



April 11, 2023

Greetings, and happy Spring!

To date, this has been an exciting year for One Vision One Voice, as the program continues to work tirelessly towards its mandate of addressing anti-Black racism and supporting improved outcomes and equitable services for African Canadian children, youth, and families in Ontario's child welfare system. This newsletter is packed with information about our ongoing work, updates, as well as highlights from this year's in-person PowerUp! Symposium.

Read on to learn more.

Élever nos enfants noirs

a poem by Shahaddah Jack

Nous élevons nos enfants noirs sous une urgence adoptée pour les protéger de l'avenir d'exister
comme
une victime statistique
Nous élevons nos enfants noirs même quand nous ne savons pas comment
Nous élevons nos enfants noirs même si nous avons encore du mal à nous élever nous-mêmes
Nous élevons nos enfants noirs dans l'image d'une existence inconcevable

One Vision One Voice - Activity Update

African Canadian Leadership Mentorship Program (ACLMP)

The African Canadian Leadership Mentorship Program was conceptualized after numerous consultations with Black staff working in the child welfare sector across Ontario who identified challenges and barriers within the workplace. The program aims to address organizational culture, cultivate leadership skills, and guide the professional development of African Canadian staff within child welfare agencies.

In the 2022/23 fiscal year, 12 agencies in the first cohort moved forward with strategic planning meetings - the first stage of ACLMP onboarding. Readiness Assessment Surveys for the initiation of a second cohort of participants are currently available.

Confronting Anti-Black Racism for Leaders Course

The Confronting Anti-Black Racism in Child Welfare for Leaders course, developed by the OVOV team in partnership with the OACAS Learning team, aims to build the capacity of learners to integrate an anti-Black racism lens into their leadership practice.

The course has been offered 6 times within the 2022/23 fiscal year to over

100 participants, with overwhelmingly positive feedback.

To learn more about this course, please contact us.

Youth Action Committee

OVOV is pleased to share that 15 youth across Ontario signed up for our inaugural Youth Action Committee. This committee provides an opportunity for Black youth to inform, participate in, and contribute to the work of One Vision One Voice. Committee members also benefit from receiving community hours, volunteer and leadership experience, an honorarium, and professional references.

The first meeting takes place this spring!

All-In Black Staff Meetings

In 2020, OACAS and the OVOV team began organizing and facilitating regular staff meetings for Black staff in the Ontario child welfare system.

The All-In provincial meetings for African, Caribbean, and Black Canadian staff were created to ensure a safe space for staff to discuss critical issues, strategize, celebrate successes, share experiences, and support one another.

Four Black Staff events were held during the 2022/23 fiscal year:

- “Mastering Race in the Workplace; Our Clients, Ourselves” - presented by Dr Kenneth Hardy - Director of the Eikenberg Institute for Relationships in New York

- “Healing from Internalized Oppression, Lateral Violence and Sharing Space & Power with Black Families Involved in the Child Welfare System” - presented by Nicole Perryman MSW RSW, Ifarada Institute
- Program Spotlight, Ontario Ombudsman Office, Children and Youth Unit
- Recap of the fiscal year; Brainstorming opportunities for 2023/24

OVOV encourages all Black-identifying staff members to attend, and our hope is that agencies will accommodate and support their staff's participation.

Policy Forum

Anti-Black racism is woven into the fabric of Canadian policies, practices, institutions and sectors, including education, health, criminal justice, and child welfare. One Vision One Voice was therefore excited to host its inaugural policy forum on June 20, 2022. This forum, themed “Transforming Evidence Into Action: A Policy Forum on Anti-Black Racism and Child Welfare” focused on:

- Sharing key research findings re: child welfare policies and existing intersections with racial inequity.
- Highlighting the cross-sectoral experiences with anti-Black racism, children and youth, with input from key representatives within various sectors
- Brainstorming solutions to continue to disrupt anti-Black racism within the child welfare sector

Stay tuned, because our next Policy Forum is coming this fall!

Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC)

This community advisory committee is comprised of community members

with a deep understanding of anti-Black racism and systems change. The PAC was created to inform the work of OVOV, providing guidance on OVOV's programs and activities. Focal points throughout the 2022/23 fiscal year included:

- Community Caregiver Investigations/Systems Abuse
- Feasibility of a new Provincial Roundtable
- Pilot to address disproportionalities in education and healthcare
- Duty to report
- Equity and Accountability Frameworks within Child Welfare
- Systemic racism and the way forward
- Establishment of a Black Youth Action Committee

We're thankful for all PAC members, for their dedication and continued contribution to our vision. Stay tuned for future updates!

