

2020

ANNUAL REPORT



RIBBON ROUGE FOUNDATION



A Message From the President

2020 - The Year of the Forest Fire.

Nobody could have seen it coming; how quickly it overtook us all and how relentlessly it moved through us all. For the Ribbon Rouge Foundation, like for every other person and organization, 2020 has been an intense time.

It has felt like attempting to stand still with the world falling apart around us. It has felt like standing still in the middle of an all consuming forest fire. And we pay our respect to those who have passed on as a result of COVID-19. We pay our respect to the many Black Lives that have been lost to the injustice of deeply ingrained systemic racism.

In Memory Of:



Top Left to Right: Ahmaud Arbery (February 23, 2020); Breonna Taylor (March 13, 2020); Samwel Uko (May 21, 2020); Tony McDade (May 27, 2020); Regis Korchinski-Paquet (May 27, 2020); George Floyd (May 25, 2020); Rayshard Brooks (June 12, 2020)

A Message From the President

The burden of proof of anti-Black racism is too high. It should not be incumbent on us to die for Canada to become aware that Black Lives Matter. A paradigm change is essential. 2020 shows us that it must be assumed that our society is inherently racist, because our society is built on a legacy of untold violence, colonization, and genocide.

When we start on this premise, it becomes a requirement of Canadian organizations, institutions and indeed society to prove that they are not racist.

It should never have been the responsibility of Black people to prove the existence of anti-Black racism.

In other words, the time is past due for us to do the work of meaningful lasting change. What is the path forward to lasting systems change for Black Equity?

Forest fires release nutrients into the soil. The sun shines and what comes next is an abundance of beautiful flowers and vegetation that you only see after fire years. Fires also disinfect and remove what no longer serves the forest. 2020 has been the year of the Forest Fire.

As long standing structures, practices, paradigms are dismantled, resources are released, reorganized and a way is made for innovation.

Health disparities and the disproportionate burden of poorer health outcomes in Black communities are now in sharp focus, and our work of deep Listening in Black communities for the past 3 years prepares us for action to close these gaps.

To Zero Discrimination.

Moréniké Oláòşebìkan

What is Ribbon Rouge Foundation?

The Ribbon Rouge Foundation continues to serve African, Caribbean and Black people globally, by facilitating systems change, in structural and social determinants that lead to poorer health outcomes, including HIV related health outcomes in African, Caribbean, Black communities. The foundation is now registered in three countries: Botswana, Canada and Nigeria to move its agenda for health equity forward.

Our Vision is to Achieve Health Equity between African, Caribbean, Black people and those who are not African, Caribbean, Black.

The Ribbon Rouge Foundation is a grassroots organization registered as a, not for profit corporation under the Societies Act that focuses on health equity and facilitates social justice through the Arts. The Ribbon Rouge Foundation facilitates storytelling, community-engaged arts and intentional meaningful community conversations to change perceptions, stir social conscience, educate the public and create positive social change. We remain committed to raising the voices of people who experience poorer health outcomes as a result of racialized health disparities.

In particular, we focus our social justice lens on issues related to gender and issues related to race. We believe in the liberating power of the arts to promote self-expression, build community and facilitate positive social change.

In 2014, the estimated new infection rate among people from African, Caribbean and Black communities was about 6 times higher than among other Canadians and that the number of new HIV infections may have increased in females since 2014.

According to 2016 national HIV estimates, 507 new HIV infections (23.4% of all new HIV infections) occurred in females compared to an estimated 436 new infections (22.2%) in 2014. Among females, the majority of new HIV diagnoses were among those identified as Black at 46% of new HIV diagnoses according to 2017 national surveillance data.

Our foundation's work is a response to have a meaningful impact on the health (gender & racial) disparities represented by these statistics recognizing that these statistics barely scratch the surface of very complex social-economic-political-cultural drivers of the identified problems.

At a glance...

