



# PROGRAM

September 22, 2023  
Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia  
Cherry Brook





## About the Venue

*The Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia is the destination for the discovery of African Nova Scotian Culture and Heritage.*

*Established in 1983 by the Black Cultural Society of Nova Scotia led by Rev. Dr. William Pearly Oliver, the Centre has a mandate to protect, preserve and promote a unique history that spans well over 400 years in this province. The Centre is the first and largest museum dedicated to Black History and the African Nova Scotian legacy in Canada.*

*The Centre is a community operated, government funded provincial museum and cultural centre that welcomes patrons of all ages, year-round to discover an important part of Nova Scotia's and Canada's diverse history.*

*Nova Scotia has over 52 historic Black communities that go back several generations, making Nova Scotia the birthplace of Black culture and heritage in Canada. The history of African Nova Scotians reaches back to the early founding years of the province of Nova Scotia. Many of today's communities can trace their origins to centuries ago, when Nova Scotia held the promise of a better life for people of African descent.*

# Youth Ambassadors

Nia Summit Youth Ambassadors consist of a group of 12 high school students and recently graduated high school students as of the 2022/2023 school year, from across the province. The Youth Ambassadors worked tirelessly throughout the summer planning, organizing, promoting and now hosting the Nia Summit. From designing the logo, to facilitating orientation with volunteers, choosing food vendors, and more, the roles of the Youth Ambassadors include Workshop Coordinators, Volunteer Coordinators, Social Media Coordinators, Tech/AV Coordinators, Food and Beverage Coordinators and Treasurers.



**Dasia Abbey** is one of our Nia Summit Treasurers, as well as the Panel Moderator. She is a 10th Grade student at Cobequid Educational Centre in Truro. There, she was one of five students with the highest marks for the Pascal Contest of the University of Waterloo. Dasia is also a back-to-back BEA Provincial Spelling Bee winner from 2022-23.



**Moriah Aladejebi** is one of our Nia Summit Social Media Coordinators. She loves graphic design and is the creator of our beautiful Nia Summit logo. Moriah is a previous volleyball provincial champion and made student of the year in 8th Grade. Moriah is currently in 10th Grade at Sackville High School where she is active on the Students' Council.

**Diliora Azuka-Onwuka** is one of our Nia Summit Tech and AV Coordinators. He is a Grade 12 student at Halifax West High School. Diliora was a Minister of Halifax West's Student Media and Technology Group Warriors Live and Technology. He is one of the Vice-Presidents of the student government for the next academic year.

**Jorja-Rain Cain** is one of our Nia Summit Workshop Coordinators. She is a Grade 12 student at Auburn Drive High School. Jorja is a volunteer with the Women with a Vision organization and helps organize events like North Preston Day, and The Peace Tournament.

## Youth Ambassadors *(cont.)*



**Keira Grady** is one of our Nia Summit Food and Beverage Coordinators. She recently graduated from Dartmouth High School and is currently studying at Acadia University. Keira has been involved in community events as a leader and works closely with the PREP Academy. She has been team captain for sports teams and has lots of skills in coordinating events and getting involved with the community.



**Princess Okorie** is one of our Nia Summit Tech and AV Coordinators. She is a Grade 12 student at Woodlawn High School. Princess has worked at and participated in programs at the MacPhee Center for Creative Learning including *Rhythm and Rights* where she engaged in conversations and learned about human rights. She wants to help others be aware of their human rights and learn more as well.



**Praise Babalola** is one of our Nia Summit Food and Beverage Coordinators. Praise graduated from Dartmouth High School in 2023 as an A+ student and is now studying Computer Science at Dalhousie University. He loves track and field and was a Provincial Finalist in 2023.



**Nathan Tesfazion** is one of our Nia Summit Volunteer Coordinators and a Youth Panelist. He graduated from École Secondaire Mosaïque Class of 2023 as an IB student, was the Student Council President and member of the Black Excellence Committee. Nathan likes to play soccer and has been a part of Soccer Nova Scotia's provincial teams.





**Jayreece Whiley** is one of our Nia Summit Treasurers and a Youth Panelist. Jayreece graduated this year as the Class of 2023 Valedictorian at Charles P. Allen High. He received the Charles P. Allen Principal's Award, which is granted to students with high involvement in and out of school and has performed spoken word poetry at various community events including for the Halifax Regional Centre for Education.