CAS Reference Group

This sector advisory committee includes individuals within the child welfare sector - directors of service, equity leads, supervisors, OVOV leads, etc. - who are active in doing the work around addressing disparities and disproportionalities and can therefore provide timely, relevant guidance. Meetings with this group are held quarterly. Focal points throughout the 2022/23 fiscal year included:

- Challenges with the Eligibility Spectrum
- Role of child welfare in confronting systemic forms of racism
- Definition and impact of systemic racial harm
- Agencies' connections and engagement with Black community organizations
- PowerUp! Symposium 2023

Community Engagement Sessions

One Vision One Voice prioritizes a consistent, steadfast relationship with Black and African Canadian communities. OVOV held many community engagements over the 2022/23 fiscal year, including two OVOV information

sessions exclusively for community members.

Our Spring session is scheduled for **May 10, 2023 at 6:00 PM.**

Look out for upcoming sessions for community members throughout the rest of the year!

New Community Partnerships & Collaborations

OVOV developed its relationships with the following collaborators/contributors over the past year:

[The Ombudsman Office](#)

[Black Health Alliance](#)

[TAIBU Community Health Centre: Black Mental Health Week](#)

[Black Legal Action Centre](#)

[Equity Global Support Foundation](#)

[Central Toronto Youth Services](#)

We're always open to ongoing partnerships and collaborations, so please contact us at onevisiononevoice@oacas.org or on all of our platforms linked below if you want to connect!

PowerUp! 2023

One Vision One Voice hosted its fourth PowerUp! Youth Symposium on March 6, 2023. PowerUp! is specifically designed for Black-identifying children and youth actively involved with child welfare. PowerUp! allows Black youth to build connections, community, and to celebrate Black

identity.

Firstly, a huge thank you and shout-out to everyone who made PowerUp! possible this year.

PowerUp! is an opportunity for Black-identifying youth to feel seen, heard, and validated. The goal is to empower, inspire, and transform lives. The OVOV team is honoured to facilitate and host PowerUp! every year.

Over **160 youth** registered for this year's event!

In the Post-Event Survey:

94% of youth agreed that they would attend next year's PowerUp! event.

100% of PowerUp! volunteers would recommend the event to Black-identifying youth next year.

97% of PowerUp! volunteers stated that they believed this year's PowerUp! event provided value for participating youth.

We're grateful to the speakers, engagement facilitators, staff, volunteers, and most importantly the youth!

We could feel the love, the energy, and the good vibes from every single person in attendance! It was wonderful to see how folks across the child welfare sector were able to come together in support of Black youth in care.

Many shared how powerful it was to gather in-person, and how impactful PowerUp! is. Participants, chaperones, and child welfare staff collectively agreed that creating spaces to celebrate Black identity are critical to our healing, and to the development of a bright future.

This year's PowerUp! Symposium was held in person and included:

Speakers:

- [Randell Adjei](#)
- [Britta B.](#)
- [Shahaddah Jack](#)
- [Joshua Lucas](#)
- [Jama Maxie](#)

Engagement Facilitators:

- Art: [Kofi Frempong](#)
- Drumming: [Negus Medhin](#)
- Dance: [Tamara Alleyne-Gittens](#)
- History and Identity: [Channon Oyeniran](#)

Check out our [Highlights video](#) for a taste of the event.

New Group: Provincial Roundtable

Do you want to contribute to the work of One Vision One Voice?
Share your ideas at the Provincial Roundtable!

What is the Roundtable?

Our vision for the Roundtable is to facilitate rich discussions with experienced knowledge-holders from across systems in Ontario.

These discussions would serve to improve coordination and consistency across systems towards the protection of Black and African Canadian children and youth.

Who can join?

Knowledge holders/experts across sectors in Ontario, including within

criminal justice, health, education, and housing.

Roundtable meetings are virtual and take place twice a year.

If you're interested, please contact: onevisiononevoice@oacas.org

IMPORTANT DATES

- **April 26, 12:00 PM** | [Webinar: Cultural Relevance in Case Conferencing](#)
- **April 28** | Anti-Colonial and Equity Roundtable Meeting
- **May 10, 6:00 PM** | Community Engagement Session
- **May 31, 1:30 PM** | OVOV - CAS Reference Group Meeting
- **June 1, 5:00 PM** | Provincial Advisory Committee Meeting
- **October 24** | Policy Forum

AFRICAN CANADIAN COMMUNITY CORNER

We invite you to share your events, webinars, discussions, and other activities with us, and we will happily communicate the information through our social media platforms.

If you're online, just tag us at [@1vision1voiceca](#). If you'd like to send us an email, please send it to onevisiononevoice@oacas.org with links and information about your program, and let us know the following things about your group:

- **Organization Name**
- **Your Goals for the African Canadian Community**
- **How the Community Can Support You**
- **Contact Information**

CONTACT US

Stay connected with us!

You can find us on all platforms at @1vision1voiceca or engage with the #1vision1voice hashtag.

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