

BIOGRAPHY:

Ken Jeffers' career spans over 45 years in which he has worked with diverse communities, individuals, agencies, and organizations in the field of recreation and community development providing training, program design, implementation, and evaluation.

Ken was the Manager of the Access and Diversity Unit in Parks, Forestry and Recreation, City of Toronto with management responsibility for all aspects of equity, diversity and human rights related to the delivery of programs, services, and activities.

Ken has recognized the need for greater outreach and participation by culturally and racially diverse communities through his work. Some of his major responsibilities include but are not limited to, training for all levels of staff, including senior management, active leadership on the Interdivisional Staff Teams on Access, Equity and Human Rights, chairing Corporate, Staff Team on Immigration and Settlement, and the development of a succession plan with an emphasis on equity and diversity.

Ken Jeffers has developed unique community recreation models, in which, recreation and leisure have been used as vehicles in the personal development of Toronto's residents. On behalf of the City of Toronto, Ken has initiated access and equity programs by introducing sports and recreation to diverse groups and cultures: *Hockey in the Neighbourhood*, a *Citywide basketball league*, *Swim for It* (an aquatics program for employment for diverse communities), *Beach Volleyball*, *Introduction of Baseball to diverse youth*, *Toronto Raptor ball*, *Cricket Across the Pond*, *Operational Cricket*, *Sharing Sports* and the introduction of the *steel band music* to the school system as a credit course.

In his capacity as a community leader, Ken Jeffers was responsible for forming the *Harriet Tubman Community Organization* (1973), one of the first African Canadian Multi-Service Centres in Toronto and developed special initiatives in Public Housing.

Finally, Ken has presented several proposed recommendations on behalf of the African Canadian community in Ottawa to the Justice Ministry in their reform of the *Alternative Measures program*. He created a unique concept and approach to counselling for African Canadian youth called *Heritage Counselling* which integrates traditional forms of counseling with the understanding of heritage as a positive motivator for change. This program has existed with the Ministry of Corrections probation service for the last 4 years.

In 2006 Ken Jeffers received a special invitation from the Mayor of New York City and represented the City at an international conference of Global Partners entitled *Governing a Diverse City in a Democratic Society*.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING:

- Access and Equity Staff Development Committee- Parks, Forestry and Recreation
- Cricket Resource Group
- Roundtables and resource groups on equity-seeking groups
- Consultant, Black Professionals Network (BPN), City of Brampton
- **The Black Awareness Coordinating Committee** Initiated and formed this committee as a student. This committee was funded by the federal government and employed 10 youth street workers to address violence among African Canadian youth in the subways and elsewhere Introduced African Dance, Steelband classes and youth exchanges with Washington D.C, Montreal, Nova Scotia, to name a few.
- **Board member of Metro Toronto Housing Authority (MTHA), a forerunner to the Toronto Community Housing Corporation [TCHC]**
 - As a board member, introduced MTHA crime prevention program for black youth and residents in the Chester Le and other areas.
- **African Liberation Day Committee**
 - For several years, a member of the planning committee for the very successful annual African Liberation Day involving thousands of people of African descent.
 - As a Garveyite, taught many young people about the significance of Marcus Garvey and his contribution to people of African descent.
- Founder and Director of the **Harriet Tubman Centre**, one of the first African Canadian multiservice centres in Toronto
- Member of the **South-Central Regional Committee of TV Ontario**, one of the first educational Television Stations initiated by the Ontario Provincial Government
- Board member of the **Continental African Caribbean Employment Placement Program** under the leadership of Dr. Isaac Akande
- Formed a **Coalition of African People (ACOAP)** to bridge relationships and understanding between continental Africans and Canadians of African descent.
- Former Chair of the **Sierra Leone Building Committee**, which successfully raised approximately one million in money. medical equipment and supplies to address the atrocities in Sierra Leone
- Chair of **Caribana**, one of the largest Caribbean festivals in North America for two years
- Former Board member of the Black Business and Professional Association [BBPA]
- Member of three Mayors Task Force on Drugs
- Initiated a major drug prevention project in Regent Park and Alexandra Park
- Member and Advisor to the African Canadian Coalition of Organizations [ACCO], formed after the youth killings at Danzig Coordinator and Project Director on the Emancipation Day commemoration for the Trinidad and Tobago government through the Consul General's office.
- Initiator and coordinator of the annual Trinidad and Tobago Classic cricket match with Jamaica and Guyana
- Founder and Initiator of the Mayors Cricket Team which has toured internationally for the past ten years
- Member of the Toronto Police Services Board [TPSB]

POLICY FRAMEWORK AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT:

