


Black Excellency in Trade & Youth Development



Know your History and Pride!

During the month of February, 2021, a new and much needed program was created by the East Preston Empowerment Academy. This program was known as “Black Excellency in Trade” and was created as a way to allow people of African descent to virtually engage in learning about various trade opportunities. The creation of this program came about with the collaboration of the National Monitoring Centre, during African Heritage Month. This was a youth leadership program that was focused on Youth Pathways to the Trades and Community Leadership program. “So, what they did is they had me coordinate their youth program so that you could train where the youth matched. We had about 20 youths with the current instructors in the trades and then got the youths some mentorship. The youths made some friends and received some knowledge about the trades. We had the same thing in February but for girls. So, 10 African Canadian girls had the chance to learn about different trades they’re interested in.”, Said Divine Gbeve.



Gbeve has had the responsibility of helping run these programs during the ongoing pandemic. The Black Excellency in Trade program hosted weekly workshops tailored to a number of different skills for participants to go into job shadowing with their mentors as a way to properly insert themselves within the work force of the trade they have chosen. “That's kind of what the Black Excellency program is, we are in need for trade opportunities. The participants will be collaborating with representatives from the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency and one of their Mentors. These workshops are stepping stones to just provide Black people with as much knowledge and understanding and skills to be able to you know how to work in the trade,” Gbeve said. This program is just one of many programs the EPEA provides for Black people and other BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Person of Colour) looking to join a trade. People of African descent have always unfortunately not been able to receive the proper training needed to follow the career they chose due to discrimination and economic disadvantages. That is why the Black Excellency in Trade program is a bi-product of a much larger program called YDI (Youth Development Initiative) - Pathways to the Trades for Youth. Here this program helps youth receive the proper education needed to enter their field of choice. While also providing an Afrocentric learning course in order to make Black youth feel connected with their culture and the content, they are learning in order to succeed.

But with an inclusive program like the Black Excellency in Trade Program, the people of East Preston and other black communities here in Nova Scotia now have something to look forward to. Here, African Nova Scotian youth can finally receive the proper training and education for their field of work. This is why it is important for young Black youth to have programs like this. In these programs they can see just how important they are to society. While also showing how important Black people are to history and its advancement. We are the forefront of change and change begins with our youth.

