

Mental Health and the Modern Man

Tayo Elnathan

# Ladies Corner

December 20, 2020

## MONEY MATTERS

Financial Coach Dickson Maiden

## Beauty AND BUSINESS

Aiyie Lim

## DOING POLITICS WITH A HEART

Adrian Bruff

## WHOLISTIC HEALTH THIS CHRISTMAS

Mary Thomas

# The Power of Positive Change

Special Focus Interview with Jeanne Lehman  
Founder and Executive Director,  
Black Canadian Women in Action



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# LadiesCorner

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FOUNDER/EDITOR IN CHIEF

Tee Adeyemo

info [lccmediafoundation.ca](mailto:info@lccmediafoundation.ca)

---

EDITORIAL

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Mary Thomas

Dickson Maiden

Tayo El-nathan

---

DESIGN

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

Mileydi Cristancho

DESIGN DIRECTOR

Tunde Adeyemo

info [citeay.com](mailto:info@citeay.com)

PHOTOGRAPHER

Tope Akindele

BUSINESS DIRECTOR

Omotayo Adeyemo

---

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It is the grace of God that has kept us since our last edition. As deaths from Covid-19 keep mounting, we pause here to send a prayer to our friends and families who have lost loved ones to this pandemic. These are unprecedented times and we are in this together. In the United States, for the first time in their 259 year history, a woman, Kamala Harris, the daughter of Indian and Jamaican immigrants made history by winning the Vice Presidency on the Biden-Harris ticket. In essence, she is the first African-American, the first woman and the first Asian American to become Vice President of the United States of America. In many ways, we feel here in Edmonton, a surge of that fresh air with Annamie Paul, a Black woman-winning leadership of the Federal Green Party of Canada. It is great time to be a woman, an immigrant and an entrepreneur. Ladiescorner Magazine is aimed at immigrant women, their lifestyles and businesses. We have had three other editions before this one.

This edition is dedicated to the men in our lives. In this edition, we have interesting conversations with the publisher of Melanistic Magazine, Greg Davis, a councilor aspirant, Adrian Bruff and a scholar, Prof Udoka Ogbogu. We are also proud to highlight the work of Jeanne Lehman and Black Canadian Women in Action in this edition.

*Hard things are hard. And sometimes complex.* David Axelrod said these words to President Barack Obama during the fight to pass the Affordable Care Act in 2010. I leave these words with you.

All editorial mistakes are mine. Have a very Happy Christmas and see you in 2021

*Tee Adeyemo*

**Editor in Chief**  
**Ladiescorner Magazine**



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# GREG DAVIS

*Melanistic Magazine Publisher*

Greg Davis has been in the media business for more than a decade. His project Melanistic Magazine is an idea that has brought every aspect of the black life and experience to the forefront of our minds. He is described as passionate and a driving force on the Canadian media landscape giving a megaphone to black writers and journalists. He is a visionary in every sense of the word, his magazine is a sophisticated reflection of the beauty and realities of the metropolitan black experience in Edmonton.

**How can you describe yourself?**

I was once described by a good friend of mine as a Jamaican who skipped through Toronto and got lost in Japan. My name is Greg Davis. I recently moved to Edmonton and I am the publisher of Melanistic Magazine.

Adventure Travel, exploration, driving, and cooking are the main things that I am into. Most of which I got into during my 10 years in Japan. Japan is also where I got into the magazine world and I have been in

the media business for over 15 years now.

**How did you get involved with Melanistic Magazine? Why are you passionate about melanistic issues?**

Melanistic started back in the Spring of 2019 as a conversation between Nigel Williams and I. That led to the coming together of our own



**Yeah, I am immensely proud of the various accomplishments by our community in the city of Edmonton.**

# Spotlight

version of the four horsemen inclusive of NiLo and Bobby T. I then brought on board Taneya our editor and Jo our designer. The six of us are at the core of everything produced by the magazine.

### **Are you proud of black accomplishments in this city?**

Yeah, I am immensely proud of the various accomplishments by our community in the city of Edmonton. We have a lot of leaders, innovators and cultural icons that add to the overall fabric of what makes Edmonton a unique place.

### **What are the highs and lows of being a black publisher?**

The highs and lows of publishing are universal, as all the best publishers ask themselves the same questions and live, eat and sleep their magazines. The hurdles that I find being a black publisher in Edmonton, have to do mostly with winning the public's trust, as Edmonton got used to a certain approach to Black media, so I find myself working to break those stereotypes that have developed over the years.

### **How have you coped in this pandemic era?**

The pandemic age has brought a ton of challenges and losses both professionally and personally. Some of those losses I can never regain, but I am still here standing.

### **Do you find men falling apart under the weight of a variety of mental health issues?**

Falling apart is a harsh way to frame the question. Black men do indeed struggle with mental health issues. For most of us, it is a cultural taboo to admit you are having such a struggle and it is also seen as a lack of manliness to show this as well. So it does hit black men quite hard, I myself have struggled with depression this year. As long as we are able to find an anchor to keep us steady, then we have a chance to make it through those mentally challenging times. Some of us do break, some of us do harden and some of us come out smelling like smoke as we have just walked through fire.

## Spotlight

### When it comes to Melanistic Magazine, there is much to look forward to as one of the goals is to be the first all Black media to win Alberta Magazine of The Year.

#### **Do you think black people collaborate enough in this city to make any progress?**

Short answer is no. However, that situation is changing as the crabs in a barrel approach is slowly being phased out by groups within our community who are focused on building the black community up in whatever way they can accomplish that. So it is an improving and evolving situation.

#### **There seems to be a lack of support for black men in Edmonton, do you find that this is true?**

I think it is more of a black community issue really. For decades, the Edmonton community has been about attacking and tearing each other down, as opposed to recognizing the community is relatively small and to focus on building each other up. Internally as a community we don't support each other enough, so it impacts whether or not we have a position of strength to then garner support from people outside our community.

#### **When the dust settles on the Black Lives Matter movement, do you see genuine change?**

If the dust settles on Black Lives

Matter, then that means there has been genuine and serious change in the minds and hearts of our society. Until that change occurs the fight for equity, justice and equality will and must rage on.

#### **What book/s are you reading now?**

Honestly, I have not picked up one in a while. What is everyone reading these days? Is Harry Potter still a best seller?

#### **Are you looking forward to 2021?**

In some ways yes and in other no. Moving forward and looking ahead has always been a part of my approach to life, but there is a part of me that wishes it could turn back time. When it comes to Melanistic Magazine, there is much to look forward to as one of the goals is to be the first all Black media to win Alberta Magazine of The Year. We are well on our way to meeting that goal.

#### **Contact:**

[outsidersedgemedi@gmail.com](mailto:outsidersedgemedi@gmail.com)  
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Spotlight

# Doing Politics With a Heart

*Navigating Edmonton politics with Adrian Bruff*

A

drian Bruff is a community activist and organizer. He is running to be elected Councillor

for Ward O-day'min. He is an alumni of MacEwan University. He works as a social worker and disability advocate within our communities. A homeowner and resident of Oliver, he is passionate about community growth and development. He is a champion for small businesses and entrepreneurship at City Hall.

He does this by ensuring fiscal responsibility while investing in initiatives that support local development. He addresses safety concerns in our neighborhoods by empowering social service initiatives to implement community oriented solutions. Once elected, he has plans to fix our roads, bridges, parks and alleys while advocating for diverse transportation and community revitalization.

In this interview, he shares his passion for politics and his plans for 2021 with us.

**Who is Adrian Bruff?** I am a community activist and organizer here in the city of Edmonton. An Alumni of MacEwan who works as a Social Worker and Disability Advocate within our communities. I am involved in the disability field, housing for homeless and working to reintegrate adults back into our community that have been involved in the Criminal Justice System. I am a homeowner, resident of Oliver and I volunteer on various community boards. I am a progressive and have spent my entire adult life fighting for working families

City Councillor's roles and responsibilities are to advocate for the interest of their constituents and address any concerns they have...



in our community.

I organize many community initiatives like my annual Back to School Supply Drive, which to date has provided over 1200 backpacks for low income families in our community, so they have the supplies they need to send their children to school or my annual Family Day Dinner, which provides meals for community members with no family in the city. I am a community leader in the Black community and a recipient of the NBCC, Afro-Canadian Award and Diversity Award for my long-standing dedication and advocacy work for visible minorities.

**Why politics? What does a councillor do?** Politics was never in my career plan, however, over my years of community organizing and leadership, along with my career working with our most vulnerable community members in neighborhoods like Boyle Street, McCauley, Queen's Mary Park, Central McDougall, Oliver, Downtown and many others. Community leaders, stakeholders, business owners and residents, asked me to consider running for City Council in the next municipal election. After much conversations with family and

friends, I decided I was going to step up and serve my community and run to become a councillor.