- TPSB member on the Ontario Association Police Services Boards
- Member of the Transformation Task Force of the TPSB
- Associate Consultant with Employment Matters, a Diversity Consulting Firm to the Private and Public sectors nationally and Internationally
- Advisor to the Harriet Tubman Community Organization
- President and one of the founders of the **Ontario School Cricket Association [OSCA]**
- Member of the First Police Black Liaison Committee
- **City mediator** in disputes and conflicts amongst community groups
 - These include successful resolutions in the following: a major dispute at University Settlement House among diverse community groups, staff, and the community Board of Directors
- Gang violence among Filipino youth, Tamil youth and African Canadian youth
- Protest of a logo depicting Aboriginal people in a demeaning way by the High Park Baseball league
- Currently assuming the lead role in claims by Aboriginal peoples of spiritual grounds in Toronto parks under the Indian Act
- Manager of the **City of Toronto Healthy Cities Office** as outlined in a United Nations policy. One of the City Representatives who met with visiting foreign delegations who were interested in Municipal Services and administration. Represented the City of Toronto at the Bloomberg Conference in New York conference on diversity and race
- Training of street workers with Dr. Da Costa
- Organized a street workers course for staff of the BCAC with Dr. Da Costa at the Clarke Institute
- Introduced the first free self defense martial arts school for Black youth
- Provided training for various shifts of police in 13 Division to prevent police violence against Black youth
- **Introduction of the first Black focus school** in partnership with the York Board of Education with ongoing consultant Dr. Granville Da Costa, the first Black professor in the school of Psychiatry, University of Toronto, initiated and operated a Black Focus School for two years. There was a 92% percent success rate with students entering Vaughn Road Collegiate.

CAPACITY BUILDING:

- **Scarborough College International Students Association**
 - Organized students and provided social activities; coordinated major discussions, and education with political guests on international issues of the day e.g. *The Middle East, The Black Panther Party*.
- **Alexandra Park**
 - Worked as a volunteer at Alexandra Park, the largest number of Black residents at that time with the leader and motivator Bob Ellis. Ongoing work on prevention of gang warfare between youth of Caribbean heritage and indigenous Black Canadians.
- **The Isaac Hayes Project**
 - Received financial and other support from Isaac Hayes, B.B King and other visiting artists to Toronto
- **The introduction of the first community intergenerational instructional programs in Canada of Steelband music** which have developed as a credit course with North York Board of Education
- Housed the first **Library of Black Peoples Literature** at The Harriet Tubman Centre
- **Black Youth Summer Program**
 - Initiated and trained Black youth to supervise a program entitled *Canada: The Third Stop*. Several hundred young people were taught the history and contributions of all of the "stops" of people of African descent
- **Cultural Youth Trip to The Caribbean**
 - Secured funding and expenses for 33 Black youth, and 7 staff on a successful cultural educational tour to Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Antigua
- **Introduction of North American Sports to Youth from the Caribbean**
 - Organized American draft evaders living in Toronto and local Toronto volunteer coaches to develop basketball players of Caribbean heritage into the winning boys and girls' team "The Toronto Wildcats"
- Worked with a committee of Black educators to insist that the **Toronto Board of Education** allow Black youth to form committees in schools when they insisted that Black youth groups be called "clubs".
- Assisted in the formation of the first coalition Black youth group entitled **Reunited African People (RAP)** under the leadership of teacher Florence Harrison
- Civil Rights Movement in Orangeburg, South Carolina, 1968
 - Obtained a track scholarship to South Carolina State College and joined the **Black Awareness Committee**, a civil rights group on campus whose primary objective was to desegregate the Jim Crow laws of the South where Blacks were forbidden to participate as equals to whites. He became one of the leading activists who were constantly under threat of the police and the KKK.
 - Organized boycotts of businesses that would not hire Black people and mobilized five other students to run 40 (forty) miles and protest the police killings of three students, one high school student and two student friends and acquaintances (see Toronto Star's "This is no longer my fight" on Ken's return for the 40th anniversary by Royson James: <http://www.thestar.com/article/301985>).

SOCIAL HEALTH RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:

- **Heritage Counselling and Healing Program**
 - Initiated and developed a method and manual for counseling and healing for African Canadian youth on probation in the criminal justice system. For a number of years, the program had a recidivism (repeat offender) rate of less than 5 percent
- **African Canadian Youth Justice Alternative Measures Program**
 - Created and presented a concept on alternative measures for Black youth in the criminal justice system
- **Get Your Move On**
 - In partnership with many diverse communities and several agencies and institutions, initiated several programs and projects on reduction of obesity, particularly in racially and culturally diverse communities
- **Swim for it: a program to introduce aquatics to diverse groups**
 - In order to provide opportunities for employment for people of Colour, worked with the Boards of Education and diverse communities in ensuring that young people have an opportunity and qualifications to be hired in the City of Toronto by qualifying as lifeguards
- Initiated in partnership with African Canadian children, a candlelight procession, and children's speeches at Queens Park for the freedom of **Nelson Mandela** who was labeled a "Terrorist" for his activism against the racist apartheid laws in South Africa
- **The first annual Black Youth Conference in Montreal**
 - Organized and facilitated the first National Black Youth Conference in Montreal
- Represented and assisted youth in the development of a **Court Workers Program**, assisting African Canadian youth who were in courts without legal representation under the aegis of the Harriet Tubman Community Organization
- A founding Board member of the **African Canadian Legal Clinic (ACLC)**, which does test case litigation based on systemic racism
- Introduced the first **Computer Literacy Centre** of learning for Black residents with the support of Minister of Housing, Alvin Curling, at Chester Le Public School
- **Founding member of The Arts Against Apartheid Project** to liberate South Africa with a subsequent invitation to Nelson Mandela

