

Great leaders earn respect

BY ROBYN PEPIN

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EVERY YEAR, the City of Thunder Bay recognizes an outstanding individual, business or organization that promotes attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that identify the importance of human dignity, and demonstrates leadership to foster respect for others. Although there may be many nominations, one person who meets the criteria is recognized with the City of Thunder Bay respect Award. This year's winner is Dianna Atkinson, president of the Caribbean African Multicultural Association of Thunder Bay (CAMAT).

Dianna is recognized for her continued involvement in many events and organizations, such as the important role she has promoting black history month, her work as the CAMAT president, as well as the Newcomer's Women's Group: Northern Women United for Change. She aspires to empower and invest in the women in our community to better the future for upcoming generations.

Northern Women United for Change is an avenue to allow newcomer women to Thunder Bay to connect in any capacity they need. For example, bridging community partnerships with other women — whether you want to meet another stay-at-home mom, start a busi-



ONE CITY
MANY VOICES

Thunder Bay's Anti-Racism and Respect Advisory Committee produces this monthly column to promote greater understanding of race relations in Northwestern Ontario.

ness, or just have someone as a sound board for dilemmas they might be struggling with as a newcomer with no extended family or immediate support system. Northern Women United for Change is an example of many supportive, welcoming groups that are in Thunder Bay.

In Dianna's many roles, she has created opportunities for change and growth in our community and beyond. For example, during her time at Wasaya Airways, she had the opportunity to visit many northern community schools teaching Afro-Caribbean culture. In this capacity, she noticed that there was a limited amount of children's books in classrooms. With this in mind, she advocated for more new

and used books to be given to northern communities. A partnership formed over the need to start a book drive and a literacy program for First Nations youth emerged. This program provided northern communities with access to a wide variety of books to enhance literacy skills in the North.

These examples are only a small portion of the work Dianna has done in our community. Dianna's leadership efforts have been recognized in our community with many awards, such as the Regional Multicultural Youth Council Leadership award, Spirit Recognition award, Employee Initiatives award from Wasaya Airways and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

There many individuals, businesses and organizations in Thunder Bay that recognize and promote the importance of diversity, respect and inclusion. Community events, such as those promoted by Dianna (Black History Month Gala), the

Thunder Bay Multicultural Association (Folklore Festival), Leadership Thunder Bay (Youth Engagement Forum) and Diversity Thunder Bay (Celebration Breakfast for the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of

Racial Discrimination) happen because our community is attempting to break down barriers that have been historically and systemically created on a larger scale. Removing barriers and promoting respect is seen in Dianna Atkinson's leadership.

Congratulations Dianna Atkinson for your outstanding contributions to our community.

For more information about the Thunder Bay respect Award, please contact Lee-Ann Chevrette at lchevrette@thunderbay.ca

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LEE-ANN CHEVRETTE PHOTO

Dianna Atkinson with her City of Thunder Bay respect Award.