

# NIAGARA CATHOLIC PART OF POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP TO SUPPORT BLACK YOUTH IN NIAGARA

Niagara Catholic is pleased to partner with TOES (Tools of Empowerment for Success) Niagara to launch *What They See Is What They Will BE* a powerful mentorship program to support young people in achieving their dreams.

This program is designed to meet the needs of Black youth across specific industries and career fields addressing racial disparities and policy and program outcomes, such as data analysis, health and mental health, education, literary and the performing arts, social impact and innovation and entrepreneurship. Two \$1,000 scholarships to support post-secondary study in any of the above-mentioned areas are accessible each year through TOES Niagara.

“Niagara Catholic recognizes the very specific needs of addressing the challenges of Black youth in our schools, specifically in finding mentors who represent their future selves,” said Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells, Niagara Catholic Superintendent of Education responsible for the Equity and Inclusive Education portfolio. “We are very pleased to partner with TOES Niagara in creating this program and thank the Niagara Community Foundation for the funding to support this innovative project.”

“The *What They See Is What They Will BE* mentorship program is a fundamental disruption to anti-Black racism, and a critical step in building the capacity and support for future Black leaders within their community,” said TOES Niagara Executive Director Nyarayi Kapisavanhu. “It not only answers a call from young Black people to be connected to leaders and role models, but also to the need to support and facilitate adult role models so that they can share their experience in a way that is sensitive to anti-Black racism. This is a wonderful example of allyship and collaboration at work. All mentors, from across all races, will be trained in the cultural competencies and racial nuances that impact Black youth. Through these conversations, the pervasively rooted anti-Black racism that erodes the identity and progress of young black people will be addressed.”

“Exceptional programs such as TOES Niagara’s *What They See Is What They Will BE* mentorship initiative will no doubt be transformative for all involved,” said Bryan Rose, Niagara Community Foundation’s (NCF) Executive Director. “It is the grassroots work done by wonderful community leaders like Nyarayi Kapisavanhu and her organization who create, build and inspire those around them to engage in making a positive difference for racialized youths in our region. Needless to say, the NCF is proud to play a role in this partnership with TOES Niagara and Niagara Catholic in providing the funding to get this program up and operational.”

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