City Councillor's roles and responsibilities are to advocate for the interest of their constituents and address any concerns they have, to consider the welfare and interests of the City as a whole and, participate generally in developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the City. A Councillor is also a representative of the City, who attends community events, functions and ceremonies on behalf of the City of Edmonton.

## Spotlight

### Do you think people of color should prioritize voting and volunteering?

I am pleased over the years to see how engaging our community Black and Indigenous people of colour (BIPOC) has become with politics and governance. With the goal of getting 100 voter participation in our community a reality, there's still more work to do. That is why I am actively looking into starting our own BIPOC Voters Registration, so we can have more control over our electoral fortunes. Regarding volunteering, many BIPOC have reached out to volunteer and donate, but we can always use a few more. If you would like to volunteer for an exciting campaign for City Council in 2021, reach out at [volunteer@adrianbruff.ca](mailto:volunteer@adrianbruff.ca), we would love to have you.

### Why must we engage politically? Why does it matter?

This is a common question many people ask when they see me, and my answer is always YES, I know with our current political climate, covid-19 and our economy, many people are feeling hopeless and disengaged. By reminding them about the roles of governments and the importance of having elected officials that are going to advocate for their interests, people tend to give politics another look. Having an elected official on council that is going to have the interests of working-class families and the working-poor is important when our city starts to build back better

post covid-19. It matters because having an advocate on council who will support small businesses and entrepreneurs, advocate for affordable homes, address social issues such as homelessness, maintain our infrastructures, provide more programs for our seniors, protect our heritage sites, diversify our economy and provide tax reliefs for residents are important initiatives for our city to focus on with our recovery plan. These are initiatives I am passionate about and I have a plan for.

### How do you campaign during Covid-19?

Covid-19 has presented a unique challenge to our campaign. I am blessed to have a diverse group of people working on our campaign, (Diverse in terms of gender, race, age groups and socio-economics status.) This diversity has given us an edge when it comes to campaigning. Campaigning during covid-19 means more online content and advertising, zoom meetings and having a well organized get out the vote (GOTV) strategy, which all cost money. So, if you can donate 5- 10 or 100 please go to [adrianbruff.ca](http://adrianbruff.ca) and

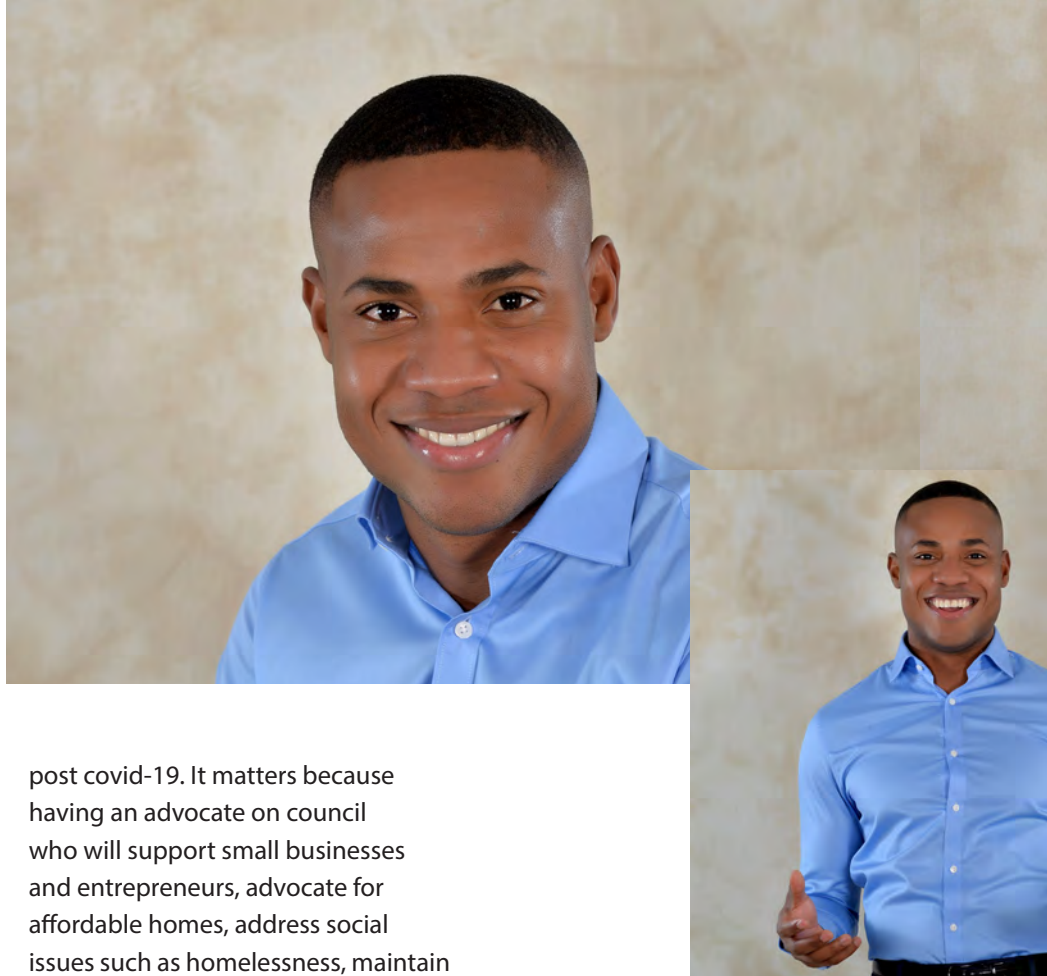
donate.

### What are the main concerns of your constituents, what are people telling you?

Firstly, I want to say thank you to the many residents in my riding for the outpouring of support, it means a lot. There are a few concerns residents in Ward O-day/min (OH-DEY-MIN) have been sharing with me on the doors. Here are the top five concerns they have addressing social issues (homeless, crime and safety), the economy, fiscal responsibility, diversity and representation and our infrastructure. I have a plan for these concerns and a vision for our city.

### What is your plan to solve them?

I am fortunate enough to have had firsthand experiences in addressing some concerns of my constituents. Whether it's my two-part plan to end homelessness or my





plan on how we maintain our parks, roads, back allies and LRT. Go to [adrianbruff.ca](http://adrianbruff.ca) or send us an email at [info@adrianbruff.ca](mailto:info@adrianbruff.ca) to learn more.

**How can the community support you?**

I am running a grassroots campaign focused on everyday Edmontonians, with a vision that is aligned with Jane Jacobs - Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody. You can support by VOTING. Bring your friends, family, co-workers, neighbours and everyone that you can think of to vote. Sign up to volunteer for a shift, we have something for everyone. You can donate by going to [adrianbruff.ca](http://adrianbruff.ca)

**“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”**

[ca](http://adrianbruff.ca) or help host an event or donation drive and you can invite me to your community events.

**What books have you read that inspires you? What are you reading now?**

I enjoy reading, I try to read at least fifteen books per year, mostly historical, political and fictional. When I was a teenager, I read Michael

Manley’s (former PM of Jamaica) The politics of Change, which transformed my political beliefs. The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald and Dreams from My Father, Barack Obama are also a few of my favorites.

While door knocking in the community of Westmont, residents Mark and Terry-Ann recommended that I read Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller, which is what I am currently reading.

**Where can we find more about you?** You can call us at **(587) 594-8586**. Our website is [www.adrianbruff.ca](http://www.adrianbruff.ca)

We are also on Twitter and Facebook [adrianbruff](https://www.facebook.com/adrianbruff).

SPECIAL  
**Focus**  
INTERVIEW



**JEANNE LEHMAN**

*Founder, Black Canadian Women In Action*



Edmonton lacked a hub for Black Canadian women. Filling this much needed gap is Jeanne Lehman, founder of Black Canadian Women in Action operating as BCW. Founded in 2017 in Edmonton, Alberta, BCW is a bilingual non-profit organization committed to making a difference in the lives of the minority of black Canadian women living in Western Canada.

As a hub of minority Black Canadian women, BCW specializes in facilitating the inclusion of Black Canadian women in the Canadian society, poverty relief, fostering the advancement of black women among decision-making entities, diversity promotion and seeks to increase female leadership in all sectors of activity.

The motto of BCW is to inspire, empower and engage women with confidence. In a short span of time, BCW leads in the not for profit sector black Canadian women with their range of targeted workshops and curated activities.

There are many powerful women in Edmonton today. But Jeanne Lehman exceeds them all. Her ability to organize women is an advantage that is second to none. Extremely passionate about women, her other main accomplishment was her involvement with Francophonie Albertaine Plurielle (FRAP).

