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NOVA CPA

COMMUNITY

**Community Volunteer
Income Tax Program**

FEATURE

**3 Tips for Making Black
History Month Impactful in
the Workplace**

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Ayo Makanjuola



A Message from CPA Nova Scotia's President & CEO

Dear members,

During recent months, Nova Scotia's population reached an all-time high, exceeding one million. This milestone can be attributed to the province's increasing attractiveness to both intra-Canadian migration and international immigration. Newcomers fuel our economy, create new businesses and jobs, fill labour gaps and add to the diversity and culture in our communities. To celebrate this milestone, we are sharing the story of a member of our Board of Directors, Ayo Mekanjuola, who is just one of the thousands of immigrants who chose to make Nova Scotia home.

Additionally, in this issue we are excited to tell you more about our new CPD Advantage program that will be replacing the PD Passport in April 2022. After listening to feedback from our members, we designed our new program to streamline the registration process and improve the user experience when purchasing courses. You will find answers to any questions you may have about the program on [page 10](#).

Finally, I would like to highlight that February is African Heritage Month. I encourage you all to take the time to listen to others' perspectives and views on the world. You will be richer for it, and we all benefit when we gain a more meaningful understanding of how we can build a better community together.

Sincerely,



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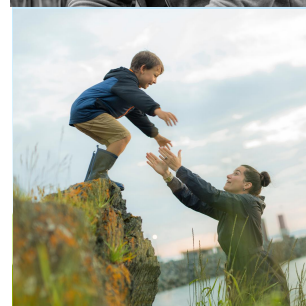
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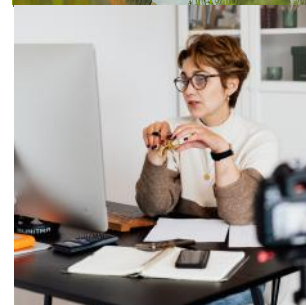
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Member Spotlight: Meet Ayo Makanjuola



Building a Better Tomorrow

Growing up in Nigeria, Ayo Makanjuola dreamed of becoming a professional footballer. He was passionate about the sport and loved how it brought people together and how it was easily accessible. As he grew older, he knew he needed to choose a backup profession. “Where I come from, you can be an accountant, engineer, lawyer or doctor. If you’re not any of those, you’re in trouble with your parents,” he laughs. There was an individual from his community that he looked up to. “I loved the way he dressed. He was stylish, always wearing a jacket and tie.” So one day, Ayo approached him and asked what he did for work. “He told me he was an accountant, and his suit was mandated at his job.” Ayo says that interaction was the catalyst for him to join the profession. “I decided then that if I wasn’t going to be a footballer, I’d like to be an accountant.”

Ayo went on to complete his bachelor’s degree in accounting and a master’s degree in finance. “I am one of the first in my family to complete my schooling and I want to be a positive influence and the best version of myself, for them,” he admits proudly. Ayo has worked as an Accountant in Nigeria, the United Kingdom, and Canada, and is currently the Chief Financial Officer of the Black Business Initiative in Halifax. He has over 12 years of experience in public and corporate accounting and has provided business advisory, accounting, audit, and tax consulting services to industry sectors such as oil and gas, banking, manufacturing, and transportation.

How did an accountant from the large city of Lagos—with a population of over 15 million—end up across the world in a small province of one million? He owes it to self-determination and adhering to his three core values—career, family, and community.

As a young professional, Ayo was looking to advance in his career and with Nigeria's economic difficulties and unstable political and physical living conditions, he started looking outside the country for opportunities. His decision to move to Canada was family-driven. "I was looking for more stability to raise a family. My lifestyle in Nigeria was similar to a Torontonians and I wanted something different. I was looking for somewhere that had a family feel, not too cosmopolitan but not too small. Halifax was the perfect balance," he explains. So in November of 2015, Ayo quit his job, said his goodbyes to friends and family, and landed in Canada one month later. "I'll never forget the day I arrived in Halifax; I had packed everything I owned into two bags, and I carried them out of the airport into subzero temperature and snow. It was the perfect welcome to Canada," he recalls.

