

BLACK HISTORY MONTH: Cobourg EDI Coordinator Yasmyn Belle's Q&A with NHH's Lola Obomighie

As a strong advocate for EDI and representation throughout the entirety of your career, what are some of the highs and lows that have come out of being identified as the key changemaker?

To be honest Yasmyn, I don't see myself as a "changemaker" so that question is difficult to answer. I am literally just a Black woman raised by very hardworking parents who taught me and my siblings that the only route to success is hard work and God's favour and this is what I have always lived by. The most poignant high for me throughout my career is the privilege of working with colleagues that see me as me, and remain willing and open to listening, hearing, and learning my perspectives which are sometimes different. NHH has and continues to offer me the blessing of that in abundance. The lows I have experienced are not uncommon to anyone who is from an equity seeking/deserving group, we do not all enjoy the privileges that others have, however this for me has been an impetus to work harder and thankfully I am able to continue to do so especially in a place like NHH.



Lola Obomighie, a mother, wife, and the Vice President of People, Culture & Organizational Effectiveness at Northumberland Hills Hospital. In addition to the many roles she has at the hospital, Lola also serves as the current chair of the hospital's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee (EDIAC).

It is no secret that historically, Black individuals have been at the root of past and current medical advancements. Are there any individuals within the healthcare system that you draw inspiration from?

I am married to a physician and as corny as it sounds, he is the one who I draw the most inspiration from. His dedication to his patients, how hard he works, his passion for what he does and the care he provides to his patients are qualities that I find admirable. Like he isn't superhero enough in my eyes, he is a wonderful life partner and an amazing father to our two kids.

What are some current issues within the Ontario Healthcare system that should be focused on more past Black History Month?

So you may not be aware of this but I have lived in Ontario for just about five years and before then relocated from England. The healthcare issues here and across the pond are not dissimilar and at the core of it is health equity – not just for Black people, the same applies for Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ2S and so many others who are just not able to access healthcare through what I feel are endemic barriers in the system. The good thing is we all becoming alive to this and hopefully, little by little, one decision by another, we would continue moving forward in a positive direction.

How do YOU celebrate Black History Month?

Every month for me is Black History Month Yasmyn! My family is Black and whether I am braiding my daughter's luscious kinky hair and reminding her how gorgeous she is; or I am reminding my son that his hue is my favourite colour, or we are eating African cuisine or just being grateful for good health, life and blessings of peace of mind, we are celebrating Black history month!