. The 11 graduates had family and friends in attendance as they celebrated the completion of the 30-week program. Although the program is funded through the Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, the program has picked up industry sponsors over the years which include Carstar Canada, 3M Canada and Collision Industry Information Assistance (CIIA). This year’s sponsors handed out the following awards to students who achieved academic success:

- **Best in Class (Carstar Canada) - Dylan Ramcharran**
- **Exemplary Student (3M Canada) - Akeme Smith**
- **Outstanding Achievement (CIIA) - John Gallo**

New for this year, Centennial College established the Tropicana Community Services Auto Body and Collision Damage Repairer Pre-Apprenticeship level 1 scholarship and even though it will officially launch for the 2019 cycle, the award was extended to three students from the 2018 class, Jorden Cardinell, Shefat Golam and Trishana Smith. Interestingly, Trishana Smith, the only woman in the class, first came to Tropicana as an infant when she attended Tropicana’s daycare. At the ceremony she shared, “What I think of Tropicana [is] community, family and empowerment. As a baby I used to go to daycare with them and now they are helping me with my first career.” Like her fellow classmates Trishana begins her 12-week paid placement.

GIVE A MONTHLY GIFT TO

Your monthly donation will make a difference in the lives of youth, newcomers, people of Black and Caribbean heritage and others in need.

You can donate monthly through pre-authorized gifts by credit card (Visa, MasterCard and Amex) or by submitting a void cheque for pre-authorized payments through your bank account.

Simply let us know the amount that you would like to

give, and where you would like to designate your gift. Information about your monthly donation can be provided to us by fax, mail, phone, or online through canadahelps.org.

Be sure to include your name, address and telephone number so that we may properly acknowledge your gift and provide you with a charitable tax receipt.