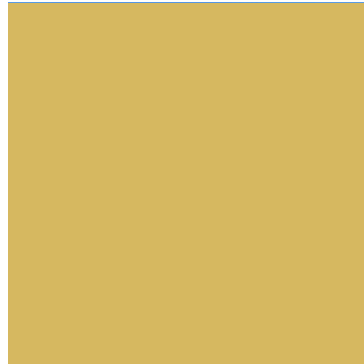




2024

DEIB Report



Joint Message

At Applegrove, our goal is to build an organization where every team member feels like they belong. We are committed to building a diverse team, equitable systems, and fostering a culture of inclusion and belonging for all. As an organization, we strive to approach this work with open minds, open hearts and a willingness to learn and change. It is a shared and ongoing journey in which there are no quick fixes, that takes time, and that relies on commitment and buy-in at all levels of the organization, especially among leadership.

In 2021 Applegrove examined its operations, culture, policies and practices from the perspective of diversity, equity and inclusion. An organizational audit was done with Lunaria Solutions to better understand the perceptions, behaviours, and culture that shaped the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at Applegrove. It resulted in the creation of a DEI Plan in 2022, focused on the priorities of communication, culture, inclusive leadership, talent recruitment and development and sustainability.

The Staff-Board DEIB Committee was set up in 2023 to guide DEI work at Applegrove. Among it's first moves was to add a "B" in order to emphasize how important it is that people feel that they belong, are accepted and can authentically be themselves at Applegrove. This is our first annual Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) report to provide a summary of what has been done to date.

DEIB is not a project that ends – it is a way of thinking, being and working that is ongoing. We are all committed to continuing to learn, grow and do what we can as we move forward on this important journey.

Staff-Board DEIB Committee

Susanne Burkhardt

Executive Director

Camille Bettonville

Membership, Outreach and
Inclusion Committee Chair

Shirin Karim

Former Membership, Outreach
and Inclusion Committee Chair

**Josh Grainger, Liliana Sanchez, K Vanderpark,
Pierre Bois, Sarah Lasch, Brian Wood**

DEIB Staff-Board Committee Members

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Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with gratitude that we are gathered on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee Confederacy, Wendat, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit. This land has been cared for and nurtured by Indigenous peoples since time immemorial.

We also recognize the contributions and resilience of Black people brought to this land through the transatlantic slave trade. Their history and enduring presence are integral to the story of this land.

We celebrated our community through art this year. We honour the work of multi-disciplinary artist Mo Thunder and the collective effort that brought our new mural to life in our Lounge. The mural depicts the Three Sisters garden, hidden rivers, surrounding trees, and the stars above to symbolize the deep connection between humanity and nature. Against the backdrop of the city skyline at sunset it reminds us of our shared responsibility to honor and protect the land we call home. Standing hand in hand across the horizon, let us also honor the spirit of the Wampum Belt Treaty, symbolizing unity and mutual respect between Indigenous nations and settlers.

Together, let us continue to uplift Indigenous voices, acknowledge the contributions of Black communities, and appreciate, support the many communities that call this land home and commit to a future rooted in justice, equality, and reconciliation.



Diversity

The psychological, physical and social differences that occur among any and all individuals, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, and/or learning styles.

Equity

The guarantee of fairness with respect to treatment, access, opportunity and advancement, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent full participation.

Inclusion

The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can feel welcomed, respected, supported and valued to fully participate at Applegrove Community Complex, both as a workplace and community organization. Applegrove acknowledges that it is part of a colonial system, and is committed to recognizing and redressing how we perpetuate colonialism through our structures, processes and ways of working.

Belonging

Belonging takes the form of employees, volunteers, participants, partners and other collaborators actively wanting to bring their true selves, and have a meaningful voice because they know it will be celebrated, respected, and admired.

Staff-Board DEIB Committee

Purpose

The purpose of the DEIB Committee is to guide, support and enhance DEIB efforts and initiatives at Applegrove, with a focus on addressing employee DEIB needs and desires.