**Nevaeh O'Connell** is one of our Nia Summit Social Media Coordinators. She is a Grade 12 student at Armbrae Academy. Nevaeh recently completed her second year of the "Prefect" position, which is the highest role of leadership there is at Armbrae. In this role she was responsible for representing the school and student body at various events, being a mentor to lower elementary classes and planning monthly activities for students and community. She has also helped organize Black History Month events.



**Linden Chambers** is one of our Nia Summit Volunteer Coordinators. Linden recently graduated from Charles P. Allen High School and has been involved in leadership roles such as mentoring elementary school students. Linden has also been involved in community work with the Lions Club and the North Preston Bulls basketball teams.



**Joshua Paris** is one of our Nia Summit Workshop Coordinators. He graduated in 2023 as Valedictorian at Halifax West High School and is now attending Dalhousie University studying Medical Sciences. Josh plays three sports, contributed to the winning of the boys' soccer team Division 1 Provincial Championship, and was named Male Athlete of the Year in high school.

# NIA Summit Elder



## Ms. Louise Delisle

Ms. Delisle contributions to human rights in Nova Scotia cannot be understated, not only through her ground-breaking work as founder of SEED (South End Environmental Injustice Society) and as an outspoken advocate addressing environmental racism in Shelburne's Black community but also as an educator, playwright, published author of *Back Talk: Plays of Black Experience*, and respected African Nova Scotian community leader. Founded in early 2016, SEED is a Black-led non-profit society and direct grassroots response to the siting of a landfill near Shelburne's African Nova Scotian and working-poor community and is a volunteer effort to address issues of environmental racism. SEED was awarded a 2018 Nova Scotia Human Rights award for work addressing environmental concerns in the African Nova Scotian community. In 2019 and 2020 SEED made international news with the release of "There's Something in The Water", a documentary by director Elliot Page, co-directed with Ian Daniels, based on the book by Dr. Ingrid Waldron. To improve access to clean drinking water in her community Louise has initiated extensive water testing in partnership with Rural

Water Watch, advocated successfully for the creation of a community well in partnership with NSCC and funding partners, installed UV treatment and filtration systems on homes in the Black community with contaminated water in partnership with LUSH Canada and participated in numerous interviews, documentaries, and research projects. Recently Louise has been working with Dr. Ingrid Waldron, Professor, Faculty of Humanities, HOPE Chair in Peace & Health, McMaster University and Juliet Daniel, Professor, Department of Biology, McMaster University on a new study examining the links between the dump in Shelburne and cancer rates which cites that "Much of the motivation for the study comes from the work of local activist Louise Delisle, who has gone door-to-door in her community to catalogue cases of cancer, both recent and historical."

In addition to Louise's work as a member of SEED, she has also been involved on various boards and advisory committees, locally and across Canada. Louise Delisle was the winner of the Queens Platinum Jubilee Medal for extensive community work.

# Hosting Partners



## Black Cultural Centre

On behalf of the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia, I want to extend a warm welcome to all Nia Summit attendees and offer best wishes for a successful Summit! We feel so privileged to be able to host this important event, and it is my hope that you come away from today encouraged and inspired.

By attending the Nia Summit here at the Black Cultural Centre, you are participating in a long history of coming together within these walls to energize, celebrate, and organize. In the 40 years since the opening of the BCC, the Centre has played a key role in the origin stories of countless community leaders, and I am confident in saying this: with you, our future – and present - is in good hands.

*Russell Grosse*  
Executive Director



## Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Creating opportunities for African Nova Scotian/Black youth to come together in discussion on topics that matter to them is an important part of addressing anti-Black racism in Nova Scotia. It is my pleasure to welcome delegates to the Nia Summit taking place at the Black Cultural Centre in the historic African Nova Scotian community of Cherry Brook. I would like to recognize the incredible work of the Summit's Youth Ambassadors, whose leadership and collaborative approach to planning today's event has ensured this space has been designed with their peers in mind. At the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, we honour the legacies of African Nova Scotian/Black community leaders whose commitment to combatting discrimination is foundational to the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act and Commission*. By understanding this connection to our history and fostering young leaders we nurture seeds of change in the spirit of Sankofa. We will continue to approach this work in partnership and hope for a future without anti-Black racism.