FRAP is an organization for the integration of newcomers of the Francophone community. As a founder, chair and spokesperson of the FRAP, Jeanne worked hard to ensure that diversity and inclusion became entrenched in the organization. This led the Greater North Central Francophone Education Region No. 2 to change its practices in its hiring process and embrace diversity and inclusion of new Canadians in all sectors of the school Board. Jeanne's action went beyond the School Board and impacted diversity and inclusion in the Francophone Community.

**The core involvement of Jeanne is women advocacy. She tirelessly advocates for black women to explore, invest and exercise leadership in Canadian society. She is a voice to the many voiceless black women in Western Canada.** Jeanne was also the coordinator of women Initiative at the Africa Centre with the mandate to empower and increase understanding of Africa women in Edmonton. The mandate included equipping women with skills to overcome prejudices and barriers in the society.

Jeanne's strong commitment can be felt in encouraging newcomers to get involved and take part in the cultural, economic and social life of this country.

She believes successful integration of the newcomers will allow our country to avoid the social divide and to be more prosperous. Putting her words into action, Jeanne was a candidate in the nomination for the Federal Election of October 19, 2015 in the Edmonton-Manning district. Beginning this adventure as a complete stranger, Jeanne was able to energize and motivate people of the district and members of the community and many of them gave her their support. Although she did not win the nomination, Jeanne's victory was bigger and more inspiring for Canadian communities of African descent because Jeanne was the first woman of African origin to seek a nomination for a Federal election in Edmonton. Her candidacy prompted three other African women to be candidates in the same election. Jeanne holds a Bachelor of General Law, a Masters Degree of Business Law from Paris X Nanterre and a Master Degree in Africa Studies from the University Paris, Sorbonne, as well as a Graduate Diploma in Management from the HEC Business School, Montreal. Jeanne was named Woman of the Year in 2014 by the newspaper Le Franco. She was awarded the Prix de reconnaissance Suzanne-Lamy-Thibaudeau / Suzanne-Lamy Thibaudeau Recognition Award by La Coalition des Femmes de l'Alberta/Women Coalition of Alberta in 2016. In 2020, she was awarded the prestigious Community Leader Award by Diversity Magazine.



**We noticed that there was a gap. Black Canadian women needed to gather to learn new skills, share information and train for future opportunities, but there were no such spaces in Edmonton for black women to do that.**

#### **Why did you start BCW?**

We started BCW recently. It is a baby organisation. It started in 2017 and we are growing stronger. Women initiative has been something I have done since 2012. We noticed that

there was a gap. Black Canadian women needed the space to gather for social and economic reasons. We needed to gather to learn new skills, share information and train for future opportunities, but there were no such spaces in Edmonton for black women to do that.

#### **Why women not men?**

We noticed that we didn't have anything for black women. BCW is a platform for women and girls. When we started we found that women were looking for where to meet. Women are usually the ones who carry the burden of looking after their children and families. Women face a lot of difficulties which sometimes break their families. Women face a lot of issues in the



# LEHMAN anne

community.

BCW specializes in providing solutions to the needs of all black women and girls regardless of their origin. Our job is to think about women and to teach them how to navigate the system as women are the bread rock of their families and indeed of all communities.

This does not mean we will not have programs for men because at BCW, we consider the wellness of family as a whole, so men should also be taken in consideration.

Our programs focus on women as the bedrock of our societies. We have programs like the Inner Child Series for boys and girls. In this period of COVID, we have featured activities for women and men entrepreneurs and we will continue to do so.

**Our job here is to think about women - to teach them how to navigate the system as women are the bread rock of their families and indeed of all communities.**

**Do you find Canadian born women have more needs than women who immigrated here?**

It depends on what angle one takes to answer this question. Are we talking about the Canadians who have been here for centuries? Are we talking about new arrivals? At first glance, one might think that

the Canadian women who have been here for generations would have different needs but if we look in depth, we see that they also have problems specific to black women. For example, since we have Canadian women who have been here for generations, newcomers should in principle have a lot of role models but unfortunately, they do not or at least they have very few role models. We all are in the same boat. We lack role models and relevant representation in spaces that matter.

**Do you direct women to services as part of your work?**

Yes. We are also here to guide, educate, encourage, support, refer and empower women. We are part of these communities, we know these women, we know the problems they face. When we meet women who have specific needs, we do our best to help them.

**So many organizations for women, how is your organization different?**

You said it, so many organizations for women.

We're different by being black. We are not just multicultural. We are diverse. We know our community, our community needs an organization like BCW. In 2017, we did a mixer for black business women and professionals, we were expecting 0 women, 70 women showed up. There is a need out there for black women to gather and meet.

**We are an unapologetically black organization.** We collaborate and partner with organizations of diverse communities. We welcome everybody who can bring something to the women of our communities. We partner with other organizations

like Alberta Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) and YMCA. What we want is a win-win partnership. We are Canadians and all we want is to be where decisions are being made, make decisions and take actions. We know black women have a lot to offer and that it is important that they participate in the social, cultural, political and economic life of this country that is also ours.

### **When you talk to women, what are their top problems?**

As you know, everyone wants to be successful, what happens to black women is that they are presented as newcomers without skills. We are well skilled but the jobs we find are mediocre and substandard. The first problem is jobs - they don't use us to our full capacity.

This is unfortunate for Canada. When we first came here, we had the passion and the motivation to succeed. People have jobs, but in these jobs, our women are not used to their full capacity.

Secondly, we lack understanding about how the system works. This can cause a lack of promotion and a lack of opportunities.

Thirdly, we lack family support. All these difficulties cause tension in the family, sometimes breaking up homes in the process. Women end up carrying this burden. Some women want to study but they can't because they are burdened by their kids.

### **How do you advocate for women?**

We go to where decisions are made. The problems we face are not provincial. It is a Canadian problem. We want our children and our mothers to be successful. We advocate in spaces of power where we have the ears of MPS, MLAs and companies. We go to decision

makers. We can only break the back of systemic racism when those in power understand our problems.

### **Is this government sympathetic?**

I don't know how to answer this question. We have problems. Black women have always had problems. We have just spoken about systemic racism - some people don't believe it exists. No matter which government is in charge, we have black women who are already pegged low. What we want is for this to change and we want to see the change now to break the stigma of subtle racism.

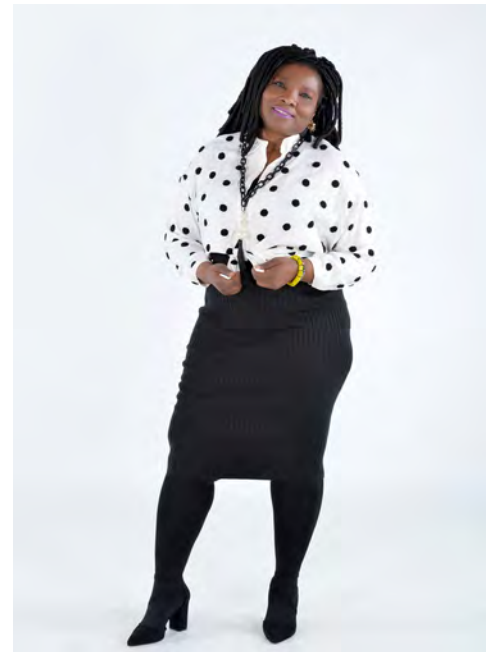
### **Is Edmonton a great place to be?**

I love Edmonton. Edmonton is the place to be. You can start afresh with possibilities. We have more black people now than ten years ago. We have so many places of interest here in Edmonton.

**We want our children and our mothers to be successful. We advocate in spaces of power where we have the ears of MPS, MLAs and companies. We go to decision makers.**

### **What are the highs and lows of this journey?**

We have a lot of highs. Seeing how people respond to us is one. Whenever we ask women to volunteer and participate, they love to. We have more than 400 members in our database. This is very encouraging. The low is that we need



resources. We need to let people know that we need resources. For example, at the end of the program for kids, what do we say to the kids, don't come again?