SOCIAL HEALTH RESEARCH AND EVALUATION CON'D:

- **The Yonge Street Riots in 1992**
 - The official liaison of the City of Toronto in negotiating an agreement with the four levels of government to provide services for African Canadian youth
 - One of the authors of a comprehensive Four Level Government report and recommendations, some of which were implemented by the City of Toronto
- Partnered with Dave Stewart of the **Toronto Blue Jays** who financed an anti-violence project with Oakland, United States and Regent Park
- Introduction of **Winter Sports at Collingwood** for Black students
 - Community members of Collingwood ski resort introduced and instructed Black children and parents in the rudiments of skiing
- **Hockey in the Neighbourhood Program**
 - Initiated and developed a program to introduce diverse children and youth to the sport of ice hockey. There was great support from the NHL and Toronto Maple Leafs
- Official liaison on behalf of the City in the **World Championship of Basketball** in the City of Toronto
 - The first official liaison with the Toronto Raptors on behalf of the City of Toronto
- The naming of **Herb Carnegie Centre**, the first Black pioneer in the sport of Ice Hockey who was denied participation in the National Hockey League because of his race as a Black man
- The naming of the Harry Gairey Ice Rink
 - Initiated the naming of the first and only ice rink after African Canadian Harry Gairey, an icon in the African Canadian community whose son and Jewish friend were denied entry to a Toronto ice rink in the forties because of their race
- **Contribution of African Canadians poster series**
 - For over 12 years, initiated and developed a poster series in the City of Toronto which individuals and institutions in Canada, the United States and the Caribbean request on a regular basis
- **Paul Robeson: The Tallest Tree in our forest**
 - Reintroduced the celebration of the contributions of Paul Robeson to the City of Toronto with a limited series poster and several presentations and lectures on the life of Paul Robeson, one of the greatest contributors to humanity
- The Primary founder of the **Afro-Caribbean Dance Group** for children and youth of African descent
- Successfully obtained an apology and removal of the offensive black sambo caricature in the Basketball Training Manual of the Ontario Basketball Association

AWARDS, CERTIFICATES AND LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

- Lifetime Achievement Award from The Black Business and Professional Association [BBPA]
- The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants [CIMA] 3 certificates of Appreciation for Volunteer Contributions to the Development of Cricket
- Muslim Women’s Certificate of Appreciation for the Introduction to Aquatics and Aquatic Instructor Certificates
- The Harriet Tubman Community Award and Appreciation
- Heritage Skills Development Community Group [African Women] Award and Appreciation
- Distinguished Men and Women Award
- Certificate of Appreciation from The City of Toronto for Celebrations of Black History Month
- Certificate of Appreciation from the Black Law Students Association of Canada
- Letters of Appreciation of professional work from five Mayors of Toronto
- Recognition Awards from Afropan Steelband, the oldest steel bands in Canada for ongoing involvement and promotion of steel band music in the community and schools in Toronto
- The Vietnamese Greater Interlink Services award for my involvement in the settling of the so-called “Boat people” who were fleeing Vietnam after the Vietnam war
- An award from the Mandarin Chinese businesswomen for organizational support
- Award from the Pa Paa Barathi Association of Toronto for my contribution to the annual South Asian Festival
- Award from the Somali Sports and Art Center for my ongoing assistance
- Award from the Sierra Leone Building Committee for leadership in providing support and assistance in raising over one million dollars and hospital supplies and chairing of the committee after the devastation of the civil war
- An award from Congressman Raul Mondesi of the Dominican Republic for my work in the Dominican Republic community in Toronto
- Certificate of Appreciation from the Academy of Latin Baseball in Toronto
- Charter Member of the first Black Lions Club of Toronto and a recipient of the ONYX award for outstanding achievement
- Award from the Domincana Social and Cultural Club
- Certificate from the Toronto Raptors for my partnership leadership on behalf of the City of Toronto
- Certificate of Appreciation from BOPSERS, a Black Public Service Employees Association for my workshop presentation during Black History Month
- African Canadian Achievement Award from The African Chamber of Commerce from Pride News magazine
- Pan Syndrome Award for Dedication to the Youth in the Community
- The African Chamber of Commerce award for excellence of work in the community
- Certificate of Appreciation from Mayor John Tory and Toronto City Council for four years of work on the Toronto Police Services Board
- Festival de La Juventud for excellent work in the community
- Letter of Appreciation from Native Child and Family Services for my assistance and support
- Developed and provided workshops for LBTTQ seniors at 519 Church
- Worked with the Native community to identify and protect spiritual burial grounds