*Joseph Frasier*  
Director and CEO

# Hosting Partner



## Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute (DBDLI)

***The wind does not break a tree that bends.***

*- African proverb*

I want to acknowledge the leadership of the group of Youth Ambassadors who have shaped this Summit and ensured youth voices are prominent in all of its aspects. I witnessed the demonstration of being firmly rooted in knowledge and resolve. I experienced humility and the ability to lean in and embrace multiple perspectives and values.

I know that all Nia Summit attendees will experience a purpose-filled day of learning and growth through the various workshop offerings, the reflection sharing from the film, *Speak It! From the Heart of Black Nova Scotia*, and just being amongst themselves.

I am thrilled that Delmore “Buddy” Daye Learning Institute (DBDLI) has been an active partner of the Nia Summit. The Nia Summit advances our principles of Africentricity and our values of Ubuntu through centering our community voices and ensuring that we succeed in focusing on each other’s humanity.

I close with a Zulu greeting - *Sawubona*, meaning *I see you, you are important to me, and I value you.*

*Sylvia Parris-Drummond, CEO*



# The Meaning of NIA

Nia is the fifth principle of the Nguzo Saba and means 'purpose'. It refers to the collective purpose of the Black community to uplift one another, and to build toward a future that benefits all Black people. For our Summit, Nia refers to the purpose of building that future by uplifting the voices of Black youth.

Nia is often depicted by the Egyptian hieroglyph Nefer which represents *"perfect, complete, beautiful, pleasant, good"*.



## Purpose of Summit

People of African descent have been leading the fight for racial justice and social equity in Nova Scotia for over 400 years. Immense contributions have been made by community leaders, organizations, and the communities at large. These efforts have led to the creation of many community organizations that continue to mobilize and create opportunities for collective progress. The self-determination (Kujichagulia), collective work and responsibility (Ujima) of the Black community in Nova Scotia have and continue to lead the national fight against anti-Black racism and social justice. The youth perspective in addressing anti-Black racism and social injustice is an important and relevant one. Their voices must be brought to the forefront, it must be done with purpose (Nia) and spaces must be created to echo those voices across our society – the Nia Summit is one such space to begin this journey into a better future and tomorrow.

An African proverb reminds us that *if you want to move mountains tomorrow you must start by lifting stones today*. The Nia Summit is a space for youth to be inspired by their peers, express their passions and use them to engage with world issues, develop confidence in their ideas and future views for the betterment of society. The Nia Summit supports the establishment of new connections, collaborations, friendships and the creation of tools and opportunities for youth to engage. Finally, to instill cultural pride and empowerment within those youth through leadership and opportunities for self-discovery.

The theme, *Equal in Dignity and Rights: Anti-Black Racism from a youth perspective*, borrows from Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – *"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood"*.

*"I am passionate about self-advocacy and supporting others. Striving to create a society where all Black students can be afforded equal opportunities is something that I want to be a part of. I also feel that helping to organize this summit has been a great environment for likeminded Black youth to network, connect, and learn about each other's experiences."*

*- Joshua Paris, Nia Summit Youth Ambassador*

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*"I want to grow relationships with Black youth and learn about their experiences to see how they differ from mine as a 2nd generation Canadian." "If I want to see the change, then I should be part of it!"*

*- Moriah Aladejebi, Nia Summit Youth Ambassador*

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*"As African Nova-Scotian students, there are a lot of ways in which we are different from one another. We are all different yet the same and as a Black youth with a different lens, having lived both in West Africa and Canada, I can help represent someone who would have a similar background as I."*

*- Princess Okorie, Nia Summit Youth Ambassador*

*"This being a summit on such a valued topic put on by students for the benefit of other students is unusual but incredible. Being a Black young female in this world there are times when I am faced with discrimination, prejudice and assumptions. As a young person, I realize I have a voice and many platforms to create solution-based initiatives to create equal and equitable opportunities for any human being. There is strength in numbers and there are so many brilliant youth able to make change in this world and anything I can do to be a part of this change would be very special. Having had an opportunity to help organize the Nia Summit, it was my hope to make it inclusive, and fun, and to create relationships in which we can change this world to become more equitable. I want to encourage more youth to use their talents and voices to foster this change."*

*- Nevaeh O'Connell, Nia Summit Youth Ambassador*

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*"I wanted to help with the Nia Summit because I'm from the Preston communities and want to get involved with more events that will help influence equality."*