181 volunteer members who form a community of inter-sectoral and multidisciplinary teams contributing to the work and impact of our foundation. These members mainly serve in two self organized groups that advise and work with our board of directors

The African Caribbean Black Leadership Caucus

(an informal coalition) which Advises >>

The Board of Directors, Ribbon

Rouge Foundation which provides guidance to the work of an >>

Artist Collective which is a multidisciplinary group of artists who serve as community animators to listen in diverse African, Caribbean, Black communities in Alberta and feedback that information to both the Board of the Ribbon Rouge Foundation and the African Caribbean Black Leadership Caucus

A network of organizations

around the Ribbon Rouge Foundation currently in loose informal and formal relationships with the Ribbon Rouge Foundation from organizations who are co-existing, to those who are cooperating, to those who are collaborating on various initiatives with the Ribbon Rouge Foundation

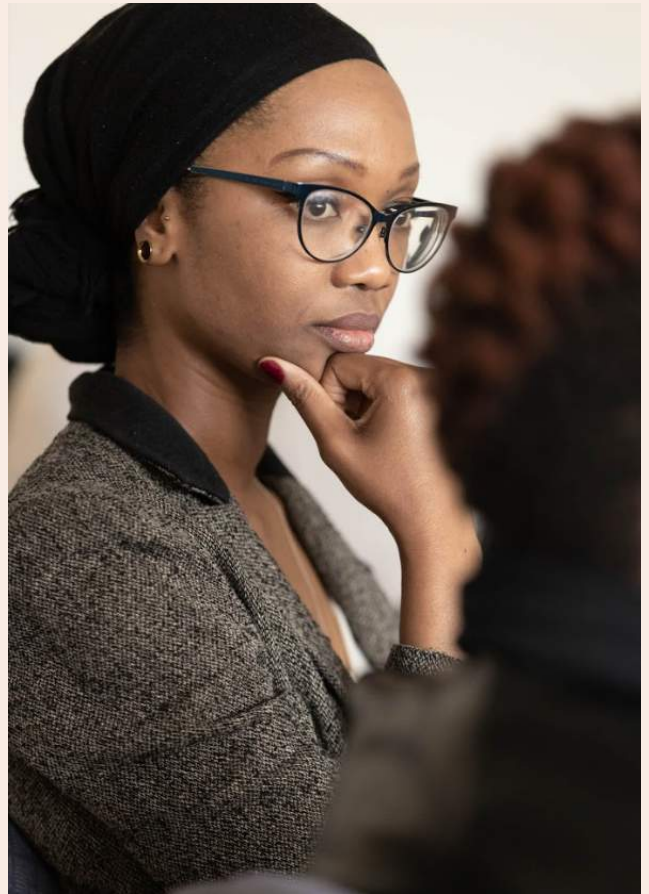
Board Of Directors

Moréniké Oláòşebìkan President, BSc.Pharm, RPh; first startup gig at 7 years - a performance art theater troupe for children's parties; next at 22 years - initiated Ribbon Rouge now a social innovation in three countries working to achieve health equity; then at 28 years - acquired and still operating a retail pharmacy franchise. Through her experiences in global health work, she came to an understanding about deeper systemic reasons for the current disparity in HIV burden in African Countries in comparison to non-African countries and the disproportionate global HIV related death of women of childbearing age. She came to understand that a combination of lack of medication access as well as youth unemployment is a significant driver of the persistent HIV burden in these countries. She has committed her life to contribute sustainable solutions to these issues.



Mary Sylla Sexual Health Promotion Lead, BSN, RPN; Registered Nurse whose focus is primarily on women's health which has led her to work in Fertility, Labor & Delivery, Postpartum and medicine. Her work experience has given her the opportunity to work with persons from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Her passion in global health has allowed her to use her skill set in a grassroots manner to look at ways she can facilitate change and advocacy.

CEO and Founder of her own business Maxan Ferguson-Dyer. Started her career as a stem cell scientist, working in labs and then moving into direct stem cell collections, finally before leaving London, England was working for DKMS, the world's biggest stem cell donation and transplantation organisation as a medical coordinator. Moving to Canada, started her on a journey of self discovery, wanting to team all of her expertise with her passion for educating and helping others. She wanted a business that would take a holistic approach to education. Specializing in sexual health and education, she also recognized the importance for education on topics, such as, wellness, environmental sustainability, natural trustworthy and environmentally friendly products. Minimalism, slow living with intention, spirituality, veganism, and other topics that make up the intersections of modern life, steeped in healing and trauma informed practices not just in our personal lives but in how we interact with the world.



