



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**Renowned Caribbean human rights activist to visit metro Detroit,  
address troubled legacy of Christopher Columbus**

*Maurice Tomlinson, Caribbean LGBTQIA rights advocate, will headline Caribbean Community Service Center's 4th annual "Forget Columbus Day" event to support efforts to build a truly inclusive community and help raise funds for two local charities.*

FARMINGTON HILLS, MI — Caribbean Community Service Center (CCSC) will host its annual fundraiser at 7:00p on Saturday Oct. 16 at Kola Restaurant and Lounge (32523 Northwestern Hwy, Farmington Hills, MI 48334). Maurice Tomlinson will deliver keynote remarks and proceeds from the event will benefit Melanin Girls Program and Cavaliers Soccer Team.

"The Forget Columbus Day Awards event is an opportunity for metro Detroit's thriving Caribbean national community to come together to fellowship and change the narrative around Columbus Day. It is the responsibility of our village to create a space that is revolutionary and creative to support, empower, and advocate for our successors," said Sophia Chue, CCSC Executive Director & Community Advocacy Project Director.

Born and raised in Jamaica, Tomlinson is a lawyer, gay rights activist, and educator. In his keynote address, Tomlinson will talk about his advocacy work to create an equitable and inclusive co-existing world for all, with an emphasis on the nexus of colonization and the treatment of LGBTQIA persons, particularly in the Caribbean.

"European colonization post-Columbus was and continues to be responsible for much of the homophobia experienced in the western hemisphere. This homophobia has manifested in savage acts of violence including murder of LGBT people in Jamaica," says Tomlinson. "Against overwhelming odds local queer activists and our allies are working to reclaim our island's rich legacy of respecting gender and sexual diversity that is partly reflected in the national motto 'Out of Many One People!' But we need allies in the global north to both help stop the export of toxic religious homophobia to the island from the US and also to support our local liberation struggle on the ground."

After being outed in 2011 while teaching a course on discrimination law at the University of Technology in Jamaica, Tomlinson went on to file a lawsuit against his country's anti-sodomy laws. He continued to fight for the repeal of the discriminatory laws in Jamaica from Toronto, Ontario, Canada, where he relocated with his husband after a series of death threats; and he went on to work as a Senior Policy Analyst and LGBT Rights Consultant for Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network.

Chue adds, "We will always advocate for a more welcoming environment for all -- regardless of which country you're from, who you love, or how you identify. That's why we invited Maurice to join us and to share about his work, about how we can support him and our LGBTQIA Caribbean neighbors."

CCSC hosts this annual event to raise funds for projects and/or programs that align with their motto to "Support, Empower & Advocate for Caribbean Nationals in the Americas." Raising an average of \$1,500 per year, previous recipients of the proceeds include: J-Flag, UWI Nursing Program, Black Immigrant Bail Fund, and Transportation for Undocumented Immigrants.

Tickets to the 4th annual "Forget Columbus Day" event are \$30 in advance or \$35 at the door and can be reserved by contacting Chue at 313-333-2698 or [lolochue@yahoo.com](mailto:lolochue@yahoo.com).

**About Caribbean Community Service Center** *the Caribbean Community Service Center (CCSC) serves to support, empower, and advocate for a beneficial, welcoming, and inclusive environment to Caribbean Nationals as they adapt to life in the United States. By fostering strategic alliances with likeminded organizations, CCSC works to provide programs to connect community members to Community Services, Professional Development, Sports, Arts, & Culture, Education Development and Community Advocacy in hopes of helping to build individual social and economic resiliency. Learn more about CCSC at [caribbeancommunitysc.org](http://caribbeancommunitysc.org).*

**About Melanin Girls Program** *Melanin Girls' Program is a project that falls under the "Educational Development" work group of the Caribbean Community Service Center (CCSC). Participants explore brown-skinned girls from around the world, highlighting the beauty and strength of brown. This program takes a liberal arts approach. Participants are encouraged to recreate what they have learned through cooking, music, dance, spoken word, skits, clothing. The 6-week summer program is scheduled on Saturdays from 10 AM to 2 PM. They also prepare a showcase for the community to enjoy that is exhibited at our annual Forget Columbus Day (FCD) Awards fundraiser in October.*

**About Cavaliers Football (Soccer Team)** *This homegrown Caribbean Football club was formed over 20 years ago in MetroDetroit to provide the Caribbean Community with a taste of home as the young men that migrated to Michigan needed to find a fitness outlet with a family vibe that speaks the concept of pick-up football that they are used to in their home countries. This club has evolved over the years to offer mentorship coupled with social and culture exchanges for both Caribbean born and Caribbean Americans.*

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