*- Jorja-Rain Cain, Nia Summit Youth Ambassador*

***“I want to connect with the community and have something for them so they can be able to believe in themselves that they can do anything they want, and I want to have something for them to relate to.”***

- Linden Chambers, Nia Summit Youth Ambassador

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***“As I often struggled feeling welcomed as one of the only Black students in my school, I make it my goal to make sure everyone feels a part of something and has a sense of belonging.”***

- Nathan Tesfazion, Nia Summit Youth Ambassador

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***“The Nia Summit aims to empower and uplift young people, providing them with a platform to voice their opinions, ideas, and concerns. By organizing the summit, I have had the opportunity to contribute to a cause that directly benefits my peers and helps them make a positive impact in their communities. My involvement allows me to advocate for the issues that matter to me and be an active participant in the discussions.”***

- Keira Grady, Nia Summit Youth Ambassador

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***“The Nia Summit is an opportunity to be actively involved in shaping a better future and tomorrow for all people, particularly in addressing anti-Black racism and social injustice.”***

- Nwadiioramma Azuka-Onwuka, Nia Summit Youth Ambassador

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***“Through our involvement, we become advocates for positive change and champions for youth-driven solutions. Our contributions have the potential to inspire others and leave a lasting impact on local, national, and even global scales.”***

- Praise Babalola, Nia Summit Youth Ambassador

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***“I wanted to help with the Nia Summit because I’m from the Preston communities and want to get involved with more events that will help influence equality.”***

- Jorja-Rain Cain, Nia Summit Youth Ambassador

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***“I believe that the Nia Summit marks the inception of something truly phenomenal, something remarkable, something inherently positive, and undoubtedly impactful.”***

- Jayreece Whiley, Nia Summit Youth Ambassador

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# Keynote Speaker

Eve Wedderburn



## Eve Wedderburn

Eve Wedderburn is a 17-year old biracial female attending Dalhousie University this year. She is a member of their Medical Sciences undergraduate program and is fascinated by a vast palate of scientific wonders. Eve enjoys volunteering along with this, she has been involved in Environmental Racism and Women's Rights efforts and has voiced her opinion on these universal concepts. In addition, she spoke as Valedictorian to her graduating class and ensures to include her authentic self in all of her speeches to make them as engaging and interesting as possible.

# Workshop

## IMANI: Protest Poetry

*It takes faith  
to write  
authentic poetry*

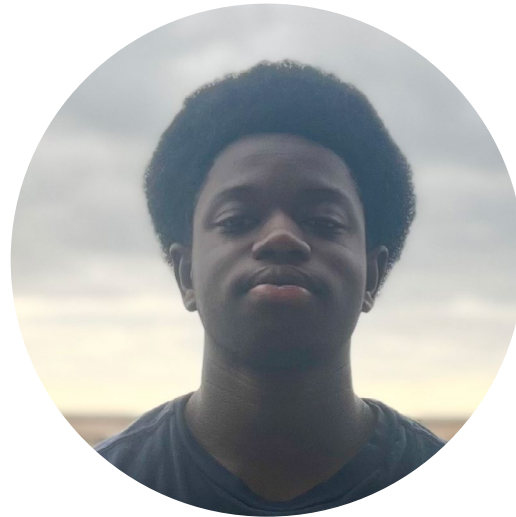
FACILITATED BY  
DAMINI AWOYIGA & IBRAHIM YAFFA

Welcome to IMANI: Protest Poetry! In our transformative workshop, we aim to inspire discussions on authentic and impactful poetry. Our focus is on empowering youth to use spoken word poetry as a tool to advocate for positive change. Poetry is an overlooked strength, one that does not see color or gender and allows the writer to express themselves in ways unlike any other. In our workshop, we will provide a safe space to channel thoughts into powerful verses. We hope that the Nia youth will learn the importance of poetry, techniques of articulation, challenge injustice and shed light on pressing issues in the form of protest poetry.



**Damini Awoyiga** is a 16-year-old high school student. She is an activist, spoken word poet and Halifax's Youth Poet Laureate. Damini is the founder of Damini Creatives and the Afro-Indigenous Book Club, a book club created to encourage young people to read books written by Black and Indigenous authors and to share the realities and experiences of Black and Indigenous Canadians. Damini was the Junior Artist in Residence for Wellness Within, a community organization working for reproductive justice, prison abolition and health equity; CBC's artist-in-residence for the Michaelle Jean Foundation's Canadian Black Summit held in July 2022, where she hosted an interactive community poetry booth; and a youth freelance journalist for CBC's Mainstreet. Damini has received multiple awards including the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal. As a spoken word poet for over five years, Damini loves to write, sing, and perform poems that bring attention to social justice issues.