Thomas Bankole, Director for Stakeholder Engagement, is a retired Engineer. He is a passionate social advocate and a community organizer. He is an avid advocate in matters of socio-economic inequities, disparities in health care accessibility and social justice. Mr Bankole worked for various international companies in Canada and the United States, among which are Coca-Cola, Nestle USA and SlimFast Foods. He is an active Volunteer with Canadian Red Cross, Catholic Missions In Canada and Rhema Chapel Kids Club.

Daniel Adewumi. In his over twenty-three years of Facility, Infrastructure Development, Project/Program and Risk Management practice, Daniel has been recognized as a hands-on practitioner known for a strategic and focused approach. Daniel has an extensive accolade for limiting risk, creating lean and productive project teams, and establishing creative strategies for optimizing operations, profitable returns and client satisfaction as outputs. Daniel is a natural leader and a consistent performer with repeated success in developing infrastructural development plans, project initiatives, directing project plans and achieving revenue performance targets. He is good with organization efficiency, Lifecycle Development, Technology Integration, and Process Engineering. Daniel is Proficient in Resource planning, team dynamics and implementation of compliance standards for projects.



Khadija Othman has over 8 years working in the healthcare field and brings skills and knowledge in Home Healthcare Management, Refugee Health, and Rehab Case Management. Khadija graduated from York University in Toronto where she completed her bachelor's in health studies. Currently, Khadija is in her last year completing her master's in health management at the University of Lethbridge, Calgary. Khadija's passion is to volunteer in non-profit to promote the rights of Black women and their social determinants of health such as gender bias and discrimination in the community.

***Ima Anugom* Knowledge Synthesis Lead for Applied Research and Evaluation; MBBCh, MPH.**

Ima's personal and professional journey includes working in health and public health on local, national and global levels. Her unique experiences working with community organizations, not-for-profit organizations, international NGOs, Indigenous organizations and the government has afforded her the opportunity to witness the consequences of social inequity on people's health in her community and around the world; and through her experiences she has come to understand the need to close the inequity gap in Canada and across the world. Using her knowledge, voices from her past, her current public health networks and evidence-based practice, she is committed to advocating for and influencing policies and practices that promote and ensure equitable access for diverse communities, especially vulnerable and marginalized populations, to achieve healthy lives.



**Previous Board
Members:**

**Sabrina Morrison - ACB Leadership
Caucus Lead and Member of the Board
June 28, 2019 - June 16 2020**



Ribbon Rouge Foundation Initiatives

PhotoVoice Project:

The Ribbon Rouge Foundation's Photovoice Project [about lived experiences of African, Caribbean, Black Women living with HIV and AIDS in Alberta Strategies, Strengths, Barriers, and Facilitators] focused on gathering stories in Edmonton between September 2019 and April 2020.

Nature/Background of The Study:

Previous studies show that:

Several factors that contribute to the burden of HIV among immigrants in Canada are **poverty, cultural and religious stigmatizing norms, gender discrimination, immigration status, violence and social exclusion, access to housing, employment, social and health services**. Particularly, African, Black and Caribbean and Aboriginal women in Canada are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS relative to women of other ethnic or racial backgrounds. The evolving epidemic among women demonstrates the need for further data on HIV trends, risk contexts, geographic differences, and health outcomes related to HIV and AIDS. In order to develop gender-specific and culturally appropriate HIV prevention initiatives and programs, additional, contextual data, including greater attention to the underlying structural factors that place women at increased risk of HIV infection, are required”.

The Project Aims were:

To understand experiences of women accessing various health, social and other supportive services while living with HIV

To understand how these experiences have impacted overall health and wellbeing.

To contribute to positive and impactful systems level change for women living with HIV in Alberta by sharing Digital Stories that highlight “Wise Practices” or propose Interventions based on a context analysis of these stories.

Final reports from the Edmonton workshops will be available in August 2020.