### **Plans for the holidays?**

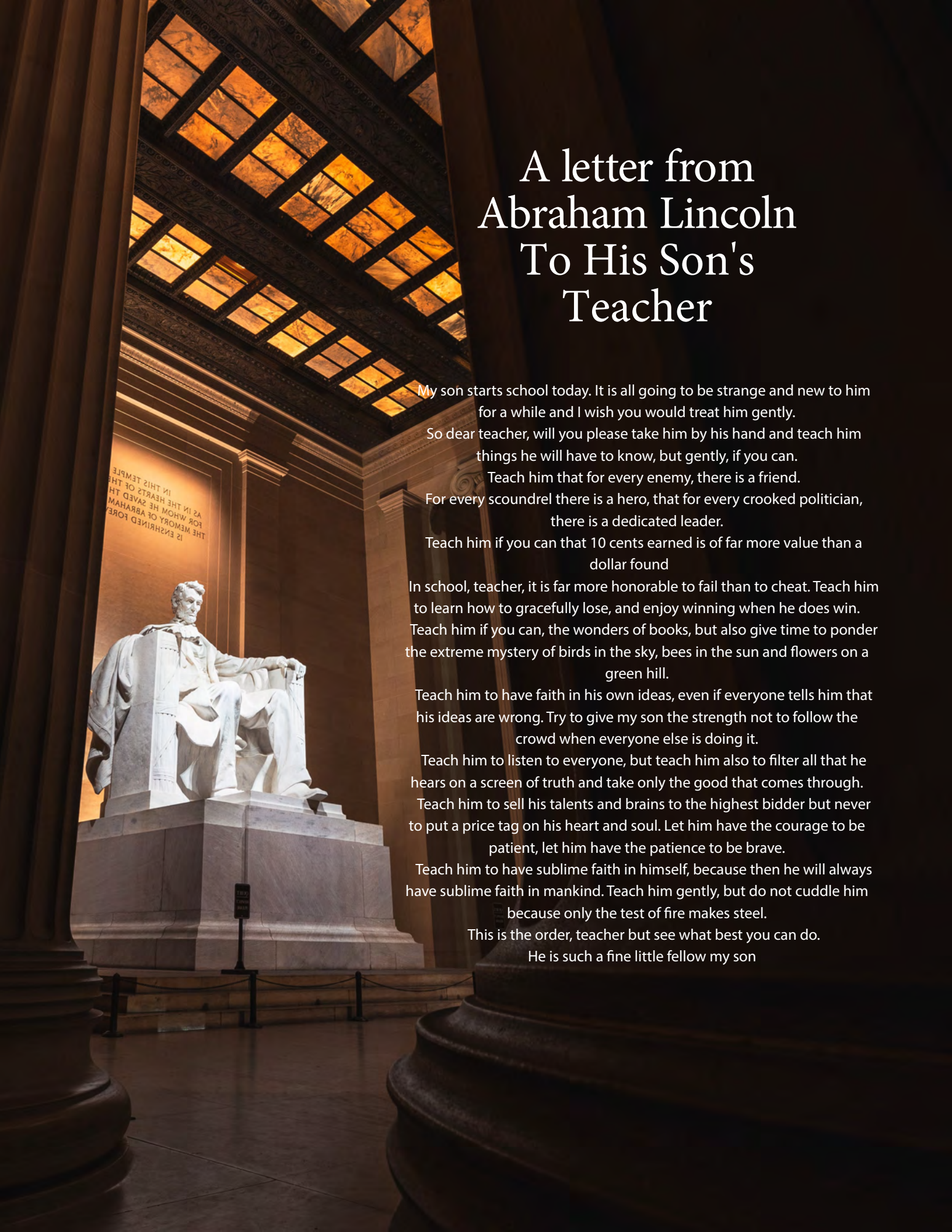
Our women come from different backgrounds. But, for me, it is a time to slow down, to spend time with my family and reflect on how we can make this society better. We need to reflect on the society we are building post Covid. We found that we are all the same as Covid has affected us all in one way or the other.

### **Are you looking forward to 2021?**

Yes There is a lot to look forward to in 2021. We are going to have a centre of wellbeing for girls and women. We will have an emotional, mental wellbeing centre. We have not done our official launch. We need to focus more on Women in Business streams. We are going to develop our Inner Child Series as well.

### **What books are you reading?**

Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart is a favourite.



# A letter from Abraham Lincoln To His Son's Teacher

My son starts school today. It is all going to be strange and new to him for a while and I wish you would treat him gently.

So dear teacher, will you please take him by his hand and teach him things he will have to know, but gently, if you can.

Teach him that for every enemy, there is a friend.

For every scoundrel there is a hero, that for every crooked politician, there is a dedicated leader.

Teach him if you can that 10 cents earned is of far more value than a dollar found

In school, teacher, it is far more honorable to fail than to cheat. Teach him to learn how to gracefully lose, and enjoy winning when he does win.

Teach him if you can, the wonders of books, but also give time to ponder the extreme mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the sun and flowers on a green hill.

Teach him to have faith in his own ideas, even if everyone tells him that his ideas are wrong. Try to give my son the strength not to follow the crowd when everyone else is doing it.

Teach him to listen to everyone, but teach him also to filter all that he hears on a screen of truth and take only the good that comes through.

Teach him to sell his talents and brains to the highest bidder but never to put a price tag on his heart and soul. Let him have the courage to be patient, let him have the patience to be brave.

Teach him to have sublime faith in himself, because then he will always have sublime faith in mankind. Teach him gently, but do not cuddle him because only the test of fire makes steel.

This is the order, teacher but see what best you can do.

He is such a fine little fellow my son



hope Maitwe -  
Takes Us Behind  
the Scenes at BCW.

**What do you do at BCW?**

Currently I work as the Team Lead, Administrative. In this role, I provide administrative support to all the programs and initiatives of BCW in Action with a special focus on the Black Girls Power programs. My role includes but not limited to: coordinating meetings and workshops, providing administrative support and assisting with budget and program planning

**How does your work impact on the women you meet?**

The work I do impacts the women in the community in a positive way. Many are thrilled that their children can gain exposure to the arts and culture of Edmonton.

I have received feedback from many women that they appreciate that BCW exposes young people to resources and opportunities they (the parents) did not have access too, when they were young.

**In light of future plans, what are some of the challenges you have faced?**

My role has been greatly challenged by the pandemic and with regards to funding . COVID

2019 has changed the way that we operate. At this time, we have had to cancel room bookings, invest in room for on-line facilitation, purchase extra supplies to meet the COVID screening guidelines and much more. Additionally, due to limited funding, we were not able to cater to the demand of participants and surpassed our capacity. For example, our ICS program was supposed to cater to 60 children but more than 100 children registered and were put on a waiting list. Also, parents are willing to come from outer city towns to have their children enrolled. Given the high demand for this program, BCW in Action hopes to acquire more funding as some parents were concerned that it wouldn't continue.

### **How have you overcome these challenges**

We have overcome these challenges by being proactive with scheduling and calling participants with as much advance notice as possible if we have any changes due to COVID. Additionally, we have found and applied to as many funding sources that are applicable to our organization.

As program coordinators, we will continue to work hard to cater to the Black Girl Power programs irrespective of funding available. BCW in Action is truly here to help, and to put a smile on the children faces. BCW in Action wants to ensure these children will overcome their difficulties and reach their potential. Knowing this, we are proactive and use all the resources we can, including volunteers, to make sure these programs continue despite any funding challenges. BCW in Action is fortunate that people from the communities are always ready to give a helping hand.

### **What are people saying about your programs?**

The feedback we have received about our Black Girls Power programs are that the children have thoroughly enjoyed what they have gained and learned and this has encouraged parents to not only participate in their child's experience, but invite other children from their acquaintances to partake in what BCW in Action has to offer. Also, we receive calls and emails of individuals from other organizations that appreciate what BCW in Action is doing and are interested in collaborating with us for our current and future programs. Additionally, BCW in Action has received feedback from the community about our Black Girls Power programs stating that they are being run professionally, and also being actively posted on social media for awareness.

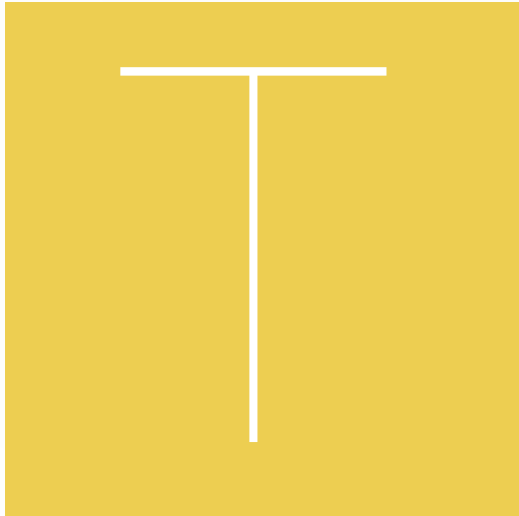
### **What are your Christmas plans?**

For the holiday season, BCW in Action will be regrouping to make more efficient systems for planning, and execution of the Black Girls Power programs. As it is the holiday season, we do not foresee that it will be practical to start new initiatives or facilitate many workshops for the Black Girls Power programs. BCW in Action is pausing to reflect on all what has been done and reinforce our programs for next year. Our programming including the workshops will have a break and will resume in January 2021.