<https://www.daminicreatives.com/>



**Ibrahim Yaffa** is a 17-year-old Sierra Leonean, born and raised in Halifax NS. While in high school Ibrahim accomplished many things. As Student Council president of his senior year, he organized events such as clothing and food drives, fundraising galas, and more. However the business did not take away from his studies as he graduated as valedictorian of his class. Ibrahim has been volunteering from a young age, first with the Sierra Leone Canadian Association (SLECA) as they raised money to combat Ebola, and later on with organizations such as Islamic Relief and Somali relief. Helping organize and coordinate a multitude of events to raise money for wells, food, and clothing for those in need around the world.

As a poet the first piece he performed was at the tender age of 11, which sparked a love for language and writing in him. Since then, Ibrahim has continued to write and perform at weddings, galas, festivals and many more. Through his spoken word Ibrahim wishes to convey meaningful messages, expressing emotion and bringing light to issues involving the Black community and society as a whole.



# Agenda for the Day

8:30AM - 9:30AM      **Continental Breakfast and Registration**

9:30AM - 9:45AM      **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

9:45AM - 10:00AM      **Remarks from Summit Elder**  
Ms. Louise Delisle

10:00AM - 10:10AM      **Singing of the Black National Anthem**  
Eriana Willis

10:10AM - 10:25AM      **Libation Ceremony**  
Nevaeh O'Connell - Nia Summit Youth Ambassador

10:25AM - 10:35AM      **Morning Introduction**  
Nia Summit Youth Ambassador MC's: Moriah Aladejebi,  
Praise Babalola, Joshua Paris

10:35AM - 11:15AM      **Film Screening - *Speak it! From the Heart of Black Nova Scotia***  
By Sylvia D. Hamilton (28 mins)

11:15AM - 12:00PM      **Panel Discussion**  
Nia Summit Youth Ambassadors and Original Cast of Speak It!  
**Moderated by:** Dasia Abbey - Nia Summit Youth Ambassador  
**Panelists:** Nathan Tesfazion, Jayreece Whiley, Shawn Grouse,  
Krista Brodie, Shingai Nyajeka



12:00PM - 1:00PM	<b>Lunch &amp; Performance by Studio 26</b>
1:00PM - 1:15PM	<b>Workshop Preview Session</b>
1:15PM - 3:00PM	<b>Breakout Sessions</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. IMANI: Protest Poetry with Damini Awoyiga and Ibrahim Yaffa</li> <li>2. Joy Through Movement with Roots of Creation</li> <li>3. Statements of Identity with iMOVE</li> </ol>
3:00PM - 3:20PM	<b>Afternoon Snacks and Reflection Sessions</b>
3:20PM - 4:00PM	<b>Keynote Address</b> Eve Wedderburn
4:00PM - 4:30PM	<b>Call to Action</b> Nia Summit Youth Ambassadors
4:30PM - 4:50PM	<b>Closing Remarks</b>
4:50PM - 5:00PM	<b>Drumming and Photo Booth – Staying Connected</b>

# Workshop

## Joy Through Movement

FACILITATED BY ROOTS OF CREATION

Joy through movement is a workshop that looks at how we as Black folk can turn our thoughts and feelings into movement and how we can find joy through using our voices that way. We will take you through a variety of dance exercises and dance creations allowing participants to find joy through moving and being in community!

### Roots of Creation

Roots of creation is an emerging collective currently made up of Black Nova Scotian artists and educators; we strive to provide Black and other BIPOC youth with alternative ways of learning about self and community through accessible arts training and experiences. The collective was founded in spring of 2022 and currently has three core founding members: Riel Reddick-Stevens (theatre artist and educator), Alondrea Johnston (arts organizer, community activist) and Brianna Willis (Educator, Student Researcher). The collective also has rotating collective members, who work with us once and a while to facilitate; this workshop will be facilitated by local artist Kiana Josette: African-Nova Scotian actor, discovered a passion for performing at a

young age. Kiana spent most of her summers traveling with a dance troupe, and her winters singing in a choir. Community, art, and compassion have always been the most important things to Kiana, and it shows through the work she does, her engagement and participation in various boards, and by advocating for other disabled, neurodivergent, BIPOC artists and young adults like herself. Starting in social media and marketing with small theatres after finishing her education at NSCC, Kiana has now stepped into the world of administration and producing with Halifax Theatre for Young People, while still continuing to help local theatres with marketing and communications.



