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OPINION

TORSTAR RESPONDS TO CALLS TO END RACISM

MEDIA HAS ROLE IN SPARKING CHANGE, JOANNE BURGHARDT WRITES



JOANNE BURGHARDT
Column

It's about trust. Our relationship with our readers is built on transparency, honesty and integrity. As such, we have launched a trust initiative to tell you who we are and how and why we do what we do. This article is part of that project. The outrage evoked by the unjust death of George Floyd, a Black man killed by police in the United States, has made us painfully aware we have work to do here when it comes to racism.

As media we have an important role to play in sparking change.

I have joined Torstar's editorial leaders in endorsing seven calls to action from the Canadian Journalists of Colour (CJOC) and Canadian Association of Black Journalists (CABJ), found here: <https://www.cjoc.net/white-paper>.

We recognize the need to

build diverse teams and provide news coverage that includes a variety of voices to tackle issues that fully represent our diverse communities. These actions will make us a better, more fair organization to work for and produce better journalism.

Journalists in our newsrooms, including this one, will be invited to join us in this endeavour.

We are working quickly to answer the call to action, namely:

1. We are committing to an internal, voluntary demographics survey on an ongoing basis.
2. We recognize the need for a more diverse news team and commit to establishing recruitment initiatives and hiring practices to make that happen.
3. We are committed to identifying and developing talented journalists of colour in our newsrooms.
4. We will set up commu-

nity advisory boards to meet and work with us regularly.

5. We will take part in representation training and workshops to hone our skills as journalists.

6. We are looking at scholarship possibilities.

7. We will be seeking insight on best practices in how to work with our friends in education to ensure diversity and inclusion in journalism schools.

It takes a community to make a difference. We encourage you to look around your workplace, school, neighbourhood and dinner table to determine what you can do to drive change.

It will not be easy and it will take all of us to make a difference.

But it's the right thing to do.

Joanne Burghardt is the director of content for Torstar's community news brands of which we are a part. She has been a journalist for 40 years. We welcome your questions and value your comments. Email our trust committee at trust@metroland.com.

KINDNESS IN FULL BLOOM

During these stressful times, I would like to share a lovely gesture I recently experienced.

I was just about to leave the house for my daily walk with my husband, and upon opening the front door found there was a lady approaching holding a potted plant.

She apologized for startling me and said that she was there to deliver a plant from Knox Church in Georgetown. I thanked her

and found a beautiful pink calla lily with a card reading "A little something to brighten your day in these anxious times."

I emailed Rev. Steve minister of Knox Church to convey my thanks, and was told that a delivery team had dropped off over 100 flowers donated by Kuyvenhoven Greenhouses for churches to give to congregants and friends in the Halton Hills area.

He then said the local to-

tal was actually around 3,000 plants, most of which were sent around by Bethel Christian Reformed Church members.

What a wonderful gesture, and one that I'm sure was much appreciated, especially during these days when we are stuck at home, and missing family and friends.

Thank to to Kuyvenhoven Nurseries, and the wonderful volunteers who most certainly brought a smile to the faces of so many people.

JEAN GRAHAM
HALTON HILLS

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