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Statements

BCFED Statement on Black History Month

The following is a statement from Irene Lanzinger, president of the BC Federation of Labour.

February marks Black History Month in BC. And as we celebrate, there is much to reflect upon in the journey toward equitable treatment of black people in our local, national and global communities.

Black community members lead the fight against racism and bigotry by standing up against injustice in our communities. The Black Lives Matter movement is an example of a renewed movement toward equity led by black people, fighting on behalf of all marginalized races.

And historically, black community members have been pillars at the provincial level in the fight to end racism and for economic and social equality. For example, Rosemary Brown and Emery Barnes—two former NDP MLAs—were engaged in this struggle with passion and commitment to make lives better for people in their community and for all British Columbians.

Recently in Vancouver, the Hogan's Alley project (http://hogansalleytrust.ca/) has been of note. Just over two years ago, Vancouver City Council voted to remove the Georgia and Dunsmuir viaducts, which when originally built displaced a vibrant community of black, Japanese and Chinese Canadians. This move by city council presented a chance for reconciliation between the City of Vancouver and the Black community.

A team of community members of African descent has been leading renowned architect Zena Howard on a journey toward a project that will honour the history of the original Hogan’s Alley, provide a space for public education on what the area once was, and give a space for community to grow and flourish again.

But progress in achieving this reconciliation and moving ahead with the Hogan’s Alley project depends on public hearings and city council approval for a redevelopment plan for parts of northeast False Creek.

The BCFED on behalf of over 500,000 working people in BC and their families, is committed to work with the black leaders in educating the public on these issues, to continue providing space for critical conversations to be had, and to continue to stand in solidarity with the black community in the struggle for equity.

This month, let us celebrate the black communities who have led the fight toward equity in our communities, and let us stand together with black communities as they pave the way for progress here in BC and internationally.