# Workshop

## Statements of Identity

FACILITATED BY iMOVE



Statements of Identity explores the power of how individual sources of empowerment can impact society. Change begins at “home”. The things you believe about yourself can change the world.

### iMOVE

iMOVE is a nonprofit organization that has been a formal organization since 2013, but the unique programming iMOVE offers goes back much further and was pioneered by Executive Director Sobaz Benjamin using the arts for healing and self-expression, to enhance participants (including youth at risk) ability to make a living, and to develop their leadership skills.

iMOVE has been working on these programs for many years, but the organization has grown significantly in the last couple of years due to some important funding and support from the Nova Scotia Departments of Justice, Communities Culture and Heritage, and Labour and Advanced Education.

The goal is to develop iMOVE’s programming and document its impact so in the next few years iMOVE can expand to teach other organizations about the work they’ve been doing, further enhance participants abilities to find

decent and meaningful work, develop participants leadership skills and ability to contribute to systemic change in their own communities, and build bridges with other communities.

To accomplish this, iMOVE is working to develop itself as a social enterprise with a variety of revenue streams to enhance its sustainability for the future. iMOVE’s approach is based fundamentally on meeting participants where they are at, developing community support around them, holding them accountable for their actions but also not judging them.

A key component is also helping program participants to understand the ‘systems’ in society that have had an impact on their lives and how they can build skills to help them address these challenges in positive ways. Another key component is teaching them about how they can work together to increase economic benefits for themselves, each other and their communities.

# Film Screening

## About the Film *Speak it!*

*From the Heart of  
Black Nova Scotia*



In their predominantly white high school in Halifax, a group of Black students face daily reminders of racism, ranging from abuse (racist graffiti on washroom walls), to exclusion (the omission of Black history from textbooks). They work to establish a Cultural Awareness Youth Group, a vehicle for building pride and self-esteem through educational and cultural programs. With help from mentors, they discover the richness of their heritage and learn some of the ways they can begin to effect change.

Researched and directed by Sylvia D. Hamilton, *Speak It!* was narrated by Shingai Nyajeka, one of the youth involved in the newly formed Cultural Awareness Group at St. Pat's High School.

*Speak It!* was screened at film festivals in cities around the world including New York, Paris, Melbourne in Australia and in Tokyo, Japan, where it won the 21st Japan Prize. At the time of its release, it was shown in festivals, conferences and schools across Canada. It won the Rex Tasker Award for Best Atlantic Canadian Documentary, a Gemini Award and the AMTEC Media Award of Excellence. It was broadcast on CBC, TVO and Vision TV.

## Panel Discussion

30 years after this youth-focused film was released, have we progressed as a society? How relevant is it today in conversation around race relations and racial harmony, in particular among youth? Alongside two of our Nia Summit Youth Ambassadors, guests from the original cast will engage in a panel discussion following the screening of the film.

MODERATED BY DASIA  
ABBEY, NIA SUMMIT YOUTH  
AMBASSADOR

## Panelists

NATHAN TESFAZION  
JAYREECE WHILEY  
*Nia Summit Youth Ambassadors*

## ORIGINAL *SPEAK IT!* CAST

SHAWN GROUSE  
*Regional Coordinator African  
Canadian Education Services at HRCE*

KRISTA BRODIE  
*Investment Management at Manulife*

SHINGAI NYAJEKA  
*Employment Support Services  
Case Worker with Department of  
Community Services*



# Presenters



## Eriana Willis

Eriana was born and raised in Dartmouth Nova Scotia, with strong family roots in North Preston where her love for singing began at the age of 7. Some of her performances include singing the National Anthem and the Black National Anthem (Lift Every Voice) for the Provincial Launch of African Heritage Month, the RCMP “H” division, and the Viola Desmond \$10 bill launch at the Black Cultural Centre. Eriana has also played in numerous musical theatre productions including, “The Wiz” (2016) at the Rebecca Cohn theatre “From Broadway With Love” (2017) in Las Vegas, Nevada, and “Descendents a Musical History Lesson” (2017) by Broadway in the H.O.O.D. Canada. Her most recent performances include singing for the Scotia’s Got Talent fundraiser. Eriana is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree at Dalhousie University.