### **What are your plans for 2021?**

For 2021 we plan to continue the Black Girls Power programs initiatives and goals. We will be starting the year strong as we have over 200 children in our database that participated in the Black Girls Power

200 children in our database that have participated in the Black Girls Power programs. This will be a great start to the new cycle of each program under the Black Girls Power umbrella. Additionally, we would like to expand on themes and concepts that participants expressed interest in. For example, participants of the Black Girls Corner program noticed that there were no Black artists featured at the Art Gallery of Alberta when they visited this gallery on a field trip. This has inspired us to set up an exhibit that features Black artists so that our young Black children can know that they are being represented and that they are going to be strong contributors to the future of Edmonton's heritage and culture. Additionally, with enough funding and pending COVID restrictions, BCW in Action would like to expand on the concept of field trips and have our Black youth visit Ottawa's Legislature Building, the Parliament of Canada, and learn more about the social, economic and political constructs of Canada. Additionally, we would love the participants to visit Regional Municipality in Halifax, Nova Scotia, so that they can learn about the historical importance of this city, the contribution of Black Canadians to this city, and note that it's a major business center known for its maritime history. Last but not least, with sufficient resources, BCW in Action would like to expand the mentorship element of the Black Girls Leadership program to include girls from all over western Canada and not just Edmonton.



Thelma Omina is a program coordinator at BCW. She joins us to talk about what she does at BCW.

### **What do you do at BCW?**

I am the Program Coordinator for the Active Women's Program.

### **How does your work impact on the women you meet?**

Our work helps black women access resources that enable them to navigate and establish themselves in different sectors of the society we live in today. This is through workshops and training in leadership, entrepreneurship and social wellness initiatives in order to foster their talents, abilities and interests in all avenues of their lifestyles.

### **In light of future plans, what are some of the challenges you have faced?**

One of the challenges has been accessing funding for our women in





order to give them opportunities that are afforded to other communities out there. Our women are just as capable as anyone else out there and thus deserve the same opportunities in order to better themselves in all aspects of their undertakings.

The other challenge which was unforeseen comes with the COVID-19 pandemic. I think there's a lot of uncertainty that has come with the challenges of navigating through COVID-19. Some of our women have had to

# WOMINA

refocus on childcare and getting their children engaged in other activities that it becomes challenging to invest time in their entrepreneurial or business training. However, we noticed that given the opportunity, by helping them for example with child care, and other incentives, women are willing to work hard in order to reach their potential.

### How have you overcome these challenges?

We are constantly advocating for the needs of our women to decision makers and all levels of government including and encouraging the women on all our programs and showing that we are just as capable when accorded the necessary resources has become part of our undertaking.

In terms of training and workshops, it has been helpful to have some of the trainings online or via zoom as they can attend these while doing other tasks. Webinars and presentations have become a huge part of connecting with our women.

### What are people saying about your programs?

The feedback has been positive. This is because there is no other organization like BCW in Action.

Women and Girls like what we do here in Alberta. Our women are appreciative of BCW's investment in their overall wellbeing. We always receive proposition for partnership in Alberta and also from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia

### What are your holiday plans?

This holiday season will be a time for evaluating how and what has worked and finding new ways to engage our communities while navigating through these unprecedented times. It will also be a time to recharge as we await the exciting new opportunities of the coming year. Stay tuned because we have lots to come in January.

### What are your plans for 2021?

In 2021, we are hoping to have even more women from our communities involved, expand our programs and make them accessible to those who are feeling marginalized. We want to create a space that fosters innovation and growth in all sectors of society and have our women at the forefront. Women are the backbone of our communities and when we invest in them, the whole community flourishes and we make a good society and consequently a stronger and better Canada.

# MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BCW PROGRAMS

### Networking Mixers for Business and Professionals

Mixers create a community of support for black professional women that encourages networking, benchmarking, collaboration, and partnerships among black women. The aim of the mixers is to connect our women with each other. These connections are between women who are already established and those who are upcoming in order to share ideas.

### Women Entrepreneur Programs Biz Startup Program:

The twelve week program guides the women entrepreneurs in setting up their business and coaches them on how to establish themselves in the industry. This twelve week program enables them to learn how to eliminate hurdles and launch a successful startup. BCW accompanies them through this program until they have their businesses set up.

### Connecting Black entrepreneurs for Success:

Female entrepreneurs undergo Business, Financial and Marketing Coaching from coaches who have expertise in these areas to help them set up and grow their businesses.

### BCW Career Women Network

The have presentation by career women to talk about soft skills, how they started and their career progression.

our communities with other women who are in the process of setting themselves up as their mentors. This program works to encourage the upcoming women and equips them with knowledge on how to navigate through the industries that they are a part off.

**For more information about Black Canadian Women In Action (BCW): Email: [Info@bcwinaction.ca](mailto:Info@bcwinaction.ca) Website: [www.bcwinaction.ca](http://www.bcwinaction.ca) 780-217-5185**



## **BCW Wellness Program**

This is the BCW's Mental and Social Wellness Initiative for Women. This program helps navigate physical and mental wellbeing of women and girls. This program has been essential for women and girls of our communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This program offers monthly webinar series' and workshops. The aim of the webinars is to equip black women in the community with tools to help effectively manage stress and manage their mental health during the COV-ID-19 crisis and beyond. Participants gain a better understanding of how mental health can affect their day to day lives and strategies to promote health and increase their wellbeing.

The workshops are informal and involve women from different communities and the topics are geared towards mental wellbeing.

## **Empowerment by Arts and Culture**

Empowerment by culture involves our women attending various workshops geared towards promoting all types of arts, in order to foster their creative side. This also includes engaging in activities such as dance, painting, sewing and other creative activities

## **Center for Wellbeing**

The Center for Wellbeing is a hub for black women and girls to come and learn skills applicable to their various interests, connect with other women and engage in activities that allow them to express themselves fully in all aspects of their undertakings. The Center will engage in the following:

counseling services, skills training, culinary art, fashion and beauty.

## **Black Girls Leadership**

BGL is a mentoring program matching Black girls (mentees), aged 16 to 19, with Black female professionals (mentors) to strengthen their leadership skills and provide them with a positive role model. This program addresses a need in western Canadian black communities by providing support to these mentees to help them to realize their skills and potential. The goal is for mentees to realize the importance of their contribution to Canadian society.

Mentees are paired with mentors who help them elaborate an action plan on what and how to look for the resources available for them in one or two areas of career interest. This ultimately establishes a contact with mentees and Black women working in that field with experience. This helps mentees determine if this is a correct career path, and they can see a Black woman in their field of interest and self-actualize themselves in that particular field.

## **Black Girls Corner**

BGC creates the opportunity of social participation while promoting inclusion for visible minority Black girls, aged 12 to 15, through learning and sharing culture and heritage. These youth have limited or no exposure to arts and cultural heritage in the city. This exposure allows the transferring of knowledge and history from one generation to another while shaping identity, values and aspiration. This opportunity facilitates skill development and enhanced confidence and wellbeing as there is a stronger connection to the cultural and heritage of

the city.

As culture and heritage promotes identity, BCW in Action believes through learning and engagement there would be more insight in cultural differences, while highlighting similarities and breaking down barriers that exist for the youth. Education is the door to success, while accessibility is the key to empowerment by art and culture is granting access to communities to engagement and learning.

## **Inner Child Series**

ICS combines different crafts and arts to bring value to minority and black children aged 6 to 11. Literature, dance and painting are used to convey powerful messages to our young audience about self-esteem and leadership. The program covers many topics such as identity, bullying, self-esteem and self-confidence. At the end of this series, the children should have developed a greater awareness of art combined with self-love, self-esteem, self-care and awareness about other cultures. This program encourages participants to challenge the way they speak and think about themselves by cultivating a better relationship with their inner voice.

The children have the opportunity to develop and enjoy artistic activities. Through play they will discuss some of their accomplishments and challenges at school and in the community. Talking about self-awareness and leadership gives them the awareness and basic tools to navigate life. This program provides meaningful activities for the children, while providing respite for parents who need rest after a long week, or a bit of time to run errands.



# DICKSON MONEY MATTERS WITH MAIDEN

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Make no mistake, nobody ever got rich by saving money. When I think about building wealth, it helps to see it as an equation:

Wealth = Income - Investments - Lifestyle. Wealth grows when we put our money to work. For example, buying assets like stocks and shares or buying real estate appreciates in value over time.

### Should I keep my savings account?

Savings accounts are not good for building long-term wealth. This is because inflation - the cost of living keeps increasing daily. However, investing, by contrast, allows you to increase the buying power of your money to account for inflation. When you think of how to balance saving and investing, this might sound difficult, but when you put down your incomes and expenses on paper as a financial plan it is easy.

### Apps like Every Dollar Can Help You Plan

Having financial goals will help you to stay disciplined and it helps to have a consistent review every 6 months. Apps like Every Dollar can also help with your budgeting and money planning management.

### Practical Steps to Take

Start by building an Emergency Fund or an Opportunity fund, while paying down your debts. If money is tight and you have \$200 total to commit towards your financial goals.

\$100 of that will go towards cash reserves for emergencies and the other \$100 should go towards long-term investments. Just \$100 a month is a good start to the healthy habit of saving for your family.