After arriving in Halifax, Ayo was eager to hit the ground running and start working. "I knew it would take some time to get my name out there and establish myself in my field. I had planned to give myself one month to find employment," he said. However, life had other plans and that one month slowly turned into two and then more. Despite Ayo's years of education and experience, he was unable to find a role that matched his skill set. One of the biggest barriers for him was having his degrees and diplomas evaluated and finding out they were not worth as much in Canada.



"As an internationally trained accountant, I started in a better spot than many newcomers, and it still took me longer than I wanted to find a role," he explains. Not one to give up, Ayo remained positive and turned to the ISANS and YMCA immigrant services for support. After six months in Canada, he landed a role. Rather than putting the difficult experience behind him, he felt impelled to improve the process for other newcomers. He started volunteering with the YMCA and became a board member in 2018. Using his CPA as a launching pad, Ayo was able to channel his passion for the community into a career. As a senior executive of the Black Business Initiative, he works towards addressing long-standing barriers and supporting the long-term success of Black entrepreneurs and business owners.



"Family, career and community"

His advice for fellow CPAs is this: "the designation offers you a solid foundation, but it is not a means to an end. What you choose to do with your life is up to you. It's important to always look for skills to add to your toolbelt." Ayo recently took on the role of project lead for the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative (SBCCI). The fund was created in 2020 to help increase the capacity of grassroots not-for-profit organizations serving Black communities across Canada.

In 2020-2021, 129 organizations were given funds to strengthen their organizations and build further social impact in their respective Black communities.

It is clear to anyone who has the pleasure of meeting Ayo that he remains true to his values and holds family, career, and community close to his heart. Along with his board role of the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth, he serves on the Board of Chartered Professional Accountants of Nova Scotia,

the Not-For-Profit Advisory Committee of the Accounting Standards Board and as the Treasurer of the Ecology Action Centre in Halifax.

As for deciding to take the courageous step and move his life to Halifax, Ayo says he has no regrets. Despite moving across the world and growing in his career, there is one thing Ayo has never forgotten. He remains passionate about football and every Thursday and Saturday, you can find him on the pitch—although he calls it "soccer" now.



COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX PROGRAM

Are you wondering how you can use your skills as a CPA to give back to your community? The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) relies on knowledgeable volunteer CPAs to assist those in need with their taxes.

The CVITP has existed since 1971 and is a longstanding partnership between the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and community organizations and their volunteers. Each year through the CVITP, organizations and volunteers help hundreds of

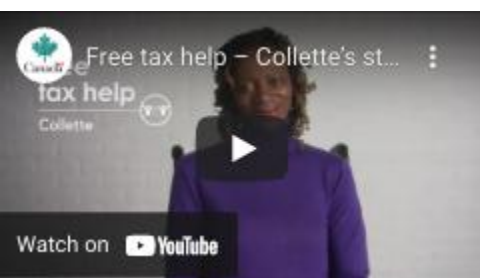
thousands of eligible individuals file their income tax and benefit returns.

Individuals need to do their taxes every year to qualify for many federal, provincial, and municipal programs and services. This is a difficult and sometimes overwhelming task for many people in need.

The CVITP service is offered free of charge to everyone who meets the eligibility criteria, and includes doing taxes for the current and previous years.

For the 2022 tax season, community organizations are hosting free in-person and virtual tax clinics. As a volunteer, you can choose to file and complete taxes in person (following local public health advice and measures) or virtually by video-conferencing, by phone, or through a drop-off clinic.

If you're interested in participating as an organization or in volunteering, please contact a CRA coordinator.



WATCH COLLETTE'S STORY TO SEE THE IMPACT OF FREE TAX HELP

Nova Scotia CPA Carol Barr has been a CVITP volunteer and suggests why other CPAs should roll up their sleeves and get involved in this program.

Why did you decide to volunteer for the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program?

I decided to volunteer because I knew that I had skills that I could use to help people. It was also a good way for me to keep on top of tax changes since I don't do taxes in my present job.

What did you do as a volunteer?

