



Congress of Black Women of Canada
Le Congres Des Femmes Noires Du Canada



ONTARIO REGION

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REGIONAL REPORT

The Ontario Region chapters continue to project the Congress of Black Women in their individual communities by reaching out to Black Women in particular and participating in their community in general.

As a region, the presidents met on January 13, 1990, to plan for activities during the year. The annual general meeting was scheduled for May 5, 1990.

Concerns discussed for National Executive attention were:

Statement on Abortion

The general feeling was "Women should have the right to choose what should happen to their body. The decision to abort or not and when should be that of the woman only." Each person makes decisions based on their social, ethical, economical and religious positions. Law should not determine what happens to a woman's body, as this takes away the individual's rights of a woman as she becomes pregnant."

This topic generated much discussion and lead to the need for further discussion. As a result, a forum on the Abortion Law is scheduled for March 3, 1990.

Concern on National Funding was discussed. The absence of funding for the National Council, lack of finance for Regional Representatives to travel and for the general operation of the National Body directed interest in the following areas.

Access to funding

The need for an Administrative Assistant at the National level to operate the business of the National.

The need for a Charitable Number so that regions/chapters could raise funds and not be totally dependent on government grants. At this point, the presidents expressed their impatience with the National Executive in their effort to obtain a Charitable Number.

A motion was moved to allow a chapter to proceed to obtain a charitable number locally. Mississauga chapter decided to undertake the exercise.

Addressing the Constitution was another concern as it was felt that the constitution has never received the time and dialogue necessary for making amendments during the bi-annual conferences. Constitutional committee was struck and the first meeting is scheduled for February 1, 1990 at the Regional Office.

BLACK HISTORY CELEBRATION

The Congress of Black Women , Black Women's Collective, and the Ontario Black History Society sponsor two film premiers of Black Mother, Black Daughter and Older Stronger and Wiser. The screening takes place on Wednesday February 7, 1990 at 7:30 p.m. at the St. Lawrence Centre.

Toronto Chapter president Charis Newton discussed a concept on Black Women Community Health Care which was introduced in the United States. Charis will further explain this concept in writing and address it to the National President.

The chapters were encouraged to continue the leadership workshops and to particularly access our speakers Fleurette Osborne on the topic of Lobbying for Your Cause. Fleurette has prepared a package for the Issues Committee and will take it across Ontario, as the chapters demand. The objective is to train women in making themselves heard in an organized manner.

In Ontario, our Black population has increased and consequently all issues surrounding Blacks. As an organization, we are to be prepared to respond to issues and also be selective in what and how we respond. For some topics we can prepare, as they are on going, but others demand immediate attention. We feel the need for some kind of framework from which to address issues. Akua Benjamin and Fleurette Osborne will assist in developing the skills needed.

Recognition of Black Women

The annual Kay Livingstone Awards function will take place in the fall. A committee will be put in place by February 24, 1990 to begin planning for the function.

A function to pay tribute to Glenda Simms, for her appointment to the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women was suggested. Some members felt that both Glenda and Jean Augustine should be honored since Jean was not recognized by the Congress at the time of her appointment to Metro Toronto Housing Authority. Contact persons were assigned for both Glenda and Jean to co-ordinate dates and eventually finalize plan for the function.

In the effort to develop chapters across Ontario, I continue to work with a group of Women in Markham to form a chapter of the Congress. At present they are responding to a Race Relations Policy from the York Region Board of Education.

Generally all the chapters in Ontario continue to be effective in their local communities.

North Eastern Chapter has extended its membership as far as Timmins and is working on Family Violence issues.

Scarborough chapter has assisted the City of Toronto with Citizenship Ceremonies.

Mississauga has established a Black History Program (Saturday classes), a scholarship program and a support network for Black Women in crisis situations.

Waterloo is very active at the community level and is preparing a major Black History Program with their township.

North York works co-operatively with the Jamaican Community Organization in programming for Black Youth.

Toronto continues to extend itself to other community organizations e.g; Black History Society and the Black Women's Collective, and also works on their filming project Racism in Daycare.

Each chapter has specific demands for finances as their projects warrant. The regional office is an expense handled through funding. The application for funding re- Child Abuse was not granted by the Ontario Women's Directorate. We are now seeking funding elsewhere to be able to maintain the office operation for 1990. A minimum of seven hundred dollars per month is needed.