Scope

- Raise awareness of DEIB within Applegrove and ensure that DEIB remains a top priority for Applegrove in areas including but not limited to human resource and other policies, as well as organizational practices, processes, and culture.
- Make high-level recommendations on organizational planning, projects, education and development of policy, procedures and practices for the purpose of ensuring an inclusive, diverse, and equitable organization.
- Inform and support the ongoing education and professional development of staff and board members and increase engagement around DEIB.
- Develop, monitor and report to the board and staff on the implementation and impact of an annual DEIB work plan and budget.
- Assess and recommend a DEIB audit cycle/schedule for the agency.
- Act in an advisory capacity to the board on DEIB-related matters.



Let's Talk Numbers

How we engaged the community in 2024!

3

Relationships established with indigenous groups

1

New Strategic Plan with DEIB focus

7

Program Evaluation Surveys

How we've engaged Leadership and staff this year!



3

Management Performance Plans Include DEIB Learning

DEIB Staff Pulse Survey

1

Staff-Board Socials

2

6

Staff Development Plans created

8

Staff Development Opportunities offered



10

Staff-Board DEIB Committee Meetings

DEIB Book Club meetings

3

Communication and Conflict Circles

3

2024 DEIB Work Plan Outcomes



Communication

Introduce/improve DEIB communication and channels

- Installed wall monitor office for messages, promote, make announcements, etc.

Define DEIB for Applegrove

- DEIB definitions finalized and approved by staff and board.

Increase representation of staff at the agency and in agency communications

- Professional headshots offered to staff.
- More and better staff representation in agency communications e.g. on website and social media, in updated brochures and office signage.

Complete a DEIB Policy

- Research started for policy development in 2025.

Culture

Provide more joint learning opportunities for staff, volunteers and leadership

- Numerous DEIB training opportunities offered to staff e.g. Communication and Conflict Resolution Circles.
- Disability Justice Training provided for staff and board members.
- DEIB library continued to grow and be used more by staff.
- 3 Staff-Board Book Club meetings created a platform for great discussions and learnings.

Create more sharing and social opportunities

- Staff and board members came together for some fun at a Blue Jays game and a Winter Social.
- Staff were invited to share their culture and identity, with funds available for supplies. Several staff shared their traditions and celebrations around Holi, Dia De Los Muertos, Ramadan, Lunar New Year, Advent and others.

Make Applegrove spaces more reflective of staff and the community

- Worked with Indigenous artist to engage staff and community in creating a new mural for the Lounge.
- Several banners were purchased to display in the office during celebrations, including a LGBT2Q and an Every Child Matters flag.

Updating policies/processes to promote transparency, commitment to DEIB, and foster psychological safety

- Updated incident reporting system drafted, which addresses and facilitate DEIB related reporting.



Inclusive Leadership

Increase management DEIB training and learning

- DEIB learning included in all management performance plans.
- Management joined staff and board members in Disability Justice training, Communication & Conflict Circles and DEIB Book club.

DEIB as priority in board and management recruitment

- Recruitment process and materials updated to include DEIB as priority for new board members and the Program Director position. Staff were consulted on priorities for Program Director attributes.
- New board member with professional DEIB expertise recruited.

Increase board DEIB training and learning

- DEIB learning included in new board training Framework.
- Board members participated in Disability Justice Training and DEIB Book Club.

Talent Recruitment and Development

Staff regularly encouraged to participate in training/learning activities

- Staff Development Plan model created, with 6 plans underway (by staff request).
- Training opportunities regularly circulated, participation was encouraged and supported.

Create internal 'placements' or 'projects' that advance DEIB as development opportunity

- 8 Staff Development Opportunities offered including professional head shots, social media documentation, public wi-fi consultation, and multiple opportunities for certification in First-Aid, Health & Safety, Food Handler's, Smart Serve, income tax preparation.

Sustainability

Confirm mandate for DEIB Committee

- Committee terms of reference completed.