I went to a designated site where there were two other volunteers working at the same time. Eligible people would line up to get their tax returns done. It would be simple T1 returns with no rentals or businesses included. There were a lot of new immigrants and senior citizens.

How much of a time commitment was it?

You can volunteer as little or as much as you want. I spent one evening a week for four hours doing tax returns. I could have done more, but there was no pressure.

How did it feel knowing you made a difference?

People were very grateful that I could help them out. I remember there was an individual working at his first job after going to university. He had unused tuition deduction that he had no idea about. He ended up recovering all of the income tax that he paid, and he was so happy. He left with a huge smile on his face. It was very easy for me to do these simple returns, yet it meant so much to the people coming for help.

What would you say to a CPA who is considering volunteering for the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program?

You can volunteer all year or just for tax season, which is what most of the volunteers do. The software is very easy to use and CRA provides training on the software and tax changes. We, as CPAs, have all of the skills and training to do tax returns for people without the financial means or tax knowledge. I feel it is important to give back to our community.



CPD ADVANTAGE

Welcome to our CPD Advantage program! This exciting new program will be replacing the PD Passport beginning in April 2022. This Q&A will help you get familiar with the program, and get you ready to take advantage of the savings!

Why is the Passport program not continuing?

Our new program is designed to streamline the registration process and improve the user experience when purchasing courses. CPD Advantage will allow more members to utilize the savings, without restricting them to a finite number of courses. Everyone will have access to an unlimited number of courses at a discounted rate. Under this new program, we will also be able to offer more variety in course content and instructors.



What is the discount and when can I use it?

Twice a year, our courses will be available at a 50% discounted rate using an online promotional code provided by CPA Nova Scotia. This code can be used for all courses you purchase during the discount sales period, without limit. These discount sales periods will occur during the same time frames as the historical Passport sales periods: six weeks in early spring and six weeks in late summer. We will notify members with the code at the beginning of both the Spring and Fall/Winter sessions. The code will also be posted on the courses and events page on our website during each of the six-week periods.





How do I use the discount code?

You will register for the course as normal and enter the discount code during cart checkout.

Do I have to attend the course during the discount sales period?

No, you must purchase a course(s) during the discount sales period to get the reduced price.

My organization always purchases a Corporate Passport. What are our options now?

Organizations can now purchase as many courses as they wish for their employees, at the discounted rate, during the discount sales periods. Those employees can register directly online or CPA Nova Scotia can help with the registration process for a small administrative fee.

Can I only purchase courses during a discount sales period?

No, we encourage you to take advantage of all our quality content and multi-faceted delivery methods throughout the entire year! Courses purchased outside of the discount sales periods will be purchased at regular course prices.



Under the Passport program, I could buy the passport and wait until later to register for courses. Can I still do that?

Under the CPD Advantage program, you must register for courses during the discount sales period to use the discounted rate. The purchase and register functions are one and the same.

Where can I find all the details about the new program?

All the details will be available on our website under the Professional Development tab on April 1, 2022.

3 TIPS FOR MAKING BLACK HISTORY MONTH IMPACTFUL IN THE WORKPLACE

| BY: SOPHIE NICHOLLS JONES

Black History Month, celebrated annually throughout February, is a time of acknowledgment, reflection and celebration of Black people, their contributions, accomplishments, culture and history. Just as it is recognized in our communities, classrooms and legislatures, so too should it be in our boardrooms and workplaces. Here are three tips for recognizing Black History Month in your organization.

1) AMPLIFY THROUGH LEADERSHIP

Buy-in from the top is essential to any project's success, says CPA Jenny Okonkwo, founder of the Black Female Accountants Network (BFAN), particularly those focusing on diversity and inclusion. "This gives a perception that the initiative has been taken seriously," she says. "That's the first step toward employee engagement."

The organization's senior leaders must be on board with any Black-centred initiatives, taking an active and engaged role, and assuming responsibility for passing the message down to the employee base. Leaders encourage diversity and foster inclusion efforts by setting the tone, communicating expectations and conveying the importance of the initiative, adds Tamara Glasgow-Cox, manager, partner services for the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI). "Leadership support and participation is a key ingredient for the success of Black History Month," she says. "It's a matter of leading by example by fully participating and encouraging."