### Develop a System

Make a point to always spend less than you make. Build and increase your knowledge of money and finances.

Increase your value by closing the gap in your knowledge arsenal. You don't have because you don't know. Make sure you are always adding value to your workplace, customers and stakeholders. Remember, value sells. Consistency, diligence and excellence are keys that can open major doors. Ask yourself, what value are you contributing or bringing to the table? People only pay for value.

### The Final Word

Discipline plays a big factor in creating wealth, sometimes people are scared to ask for help from financial professionals. Don't make your ego drive you into poverty, ask for help and find mentors to educate, inspire you.

[www.dicksonmaiden.com](http://www.dicksonmaiden.com)

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## Spotlight



Ubaka Ogbogu is an Associate Professor in the Faculties of Law and Pharmacy, Pharmaceutical Sciences and the Katz Research Fellow in Health Law and Science Policy, at the University of Alberta. Dr. Ogbogu is a recipient of the Confederation of Alberta Faculties Association Distinguished Academic Early Career Award. He holds a doctorate in law from the University of Toronto, a

Masters of Laws degree from the University of Alberta and undergraduate degree in law from the University of Benin, Nigeria and the Nigerian Law School. He teaches and researches in the areas of health law and science policy studies, law and bioethics, legal history of science/medicine, pharmacy law and ethics and the law of torts.

# Prof. Ubaka Ogbogu

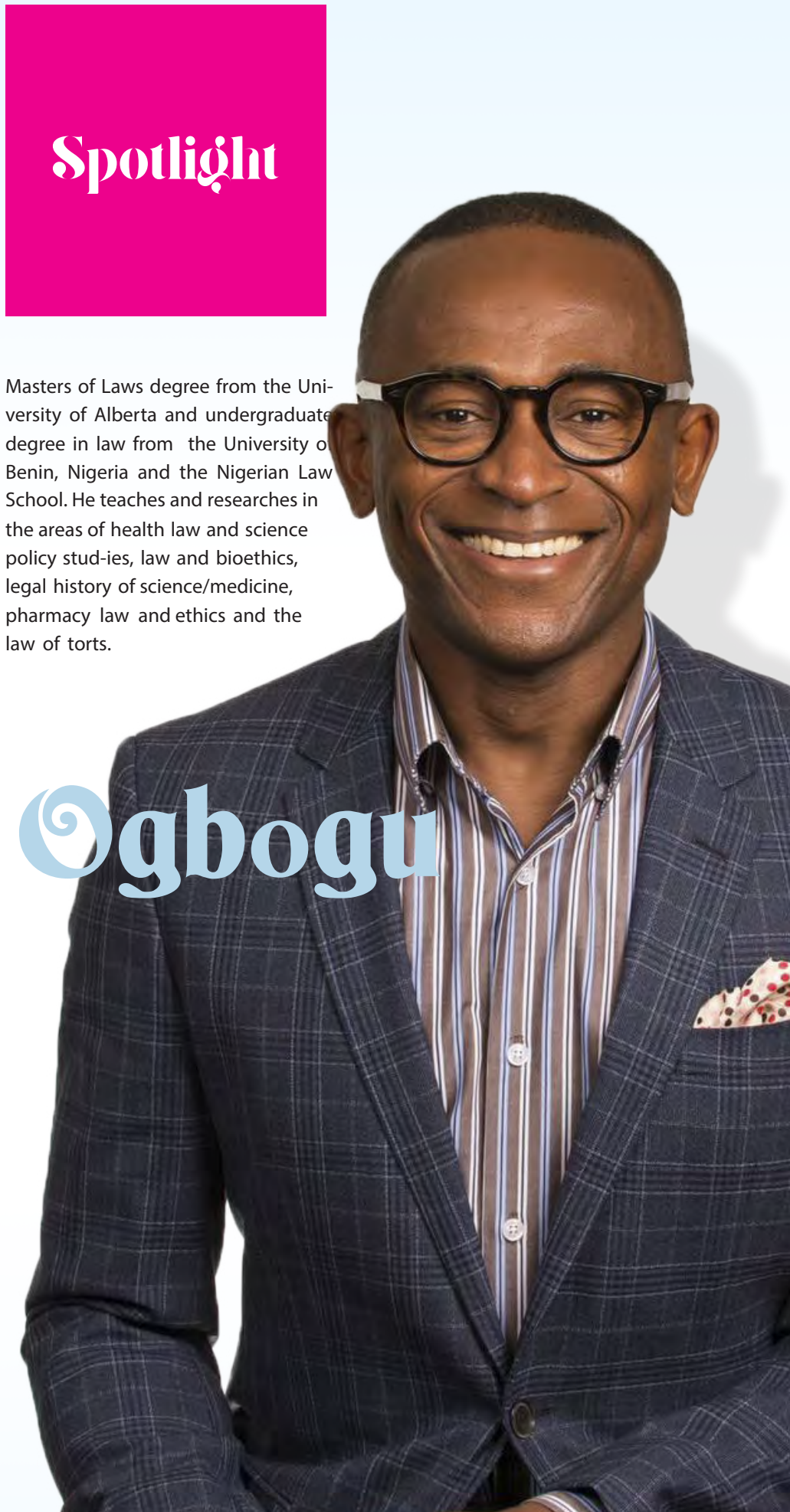
He previously taught at the Universities of Nigeria, York and Minnesota. His academic publications have appeared in numerous law and science journals, including Health Law Journal, Stem Cell, Nature Biotechnology, EMBO Reports, Regenerative Medicine, Canadian Medical Association Journal, Canadian Pharmacists Journal.

### Tell us about yourself?

I am a legal academic who resides in Edmonton with my wife, Gift and our 2 daughters.

### Why did you study law?

I never really wanted to so I don't have a why. I kind of stumbled into it. My initial choice was Classics.



**Would you say black men are incentivized to achieve by this community?**

I tend not to think of blackness as a thing that attaches to just men and their incentives. The black body exists in many different forms, and we see and share incentives in common and different ways. If my answer sounds convoluted, it is because I don't really understand the question

**Is there a parallel between the End SARS movement in Nigeria and the Black Lives Matter Movement?**

Yes, police brutality is a common de-nominator.

**How did you maintain a semblance of balance during covid 19? You are vocal on Twitter- Why did you choose Twitter as a platform?**

I find balance in taking each day as it comes. I have an introverted side, and it has helped me a lot during this pandemic. It helps that I have a family I absolutely love spending time with. As for Twitter, is there anyone who is not on it? It is a good way to engage with the issues of the day and i enjoy engaging with the issues of the day.

**Do University professors experience racism?**

I can't answer for university professors in general, but I have experienced racism and I am sure others have as well, particularly academics who are Indigenous, Black or other persons of color.

**Why should Nigerians get more involved in community matters in Edmonton?**

Because they are Edmontonians and we owe it to ourselves to be part of building and maintaining our community.

**What are your plans for Christmas?**

I don't celebrate Christmas. I plan to spend the time hanging out with my family, reading, and cross-country skiing.

**Are you looking forward to 2021? Why?**

Of course. Every new year is special because it marks a new beginning. After the events of 2020, a reset would be nice. Hopefully we get one.

**What books are you reading now?**

Alex S. Vitale, The End of Policing, and David Van Reybrouck, Congo: The Epic History of a People

**Yeah I am immensely proud of the various accomplishments Edmonton.**



# Stay balanced and safe this holiday season

*by Mary Thomas*

The festive season 2020 is on us. Navratri, Diwali, Gurparab, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, wanzaa, New Year's when we spend time with family and friends enjoying old traditions and creating new ones. Many of those traditions involve food. This year we have an uninvited guest COVID-19 to contend with. After months of isolation, many families view the holidays as both an

opportunity for relief and a cause for concern. FYI: The COVID-19 virus is not taking a break. Keep up with all safety precautions, both for you and for those around you, to ensure that you enjoy a truly healthy holiday season.

A few tips to keep you and your family healthy during this unusual holiday season.

## **Safety first**

The pandemic is not over. To minimize your chances of contracting or spreading the virus, everyone should continue to follow the basic guidelines we've got used to:

Wear a mask (except when eating).  
Stay at least six feet away from other people.

**Wash your hands frequently.**

Additional guidelines for safe gatherings during the holidays:

Limit get-togethers to people from no more than three households.

Keep events to under two hours.

If possible, hold gatherings outdoors.

Avoid singing and loud talking.

Take socially distanced photographs

If you're feeling unwell or have any concerns about the safety of an event you're considering, stay home. It's better to be cautious than to risk unnecessary exposure to COVID-19.

**Schedule**

Holidays are about food, no matter how you celebrate them. Maintaining a routine and planning ahead can help your family strike a balance between having healthy meals and enjoying the occasional indulgence.

