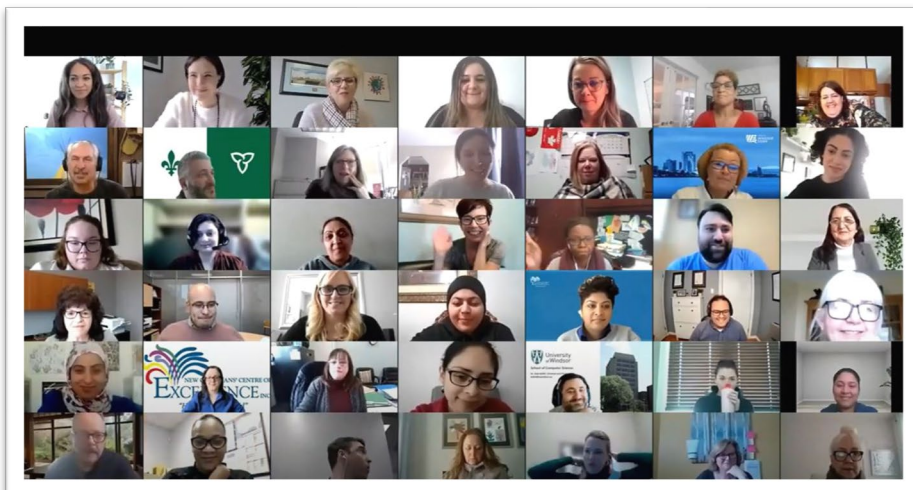


Each year, the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership hosts its Annual Community Forum. This year over 153 people attended the virtual event on February 8, 2022.

Charlotte LeFrank, Diversity Outreach Coordinator of Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society and WE LIP Chair, welcomed the attendees and introduced Russell Nahdee, Coordinator at the Aboriginal

Education Centre, University of Windsor and WE LIP Council member to share knowledge about the land.



As Russell shared on the rich history of the land, he highlighted the name of the Windsor area, “where the river bends” and connected the history of the land from the 1600s up to the present day. Paying homage to the land opened up the Forum and emphasized that much of what the WE LIP Annual Community Forums really provides, is an opportunity and a place to tell our collective stories and histories and the importance as a community to continue to do so.

Sarah May Garcia, Health System Strategy and Implementation Planner at Ontario Health West and WE LIP Vice-Chair introduced Keynote speaker, Jean Samuel, Former Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies.

Jean delivered a message focused on “Getting Ready to Get Ready for Equity Leadership in Our Community.” Participants were given the opportunity to explore emotional intelligence; the ability to understand one's own feelings and provide great insight on how emotion influences motivation and behavior.

Jean brought our attention to the concept of intersectionality which examines how identifiers such as gender, class, ethnicity, immigration status, ability, and race can overlap and span across multiple systems of oppression. Ways in which systemic-structural racism has been upheld in institutions were also identified, through old fashioned racism, modern/symbolic racism and aversive racism; the visibility decreases, whilst harm increases.

Even if it is not possible to change the system from within, an individual's actions within the system do matter. We can accept or reject, promote or hinder the state's agenda."

– Alfred Taiaiake

Leaders were encouraged to lead with love and to challenge stereotypes by asking the right questions, using tools such as the Privilege Identity Exploration (PIE) Model and concepts such as cultural humility, and white humility to deconstruct and dismantle oppressive ideologies and actions.

Participants were engaged and were given the opportunity to ask Jean questions during the Q&A.

Mary Ellen Bernard, WE LIP Project

Manager and Manager of Social Policy and Planning at the City of Windsor thanked Jean Samuel for her inspirational talk and Riham Attia, WE LIP Executive Committee Member at Large and PhD Candidate at the University of Windsor announced next steps for WE LIP and upcoming events including an Indigenous history walking tour and an upcoming Lunch and Learn with Jean Samuel on March 24, 2022 on the topic of "Moving From Head Equity to Heart Equity: Dismantling and Addressing Inequity within Windsor-Essex Communities" to continue to build on our collective learning.

Hussein Kawas, Agent de liaison communautaire - Windsor-Essex, Conseil scolaire catholique Providence and WE LIP Executive Committee Member (at Large) provided a Francophone update on the creation of the Carrefour Communautaire Francophone located at 720 Ouellette Ave., the Carrefour's purpose is to develop and welcome all organizations that serve Francophones who would like to work together for the good of the community. In addition, the Francophone community is working on the development and implementation of strategies, tools and policies related to equity, diversity and inclusion. Another upcoming event is the Celebration of the 15th anniversary of the RIFCSO (Réseau en Immigration) in June 2022.



Jean Samuel,
Former Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies [Click here for link to bio](#)

In closing, Michelle Suchiu, Senior Director of Employee Development & Strategic Partnerships, Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership and Workforce WindsorEssex introduced a [Year in Review video](#) that was put together with the help of Aaron Fauteux, Project Assistant, Workforce WindsorEssex.

A recording of the forum can be viewed on the [WE LIP Council Webpage](#).

A survey was circulated to attendees after the forum to gather feedback and help inform next steps for the work.

