

January 28, 2021

Black History Month 2021: The Work Isn't Over



Since our country officially recognized February as Black History Month in 1995, governments, organizations and individuals have used this month to honour the traditions, accomplishments, heritage and culture of Black people, as well as educate people about Black history.

Over the years, CUPW's Human Rights Committee has overseen the creation of posters and bulletins highlighting Black settlers across the country and celebrating honourable Black Canadians including Albert Jackson, the first Black postal worker.

2020 brought new challenges and highlighted existing ones. Black people were disproportionately affected by COVID-19, with studies showing that Black Canadians became sick and were hospitalized due to the virus more than other ethnic groups.

It was also the year which reignited the call to end systemic racism and dismantle systems of oppression. The call was made following high profile and recorded incidents of police murdering unarmed Black people in the United States. As we have mentioned before, Canada is

not immune to this type of targeted and racist violence.

Last year, CUPW commissioned a local Black artist to create a banner which highlights Black people who have lost their lives to police violence, and reinforces our support for the Black Lives Matter movement. The banner was turned into a poster for Black History Month this year. There is no better moment than the present moment to dismantle systems of oppression and eradicate all forms of racism. In 2021, CUPW will continue its anti-racism and anti-oppression work.

Many members have asked about allyship and what that looks like. The truth is, allyship is vast and broad. Black History Month is the perfect opportunity to show support. The COVID-19 pandemic and numerous restrictions and shutdowns across the country have pushed many events online, making them more accessible to many. We encourage members to seek out and participate in Black History Month events, whether it be panel discussions, theatre productions, seminars, poetry readings, etc.

Being an ally also means supporting the work of Black people.

Great steps have been taken but many more are necessary to eradicate all forms of racism. This Black History Month, choose to educate, celebrate and support your Black Sisters, Brothers, friends and neighbours.

In solidarity,

Jan Simpson
National President

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