Involve children in shopping and preparing meals and snacks. This gives them a sense of ownership and pride as people comment on their delectable culinary creations. This is especially helpful for picky eaters.

Stick to your normal meal times to limit the graze-and-grab style of eating that can creep in when there's lots of food around. Set up innovative holiday traditions that are not based on food. A daily family walk to look at holiday decorations, board-game night, a creative way to get each member light the candles—activities like these move

the attention away from food as you build long-lasting memories.

Be realistic about food choices.

Let kids have their special foods, but fill in with healthy snacks they could prepare themselves. A bowl of chopped fruit or vegetables with nuts sprinkled on top can appeal to children get them to do the chopping, peeling, or sprinkling themselves.

Include lots of vegetables and fruits in your meals. They are not only nourishing but add a vibrant splash of color to the table.

If you know you'll be busy with holiday preparations, set aside a plate of healthy foods like fruit, nuts, and yogurt in advance. Then you'll have something quick and nutritious to reach for when you're hungry.

**Be kind to others**

Unemployment resulting from the coronavirus pandemic has pushed many people to the edge of their ability to cope, and food insecurity is now the reality in many households. Consider volunteering with your family at a food pantry or soup kitchen to help distribute food or serve meals.

Be aware that holiday eating can be stressful for people with chronic conditions such as diabetes or celiac disease. Ask your guests if they have any food restrictions so that you can have appropriate food available for them. They will be grateful and you'll feel great.

If anyone in your family has a chronic condition that affects what they

can eat, let the hosts know in advance so that your whole family can enjoy the celebration. Don't be shy about this—your hosts will appreciate your telling them.

**Be kind to yourself.**

Stay active. This can be your most effective stress-reduction tool any time of the year but especially during the holidays. Take time to relax. Go for a walk. Meditate. Read a book.

Recognize that taking care of yourself is an act of giving. It will enrich your experience of your holiday. Be a role model for your family in self-care. Take time to rest, digest and enjoy everything calmly, in moderation.

For many of us, the holiday season is when we forget about healthy lifestyle goals, we usually set for ourselves. For me, it's all about balance and ensuring your healthy life is manageable and sustainable all year round which means indulgence, parties, good holiday food and fun times.

Deprivation is not a good idea. Enjoy Christmas treats. Deprivation often leads to overeating or binge-eating. We have to learn to eat with moderation and mindfulness, instead.

Remember: holiday meals don't have to leave you feeling stuffed, lethargic and unhealthy. Especially because there are so many tasty, wholesome alternatives to festive food. Prepare healthy versions of your favourite treats.



# Tips for fun and healthy holidays

by Mary Thomas

- Start your day with 10 minutes of movement - a walk-in nature, a quick HIIT workout or a morning yoga flow.
- Arriving at a party hungry is never a good idea. Try your best to eat some fruit/nuts before an event. Drink a big glass of water with fresh lemon before your event.
- Cook up a healthy sweet treat for friends and family. This will inspire friends and family and prove how delicious healthy food can taste.
- Take deep breaths before your meal and remind yourself: the food is not going anywhere. You can eat more later or tomorrow. You do not have to eat

EVERYTHING now.

- Make the best food choices available to you. Replace the fried and sugary options for fresher, grilled options instead.
- Ensure half your plate of food is greens and veggies. You and your stomach will feel good.
- Enjoy the proteins during the meal to keep you full and satiated.
- Try to have a balanced plate of food good fats, protein, healthy carbohydrates (low GI and gluten-free if possible) as well as veggies.
- Drink wisely. Enjoy 2- alcoholic drinks if you wish, and choose

red wine or gin, vodka or whiskey with soda water and fresh lemon for a healthier option.

- Give yourself permission to enjoy unhealthy treats you crave in a moderate amount eat with mindfulness and joy Remember you will be going back to eating well tomorrow.
- Feeling stuffed? Take a 20-minute walk after a big meal to digest.
- Enjoy some hot water with lemon or peppermint tea post meal.

Everything in moderation, and there's a perfect balance in this life if we can find it. And enjoy a memorable festive season 2020.



# Beauty & BUSINESS

*with Queen Aiyie*

## **Tell us a little about yourself**

I am Aiyie. I am an accountant by profession and a professional makeup artist. I am also an advocate of art and beauty. You can see my work in the fashion and beauty editorial pages of leading magazines such as Stylecruze, Fienfh, Surre-al Beauty and intElegance. I am an ambassador of some local brands here in Alberta. I am the Founder/Creator of AiyieOfficial (All Your Essentials - Lipstick Collection Face Cover, fashionable/stylish silk masks and futuristic visor face shield), ExploreFoodYeg (as a Food Stylist, I share my Recipes Food Tastings) and now I am launching my DriedBloomsbyAYE (dried flowers and grass).

## **How did your journey on Instagram begin?**

I began my account to share pictures because I was into pho-

tography at that time. I started to share my life, my story. I am always fascinated by the different pathways, people who are Jack of All Trades because they are as unique as I am. I have enjoyed and continue to love sharing my tasty kitchen, love for arts, beauty and all my passion. I devote myself to my Instagram account because of the intrinsic rewards. The reward is just a cherry on top and a blessing. My goal is to empower women to love their own skin and color. Everyone is beautiful and we can do all things if we put our time to doing it excellently. I began to hear God calling me to use my platform to share His love and truth. Now, sharing my spiritual strength is very high is my major motivation. I also love to use my platform to help others, p others,

whether it is for their business or simply to spread the word. My number one insight into Instagram success is enjoy the journey, for it is the greatest reward.

**You are a makeup artist and a business woman - how do you juggle life as wife and entrepreneur?**

Marriage is a full time job And being entrepreneur ,it can feel like an enterprise of its own. Having a work-life balance boils down to efficiency in managing and prioritizing time for yourself, your work and your family. There is no way I can do everything without my husband's endless support.

One of the great ways to enhance your relationships is to have quality time and this is why we have scheduled weekly date nights. . Maintain a direct line of communication with your spouse and a healthy work life balance and treat your spouse right. If you take the time to develop the right strategies in both your professional and personal lives, you can stay on the path of a happier life and marriage.

My responsibilities as a wife and a businesswoman are clear, crisp, and easily juggled through organization. I can't tell you how many times having a handwritten planner has saved me. Now I keep my two planners, one handwritten and one digital to keep myself organized.

**Marriage is a full time job! And being entrepreneur it can feel like an enterprise of its own. Having a work-life balance boils down to efficiency in managing and prioritizing time for yourself, your work and your family.**

I chose to stay positive and embrace changes. I focus on what we can control and filter what we read or hear on social media/news that can cause us fear and even panic. I find time to touch base with love ones, family and friends remembering we are all in this together. This mindset can be empowering and uplifting. I also maximize the use of social media since everyone is Online especially now that most people are Online. I teach an Online course and makeup tutorial to a group of ladies and friends during pandemic. Then I created my food account and it was a success in terms of growing organically. I am privileged to help a restaurant owner to open their business as their social media manager and promote their business. And I launched my business (AYE Official).

**How do you unwind from Instagram?**

How do you unwind from Instagram? We all need to relax from time to time. In everything we need to have self control. We need to stop if we need to. Scheduling your post is also a big help. Cooking is one of my therapy. I schedule a massage to pamper myself or even coffee or dinner with friends.



**Your new pages are doing well- what is the secret of success on Instagram?**

There is NO SECRET. While there is no one, magical secret to Instagram growth, I do have some genuinely tried and true ways to increase your following on Instagram and create a

**Engagement and interaction is everything. Spend time to answer all the comments, and dms. Also visit their pages and give some love.**

vibrant, engaged community. Stay true to yourself, be real with your followers, be authentic, kind and friendly.

Be consistent as much as possible. I post once daily and learn to know your insights (where you will know what time your followers are active). Consistency is a must. You need to consistently create cohesive looking feed, so people will not get confused and people know why or what they are following. Also, good quality photos is one of the keys to success on Instagram. However, you should take note of the types of photos you're posting, try to keep it fresh and of high quality. Engagement is also important. Engagement and interaction is

everything. Spend time to answer all the comments, and dms. Also visit their pages and give some love. If you want engaged followers, you have to engage back. You must be willing to give, give, give before you receive. Build a relationship. Be friendly, if you want to make friends, be a friend. That's the power of social media we can make a lot of friends around the world.

**It's almost Christmas. What are your plans for Christmas?**

I will have a bazaar at Glow Edmonton so please visit us there. What is Glow? Over 90,000 feet of family fun as you stroll through the million twinkly lights in their light gardens. This year's theme is Santa's Sleigh Transportation Adventure But of course, we take extra precautions as per covid-19 protocols to ensure a safe and enjoyable holiday season experience. I look forward to seeing all of you as you celebrate Christmas with us.

