

Melissa Edwards

Foundation Manager, Philanthropy & Gratitude



Black excellence has changed over the years for me. There was a time when I looked up to Black celebrities, athletes, authors and entertainers, thinking they were Black excellence, and they are. But I have learned that Black excellence is so much more. Now, I look up to everyday Black people working hard to create better outcomes for themselves and their families. Black excellence means seeing Black people woven into society. It still shocks me sometimes to see

Black people in some professions that members of the Black community do not typically hold. But the shock comes from a strong sense of pride, delight, joy and happiness to see them achieving their life goals.

Donovan Cooper

Senior Director, Ambulatory Care



When I think of the phrase “black excellence” what immediately comes to mind are trailblazers like Nelson Mandela, Fannie Lou Hamer and Mohammed Ali; principled people who faced tremendous obstacles but stood steadfast in their



beliefs and were not afraid to speak out regardless of the consequences. These however are extreme examples and in reality, I see examples of Black excellence every day. From my wife who is in a pivotal leadership role in her organization or my son who is excelling in university and a leader on the black student association executive council and of course my daughter whose vibrant aura lights up a room. I have encountered many outstanding black health care professionals and leaders in my career journey including my new colleagues at Holland Bloorview. I've been blessed to see these remarkable people in action and there is no time like to present to acknowledge their excellence!

Brian Noble

Human Rights and Equity Navigator



For many, Black excellence is exemplified by those members of the Black community that achieve success by exceeding expectations from a professional and/or academic standpoint. While I feel such accomplishments are examples of Black excellence, in my view, the essence of Black excellence is embodied in the mundane and routine. While navigating the inherent challenges and disadvantages that comes with being a member of the Black community, Black excellence is often manifested in the perseverance and ingenuity that is required to simply subsist, whether that entails having the resourcefulness needed to put food on the table or securing shelter or clothing.

One of the countless examples of such Black excellence includes my grandmother emigrating from Guyana to Canada along with myself and my three older brothers in search of a better life. With limited resources that was compounded by having to navigate systemic disadvantages and the perpetual uncertainty of providing the necessities for four kids and herself, it required herculean effort and resourcefulness to merely survive.



There are also examples of Black excellence in or associated with the health care sector including Black professionals or advocates that work to promote equity in health care for members of the Black community as well as other marginalized and historically disadvantaged communities.

Terry Mutuku

Senior Communications Associate



Black excellence to me means advancing the accomplishments and positive contributions of Black people to the society. It means amplifying fundamental human rights, equity and social justice of our Black community and removing of barriers that exclude them in all sectors. Often, the success stories of the Black community are unappreciated; I believe we all have a role to play in strategically communicating and increasing the visibility of the accomplishments, abilities and values of the community.

Through my communications work at Holland Bloorview, I am actively involved in promoting Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Anti-Racism (IDEAA). To me, this is a great opportunity to advance black excellence, equity and social justice within the organization and health sector in general.

In addition, I am actively finding opportunities to advance excellence and equal rights for disadvantaged families back in my country Kenya by supporting community projects such as education and healthcare projects as well as development and economic empowerment projects that advance the community's potential and abilities. Black excellence to me therefore means leading by example, and striving to make a positive impact on my community, in



everything I do. I believe we all have a moral obligation to advancing equal rights of everyone and thriving together as a community.