## Studio 26

As the most diverse dance school in Atlantic Canada, Studio 26 makes it a priority to embrace, incorporate and celebrate culture in everything we do. From the choreographers we bring in, to the styles of dance and the music we choose to use, we are always considering our students’ diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Here at Studio 26, we believe that dance can build self-confidence and that it can be an amazing outlet and way of self-expression. We know that with the right training anyone can be a beautiful dancer and so we encourage everyone to come and dance with us. Whether it’s our Recreational or Competitive program, we have something to suit every dancer of every age.

# Presenter

## African Nova Scotian Justice Institute

The African Nova Scotian Justice Institute was formed in 2021 as a result of generations of advocacy by African Nova Scotians. The institute has a mandate to address historic and present issues of systemic racism in the criminal justice system that negatively and disproportionately impact the distinct African Nova Scotian population. ANSJI offers direct legal services to African Nova Scotian community members and is a national leader in justice policy and justice-related mental health service. Through strong partnerships and collaboration within the justice sector the ANSJI works to ensure fair, legal and constitutional treatment of all African Nova Scotians.

ANSJI is also working on the *Know Your Rights* campaign which will provide members of the African Nova Scotian community with valuable information regarding their rights in the areas of policing, human rights and employment law. Through a series of events, information sessions, online resources and video storytelling, the campaign will reach a variety of target sub-populations within the community. The *Know Your Rights* campaign will empower participants to pursue legal avenues that can often be seen as daunting and frustrating to navigate with or without a lawyer. The initiative seeks to demystify tribunal, quasi-legal and complaint processes surrounding three areas of law that negatively impact African Nova Scotians on a daily basis. The campaign will provide the tools and resources necessary to strengthen participants' understanding of their legal rights and their options. Know Your Rights also has a focus on youth education and will be providing in-school education session provincially throughout the 2023/2024 school year.

**To learn more visit [ANSJI.ca](https://ANSJI.ca)**



# Sponsors

## Canadian Race Relations Foundation

The Nia Summit creates crucial space for young Black and ANS Nova Scotians to celebrate the legacy of ancestors while building a path forward in the fight against anti-Black racism. At the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF), we know youth are pillars of leadership and innovation in their communities and drive change that is essential to creating a Canada without racism. We're honoured to sponsor this event and wish all attendees a powerful summit!

**Mohammed Hashim**  
*Executive Director*



**Canadian  
Race Relations  
Foundation**

## Community Services

The Department of Community Services helps people live more independent and healthier lives by providing a range of services. Our programs for young Nova Scotians can help you to build self confidence, connection to community, gain job skills or work experience, and find paid employment. You've got a great future in Nova Scotia. We can help!

**Joy Knight**  
*Executive Director, Employment Support  
and Income Assistance*

# Sponsor



## Labour, Skills and Immigration

As the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration, it is with great pride that I welcome all participants from across the province to the Nia Youth Summit. Youth are already playing a major role in the leadership of Nova Scotia with your ideas on climate action, anti-racism, positive change in gender diverse and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, and truth and reconciliation efforts. I thank you for embracing our challenges as a province and for your ideas, energy and commitment to collective action.

The future of this province is YOU. And Nova Scotia is full of opportunity for you. There are many job opportunities here for you. Whether you're considering a career in the skilled trades, healthcare, education, or entrepreneurship, we want you to stay here and be part of the continuing growth in Nova Scotia.

"Nothing about us, without us." is a guiding principle I believe in and know that this Summit was built on. The Nia Youth Summit represents the impacts of youth leadership as it is designed for youth by youth, and I know it will be a success because of that.

I hope attendees take advantage of the workshops, speaking engagements, and film screenings exploring community themes, innovation, and transformative change.

Enjoy your time at the Nia Summit!

**Jill Balsler**  
*Minister*

# Sponsor



## Health and Wellness

On behalf of the Government of Nova Scotia, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Nia Summit, a gathering we are so pleased to support. This summit offers Black/African Nova Scotian youth a space to lead, learn and share their views on the change needed for communities to be just and equitable by exploring themes around anti-Black racism, discrimination, human dignity, and social justice. African Nova Scotians have a 400-year legacy of contributing to the vibrancy of this province. It is essential that we continue to prioritize the empowerment of the next generation of Black leaders. We are doing this with initiatives like the Black Youth Development Mentorship Program, for example, through which the Department of Health and Wellness hired several interns over the summer.