**Can you share with us a favourite Christmas recipe?**

Ofcourse, I love to share my recipes and I'm actually working on my cookbook. I'm sharing my colorful and simple Celebration Meatloaf. Here is my very best Christmas Meatloaf.



# My Tasty Kitchen – Christmas Meat Loaf

*Aiyie Lim-Valdez*

Meatloaf made from ground meat. It can be eaten cold or fried dipped in tomato ketchup or sweet chili sauce.

## Ingredients

- 1 pound ground beef or ground chicken
- 2 pieces raw egg
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- 1 carrot - shredded
- 1 onion - diced
- 1 green bell pepper - diced
- 1 red bell pepper - diced
- 1/2 cup sweet pickle relish
- 2 tablespoons tomato sauce or ketchup
- 2/3 cup raisins (optional)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 6 pieces vienna sausage or hotdogs
- 2 hard-boiled eggs each cut into 4

## Instructions

- Put all ingredients, except the last 2 in a large bowl.
- Mix everything together using a spatula to make sure that all is well incorporated. Set aside.
- Cut 2 pieces of aluminum foil about 12 inches long each. Take half of the meat mixture and flatten it on the foil, covering about a half. Don't forget to leave some space at the ends, about 2 inches each side.
- Place the sausages and hard boiled eggs on the middle of the flattened meat.
- Roll the foil so that the meat forms a cylinder or log, locking the sausage and egg in the center. Twist the ends of the foil to lock.
- Steam for 50-60 minutes.



# Mental Health and the Modern Man

by *Tayo El-Nathan*



“**W**hat mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, and more unashamed conversation. Glenn Close.

Mental health issues are issues that affect the entire family, the entire family must be involved in sustaining a lasting solution. Tayo El-Nathan. The lack of discussion and awareness of mental health issues affecting the lives of our men especially during this pandemic season is baffling. There is a lot of talk about women, women of color, but not a lot of support for men and especially men of color. They say the reason this is so is because men are at the fore front of business, politics and economy so therefore, they are not considered

vulnerable. However, what also happens is that majority of the violent crimes perpetuated against women are done by men, men who are not considered vulnerable but are known as aggressors and perpetrators. Sometimes, it is when these men are apprehended that their mental health issues are diagnosed. It is often too late by then. There is also the flip side of the coin, of hardworking men, men who are just trying to make a living and especially men of color who have come to North America in their midlife and have to deal with mid-life crises while raising a family, earn a living and settle down. This is a recipe for mental health crises whether it be depression, addictions

or excessive anger.

It is important to define what a mental health crisis is because, of the stigma related to it.

Mental health means every aspect of your mind, reasoning, and logic. It does not necessarily mean that once you have a mental-health crisis you have gone mad or you have lost your mind. It's important to note that mental health issues are wide and encompassing and we as a people and as men should begin the discussion that these issues are real and that they exist.

Once, we can come to this moment of truth then we address the needful because you see, mental health is as important as taking care of the rest of your body.



# EL-NATHAN

# taryo



the modern man, we need to come away from some of the macho assumptions that has led to the unnecessary stigma especially within the immigrant community. Having a mental health moment does not mean you are crazy, but not addressing it will make you crazy. Everyone has issues, everyone needs to take into consideration their mental health state. We are going through a pandemic for goodness sakes, these are unprecedented times. Children have issues, women have mental health issues and so does men. In putting

together is piece, Let's come away from this mentality that the modern man is sacrosanct and untouched by the happenings going on. Away from the mentality that men who are physically strong are also mentally or that physical strength translates into mental strength.

Let's come away from the standpoint that it is weakness to admit failure or weakness to ask for help.

Let's come away from the standpoint that no one, is able to advise us. True, the man is the master of his universe and the commander of all he

surveys, - the greatest men still listen to their wives or to someone. Who are you listening to. Who is in your support circle. Do you have a support circle?

Let's not buy into the status quo that it is weakness to seek help when a man is no longer able to handle the pressures, he is under.

Let's address the fact that substances (alcohol, smoking, recreational drugs, pornography, gambling), while they produce temporary release and relief, is not the answer to the problem. Let's agree that there is no help



in the bottle, smoke or syringe.

When we can admit and come to the place of total honesty and we are unashamed about the way we feel, our failures, our fears and our shortcomings then are able to tackle and obtain solution for the problem.

The fact is that most immigrant men are not used to been told or been talked to.

Most immigrant men are not used to admitting there is a problem.

It is important to know the signs of mental health especially in men

According to the National institute of Mental Health, - Men and women can develop most of the same mental disorders and conditions but may experience different symptoms. Some symptoms include: Anger, irritability, or aggressiveness Noticeable changes in mood, energy level, or appetite. Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much, difficulty concentrating, feeling restless or on the edge.

Increased worry or feeling stressed  
Misuse of alcohol and/or drugs  
Sadness or hopelessness  
Suicidal thoughts  
Feeling flat or having trouble feel-

ing positive emotions

Engaging in high-risk activities

Aches, headaches, digestive problems without a clear cause

Obsessive thinking or compulsive behavior

Thoughts or behaviors that interfere with work, family, or social life

Unusual thinking or behaviors that concern other people.

There is good news and hope. Mental health issues can be mitigated.

There are lots of ways to handle the mental health struggle and below are some ways that may be used in addition to professional medical help.

**Visiting your doctor** and be candid and thorough in explaining the problem. Remember there is no shame in seeking for help. Remember what is at stake. Your entire family is counting on you.

**Do what your doctor says.** Follow the course of treatment to the end.

**Guard your mind** The mind is the seat of knowledge, invention and

**Tayo El-Nathan hosts a weekly show (sharing your stories) on FBLive every Tuesday @7pm MST.**

**email- [tayo.elnathan@lccmediafoundation.ca](mailto:tayo.elnathan@lccmediafoundation.ca)**

creation and it needs to be guarded. We put our cars in garages to protect them, we put our money in the bank for safe keeping, we insure our house, buy house alarm to protect the contents of our home but we forget to protect the most important of all. OUR MINDS.

### **Prioritize protecting your mind**

how do you do this?

Stop the negative thoughts listen to uplifting messages, sermons, pod-casts and talks.

Be Intentional about what you let affect you - being intentional means having a plan, a filter and a method of processing ideas, thoughts and emotions.

now that you are not alone, there is nothing that you are going through that is new in this world.

If you are that over-burdened, you may want to consider talking to someone, go for therapy, a friend, a pastor, a spiritual leader, God through prayer.

Listen to music.

The statistics are depressing, and the prognosis may be grim, but if you are reading this article, you can make a change in your life and the lives of men around you for the better. You don't have to be a statistic. You can make the difference in the life of another man. Typically, men respond better to other men, if you are reading this article, this is a call to action. Reach out to the men in your circle. Don't leave another brother in isolation.

Be intentional about supporting the men in your reach.

Remember men carry the burden of the family, so a struggling man is a struggling family.

In conclusion, it also takes a village to make a man. Lets support one another.



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# COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## BASIC NEEDS

Edmonton's Food Bank	780-425-4190
Government of Alberta	
Alberta Supports Centre (info line)	1-877-644-9992
Alberta Works - Income Support / Employment Information	
- City Centre (105th Street Office)	780-415-4900
- North (Northgate Centre)	780-422-9440
- South (Millwood's Town Centre Mall)	780-644-2888
- West (Meadowlark) 780-415-8116	
Emergency Income Support (24/7)	780-644-5135
Hope Mission - Women's Emergency Shelter	780-422-2018
Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre	780-423-5302
Money Mentors	1-888-294-007

## FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Family Violence Prevention Centre	780-423-1635
Domestic Violence Complainant Program	780-422-0721
Edmonton Violence Prevention Centre	
Changing Pathways	780-439-4635
(group for adults who are/have been abusive to their partners)	
Edmonton Women's Shelter Limited	
(women with or without children; 24/7)	780-479-0058
Government of Alberta - Family Violence Info Line	310-1818
Islamic Family and Social Services Association	780-430-9220
The Shaama Centre for Seniors and Women	780-465-2992
The TODAY Family Violence Help Centre.	780-455-6880
Edmonton Community Legal Centre	780-702-1725
Government of Alberta	<a href="http://www.rcas.alberta.ca">www.rcas.alberta.ca</a>
Dispute Resolution - Family Mediation	780-427-8329
Maintenance Enforcement Program	780-422-5555
Resolution Services - Information Program	780-638-4747
Law Society of Alberta	<a href="http://www.lawsociety.ab.ca">www.lawsociety.ab.ca</a>
The Family Centre - Edmonton	780-424-6103
Alberta Supports Centre	1-877-644-9992
Edmonton's Food Bank	
Beyond Food	780-425-2133
The Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton	
Work for Women Employment Program	780-784-220



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