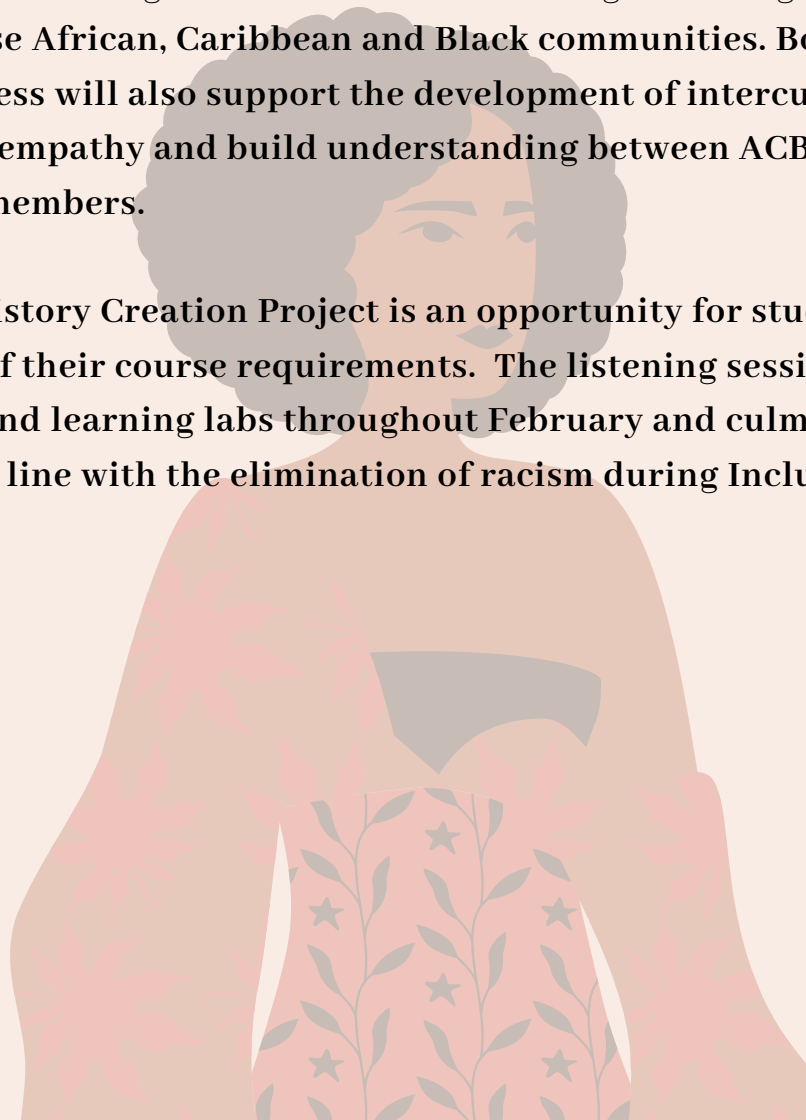
Artist Collective

Black History Creation Project

The Ribbon Rouge Foundation Black History Creation Project is a co-curricular activity designed to engage learners and staff in learning opportunities designed to develop 'inclusive engagement competence' through storytelling, dialogue and the arts.

The focus of this project aligns with Black History month and will contribute to a living repository of lived experiences of the African, Caribbean, Black (ACB) communities within Colleges and the community. These stories will serve to explore transnational identities and intergenerational contexts as well as promote intergenerational understanding and bridge social capital within diverse African, Caribbean and Black communities. Both the product and the process will also support the development of intercultural dialogue skills, foster empathy and build understanding between ACB and non-ACB community members.

The Black History Creation Project is an opportunity for students to fulfil a component of their course requirements. The listening sessions run in various classrooms and learning labs throughout February and culminates with an exhibition in line with the elimination of racism during Inclusion Fusion in March.



Our Objectives were:

- 1. To explore various historical determinants of medical racism against black women and other current issues experienced in diverse black communities in Alberta (from the period of slave trade till date)**
- 2. To encourage self reflection on what it means to be an ally to or advocate for people of African descent as a social or supportive service provider**
- 3. To document stories (historical &/or autobiographical) from people of African descent living in Alberta that factor in transnational identity who live here in Alberta in addition to and beyond black history with regards to the civil rights movement.**
- 4. To encourage thought/ consideration about the limits of Allyship and encourage self reflection on: “How might we change the environment to make Allyship unnecessary?”**

The projects ultimate goal is to foster an inclusive and anti-racist environment in which health and social service providers engage with people of African descent by exploring experiences in community to develop reflexivity, skills and critical thought around diversity, vulnerability, marginalization and systems change

Inclusion Fusion - An Anti Racism Exhibition

Inclusion Fusion is a college wide event held at NorQuest College in the week of March 21st in line with the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It is a week of events designed to challenge people to consider their edges around a variety of dimensions of diversity and to think about Inclusion and their part in creating an inclusive community at NorQuest and beyond through the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness of self in systems. Inclusion Fusion was cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic.