Once the message is communicated, others within the organization will be inspired to participate and "show up." Those who feel Black History Month or the Black experience do not relate to nor impact them will have an opportunity to engage differently and broaden their mindset, while Black employees will sense authenticity and be encouraged to get involved.

It's a first step toward allyship in the workplace, adds Frederick. "It's not just Black employees' month. Everybody can be a part of Black History Month. Black history is Canadian history," she says. "Rather than just telling people 'Happy Black History Month,' there's a way to feel and recognize it in a deeper and more meaningful way."





2) ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

Engaging with the Black community—within and outside your organization—should occur frequently, beyond just Black History Month, says Stachen Frederick, executive director of Frontlines, a non-profit, charitable organization that provides support for children and youth in Toronto’s Weston community.

“There is [often] a sense within the Black community that a lot of times we get ‘tapped’ when it’s Black History Month,” she says. “To dismantle that feeling, corporations, organizations and individuals need to engage [more] with these communities [before and after Black history month]...it’s really about building relationships.” This outreach and subsequent dialogue should occur not only in February, but throughout the year. And these programs should be diverse in dialogue, adds Okonkwo. “It’s about communication, bringing people in, having brainstorming, sharing ideas, gathering and consulting. That’s a really good way to get people [engaged],” she says.

“People are sharing their stories [and] lots of great questions [can] come from the audience.” Whether it’s a panel, webinar or more informal conversation, hearing the perspectives of people inside and outside the organization gives broader meaning to the conversation, while helping unite teams, bridge gaps and encouraging understanding about Black history and experience. The CCDI recommends distributing employee surveys to elicit ideas that will shape events planned over Black History Month and beyond.

“It is important to be thoughtful about the slated programming, to ensure that the content is impactful and meaningful, and that it also yields social and corporate ROI (return on investment),” says Glasgow-Cox.

3) IMPACT THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

Forming meaningful partnerships with like-minded organizations that represent and support the Black community cultivates trust, legitimizes efforts to engage and results in more meaningful impact, say advocates. “Joining forces with organizations, such as CCDI [for example], can certainly result in significant benefits that will support the organization on their overall diversity and inclusion journey,” says Glasgow-Cox.

These partnerships, however, must be established with preparation and clear intention, stresses Frederick. Organizations should analyze their values, mission, short- and long-term goals to find commonalities with potential partners and pursue relationships from there.

“What is important to your organization? What do you want to do? Where is your alignment?” she questions. “If it’s youth, look for a charity that supports Black youth. If it’s food security, engage the Black community and look for charities that do this work.” The pursuit, Frederick adds, should not focus solely on what your organization will do for your partner, but rather how you will progress together. Working with youths, for example, could lead to ongoing mentorship and internship opportunities, combining professional development opportunities with the cultivation of future talent.

In other words, the aim should be to take the relationship beyond an annual Black History Month celebration, into longer-term efforts—a common goal using aligned values, such as a commitment to help eradicate racial injustice and make the workplace more equitable and inclusive.

“I look for the type of values (of the organization) that I’m dealing with when we partner with a corporation, and if I don’t see that within the fabric of the organization, that there’s representation [of those values], that is a red flag to me,” she says. “When you look at possible partnerships, you should look for those that create connection points that can lead to a much more beautiful sort of relationship.”



DO YOU KNOW A CPA THAT DESERVES TO BE RECOGNIZED?

FCPA

The Board of Directors of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Nova Scotia elects members as Fellows to formally recognize those members who have rendered exceptional services to the profession, whose achievements in their careers and/or whose contributions in the community have earned them distinction and brought honour to the profession.



Early Achievement Award

Early Achievement Award to recognize a young CPA who is making a positive contribution to the profession.

The Unsung Hero Award

The Unsung Hero Award, designed to recognize CPAs who stand out for their tremendous community support, not just in financial roles but by rolling up their sleeves and making a difference in their community.



NOMINATIONS OPENING SOON



— GET CONNECTED —



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