These are the kinds of opportunities where we can all come together with a collective purpose, efforts and responsibility to help shape the future of our healthcare system.

Through our government's Action for Health plan and Health Equity Framework, we are working to address and eliminate social, structural and historical inequities in our healthcare system. We continue to learn and make progress, and look forward to learning from the outcomes of the Nia Summit. We are committed to removing racism from our health system and to working together to improve health outcomes for all Nova Scotians.

I wish you all a successful and productive Summit!

**Michelle Thompson**  
*Minister*



# Sponsor



## Halifax Regional Municipality Mayor's Office

As Mayor of Halifax and on behalf of Regional Council, it's my pleasure to welcome you to the first ever Nia Summit.

I want to acknowledge, with gratitude, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, in partnership with the Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute and the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia along with youth leaders from across the province for organizing the Nia Summit, Equal in Dignity and Rights: Anti-Black Racism from a youth perspective. The Summit will bring to Halifax students from High Schools across the province to explore youth anti-Black racism and social injustice.

I also wish to recognize the important legacy of people of African Descent and their long-standing contributions to the development of our city, province, and country. This is particularly important as we continue to observe the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent which focuses on strengthening global cooperation in support of people of African Descent as they strive for full inclusion in all aspects of society.

The history, culture and influence of African Nova Scotians continues to be a powerful presence throughout Halifax. We all have a role to play in ensuring our municipality exemplifies inclusion and equity and that we not only respect diversity, we encourage, embrace, and celebrate it.

I wish you much success and trust your visit will be a memorable experience.

**Mike Savage**  
*Mayor*

# Sponsor



## Nova Scotia Power Inc.

I am thrilled to welcome delegates to the Nia Summit – the first Black student-led summit created for Black students.

As you gather with your peers, celebrate your rich heritage and collaborate on creating action, I hope you leave today with a renewed and reinvigorated sense of purpose – or Nia. At NS Power, we stand with you in addressing anti-Black racism and social injustice. We are committed to breaking down barriers and partnering with our communities to set the course for a sustainable and inclusive future in energy.

There's no doubt that the future is bright with you leading the way. We hope to see many of you come through our doors in the future to find a safe, respectful workplace where you can thrive.

**Caroline Blair-Smith**  
*Vice President Human Resources*

Thank you to the African Canadian Services Branch  
of the Department of Education and Early  
Childhood for their support throughout the  
organizing of this Summit.

Thank You to Our Caterers



Thank you to our NIA Summit Material Suppliers



# Call to Action

The call to action is an important and integral part of the Nia Summit because it provides us youth with a sense of inspiration and courage. Bring in action, which we are acting interdependently instead of waiting on others to act. Taking the initiative to act is a vital and crucial way as we seek a better future. Thus, looking back whenever something great occurred in history there was some form of action that provoked it. Social movements followed suit in our history and The Nia Summit is no different. The start of social change is something big, so it is only fitting to incorporate a call to action with the hopes of challenging the utilization of the tools taught at The Nia Summit. Hence, it is to also to encourage Black youth-led action within our communities to keep social change active in our society. Striving for newer approaches for social action to aid this world, with new generations to come.

*- Jayreece Whiley, Nia Summit Youth Ambassador*

***The Youth Ambassadors will be supported by the African Nova Scotian Justice Institute (ANSJI) to challenge Nia Summit attendees to a Call to Action.***

Thank you for participating in our event. We hope you had as much fun attending as we did organizing it. We want to hear your feedback so we can keep improving our logistics and content. Please fill this quick survey and let us know your thoughts (your answers will be anonymous).

**SCAN ME ▼**





# NIA SUMMIT '23

## A BLACK YOUTH LED SUMMIT

For us by us for our peers "Equal in Dignity and Rights:  
Anti-Black Racism from a youth perspective"



**September 22, 2023 | 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM**

Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia

Cherry Brook, Nova Scotia

***Nia.bccns.com***



SCAN ME ▼



An initiative funded by the Canadian Race Relations  
Foundation National Anti-Racism Fund