A Quilt was created on the Ribbon Rouge Foundation's theme of "Allyship" and the creation involved over 300 students from 5 different classes.

Teaching Artists Credit: The Black History Creation Project and the resulting Quilt was a result a passionate collaboration in facilitation and other artistic practice between:

Brandon Wint

Darren Andrychuk

Elsa Robinson

Junetta Jamerson

Shawn Tse



ArtSpace

A new initiative is being developed in collaboration between artists of the Ribbon Rouge Foundation artist collective.

Art Space Workshops are designed for interactions within the community to develop relationships with those who are often more marginalized in Alberta. Specifically, African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) people living with addictions, single mothers, people with an incarceration history, people living with HIV, people with mental health illnesses, living with disabilities, LGBTQ2+.

Art Spaces involve community members participating in a mix of art practices and include workshopping community conversations/research that has happened over the course of the year. The blend of conversations facilitated and expression-oriented cultural art forms facilitated by an artist, will provide community connections to counter social isolation.

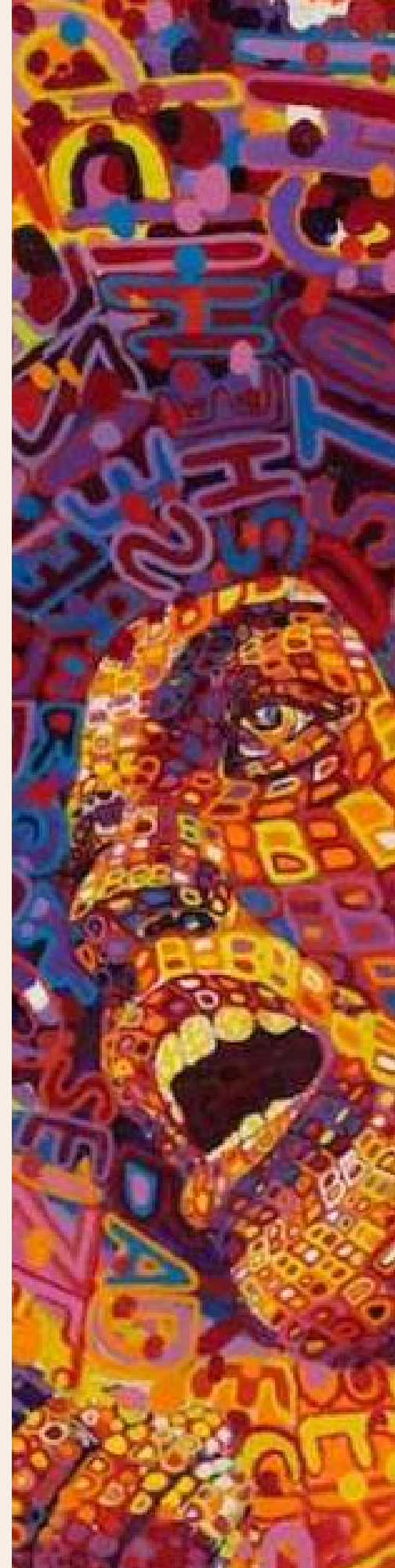
What is created in the Art Space workshops will not be a one-off experience. Participants will be invited to share their art in a 2-day antidote to social isolation: Kinfest. Taking place in Calgary in June 2021, participants will be supported to attend and present their work in a 2-day gathering that will be a highly participatory, community-building event.

Additional details and invitations will be shared over the course of the year.

Kinfest

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The Black Equity in Alberta Rainforest (The BEAR)

Anti-Black racism presents a major barrier in the social participation of African Caribbean Black (ACB) Canadians in civic leadership, arts and culture, and employment, as well as barriers to justice as negative relationships are created between communities and criminal justice systems. Resulting barriers and negative relationships are structural drivers of health inequity.

In response, the proposed applied research work will build a vast network of key stakeholders to understand root causes of ACB related health inequity. This proposal focuses on the foundational, comprehensive multi-disciplinary research required to achieve health equity. Our applied research includes transdisciplinary, participatory action, human centered design research work that will ultimately synthesize deeply contextualized knowledge, and generate a series of prototypes and solutions tailored into a community field guide that will increase the capacity of organizations across the province to focus on real solutions to systemic barriers to employment, justice and social participation.

Four main sub-objectives: relationship development, asset-based community development, social innovation lab and knowledge synthesis, will be tackled by interns and academics from multiple research disciplines and then integrated into an overarching research-driven framework for community groups across the province and Canada to adopt.

The ultimate goals of the BEAR are:

Black Data
Governance

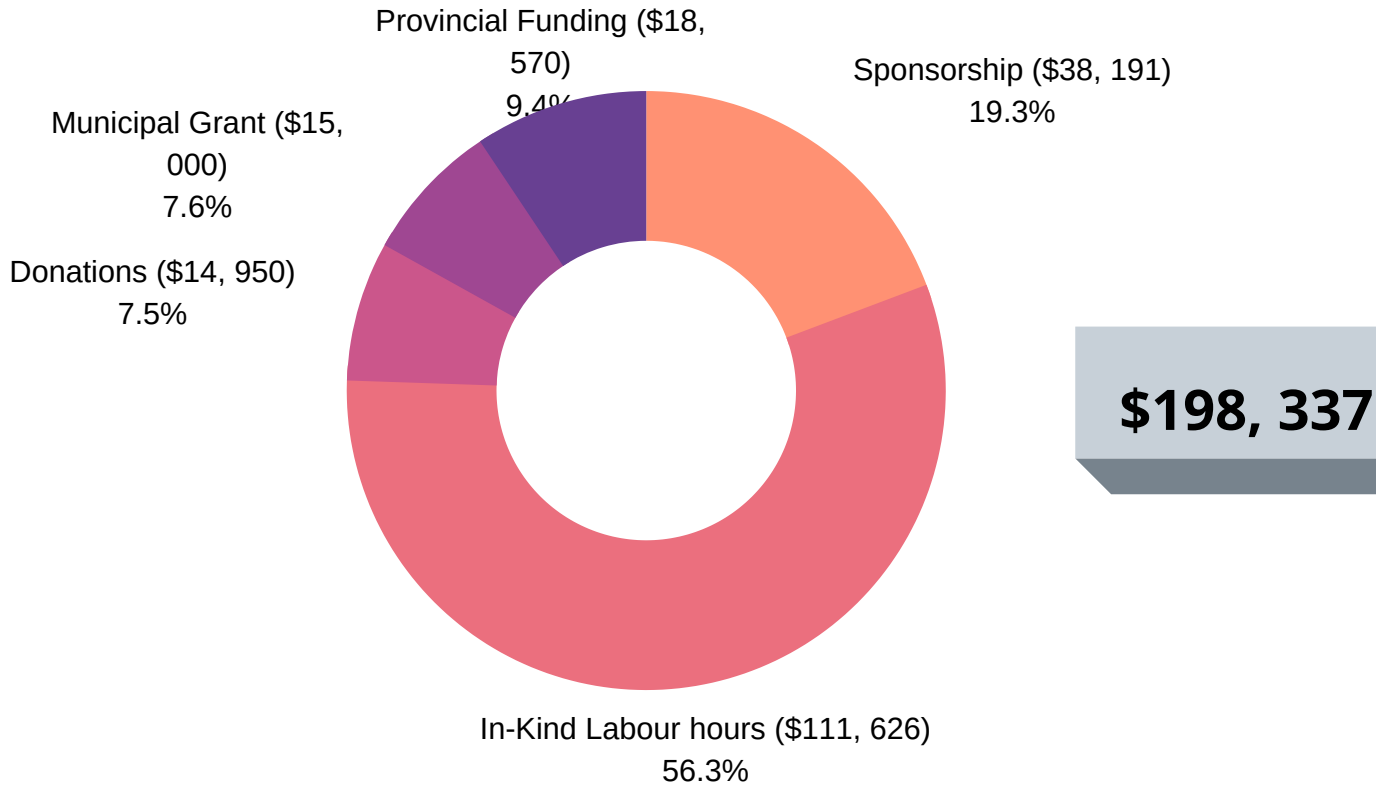
Justice for Black
Youth as relates to
mental health and
interacting systems
navigation

Justice for
People Living
with HIV

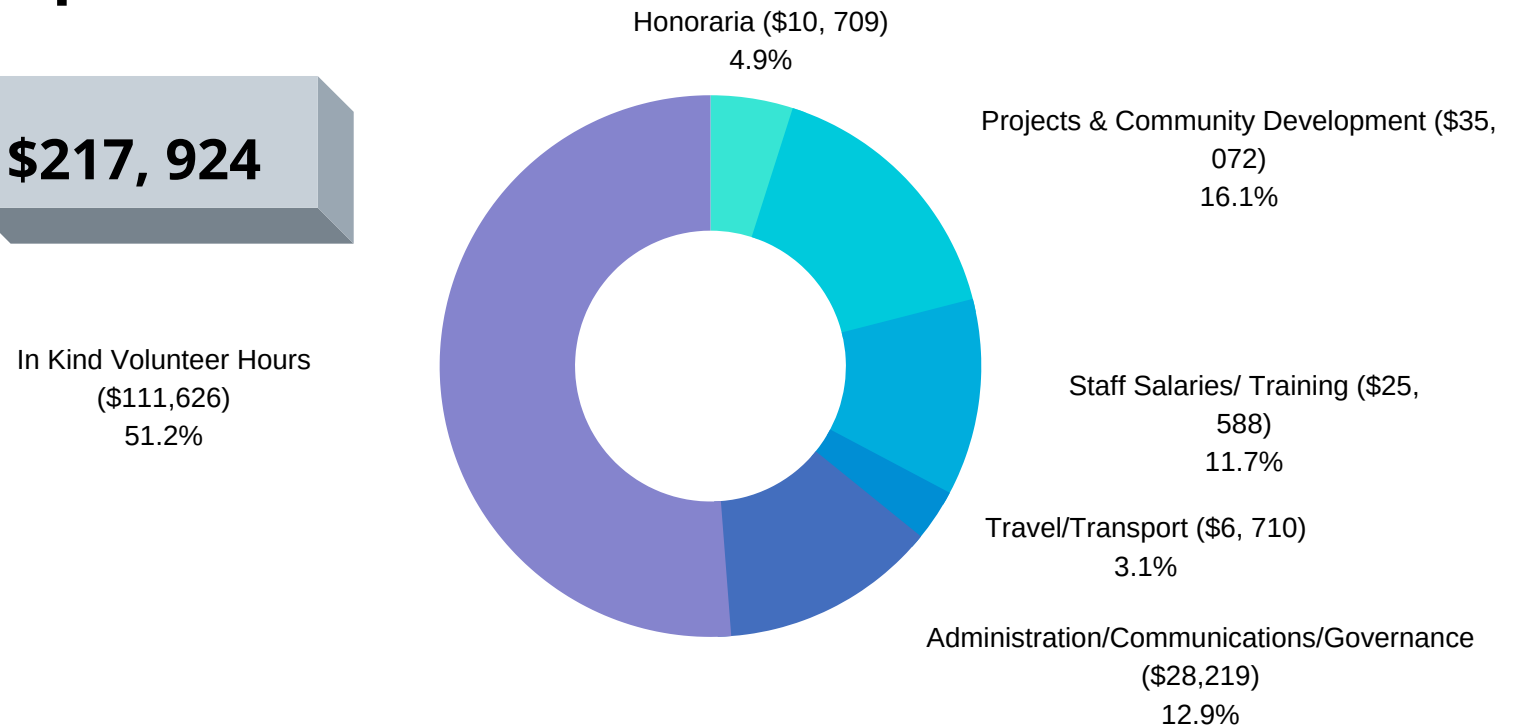
Black
Enterprise &
Employment

Financial Summary

Revenue



Expenses



2019/ 2020 in Pictures







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