Develop community partnerships that support DEIB in the community

- New relationships established with 2 Indigenous groups, mural co-created with Indigenous artist.
- Agency participation in The Neighbourhood Centre's TRC "Relationship Audit Tool" project.
- Re-established relations with Toronto Community Housing Community Service Coordinators for our catchment and partnered on outreach and annual Toy Drive.

Create and implement DEIB monitoring & evaluation framework

- Monthly work plan reports brought to Staff-Board DEIB Committee and posted in the office.
- DEIB Report, Work Plans and Program Evaluations to be generated annually.
- First employee pulse survey done, will continue to be done periodically as required.

Reflecting on the Year



Afterschool Counsellors Share Customs, Celebrations and Traditions

Kala introduced the celebration of Holi to our Afterschool program. Using of colourful powders the kids loved getting their faces painted, and painting a few staff faces as well! The excitement built up with many joyful faces among children, staff and parents in the back field. Kala also shared the celebrations of Diwali and Durga Puja with our staff and the children.

Maryam wanted to do something special for Eid and organized a food drive to support our local food bank. She was able to share more knowledge around Eid with the families and highlighted the importance of charity and giving back to the community.

Liliana shared her tradition of setting up an *ofrenda* for Dia De Los Muertos with her group. These colourful alters decorated and adorned with pictures and personal items or food help to remember and celebrate the lives of loved ones who have passed away. Kids brought in photos and shared stories with one another.

Kala, Maryam and Liliana – thank you for sharing an important part of yourself with Applegrove!



Indigenous Legacy Gathering Day Trip - National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

The staff all agreed that the PA Day trip to the Indigenous Legacy Gathering was a huge success! There were crafts like rock painting and making beaded key chains that represented the treaties made between the first settlers and the Indigenous peoples. The children got to see and participate in Indigenous arts and culture through drumming, dancing, fiddling and other activities. They heard elders talk about self love and the importance of restoring the respect and trust of Indigenous communities, and learned about respecting the land and co-existing peacefully among ourselves and with nature. The children then got to ask questions and hear from Residential-School-Survivors about their experiences. It was a day of learning for all.



Lounge Mural Project with Mo Thunder - Connecting Community with Art

The mural project in the Lounge, created in collaboration with Indigenous and neurodivergent artist Mo Thunder, was an enriching experience for many staff, participants and some community members. People found it exciting and empowering to be creative, share their ideas and work alongside a professional artist. Mo's approach made it easy for kids to contribute, and they enjoyed learning new, non-traditional methods of planning and sketching the mural. The design, shaped by both children and seniors, reflects the community's diversity and sense of belonging.

Staff appreciated how Mo introduced the project with a mixed-media journal, encouraging creativity and alternative ways of expressing ideas. The project also brought together staff, children, families and seniors, fostering a deeper connection within the community. The mural now stands as a lasting symbol of collaboration, inclusion and our connection to the land.



DEIB Staff-Board Book Club - A Successful Approach to Shared Learning

Our DEIB Staff-Board Book Club meets quarterly and fosters meaningful connections by bringing together staff, management and board members to engage in thoughtful discussions on books that address social issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Through a diverse range of authors, styles, and topics, members have discovered new perspectives they might not have considered before, both from the books and the enriching conversations. While the presence of board members initially felt intimidating, staff now feel more connected and comfortable approaching them, strengthening relationships and promoting a culture of inclusivity and shared learning.

2025 DEIB Work Plan

The DEIB Committee is developing a 2025 DEIB Work Plan informed by staff input, City of Toronto Employee Engagement Survey findings, program evaluations, the TNC Relationship Audit Tool and board input. It's priorities will include:

DEIB Policy

- Development of an Applegrove DEIB Policy, with engagement of the staff and board.

Land Acknowledgment

- Creation of an Applegrove-specific Land Acknowledgement that is reflective of the land we operate on and the commitment we want to make to Truth and Reconciliation.

Communication

- Using our 2024 pulse survey results as a starting point, improve the quality and accessibility of information and communications across the agency. We also plan to be proactive about having more difficult conversations around DEIB in the workplace.

Program Planning

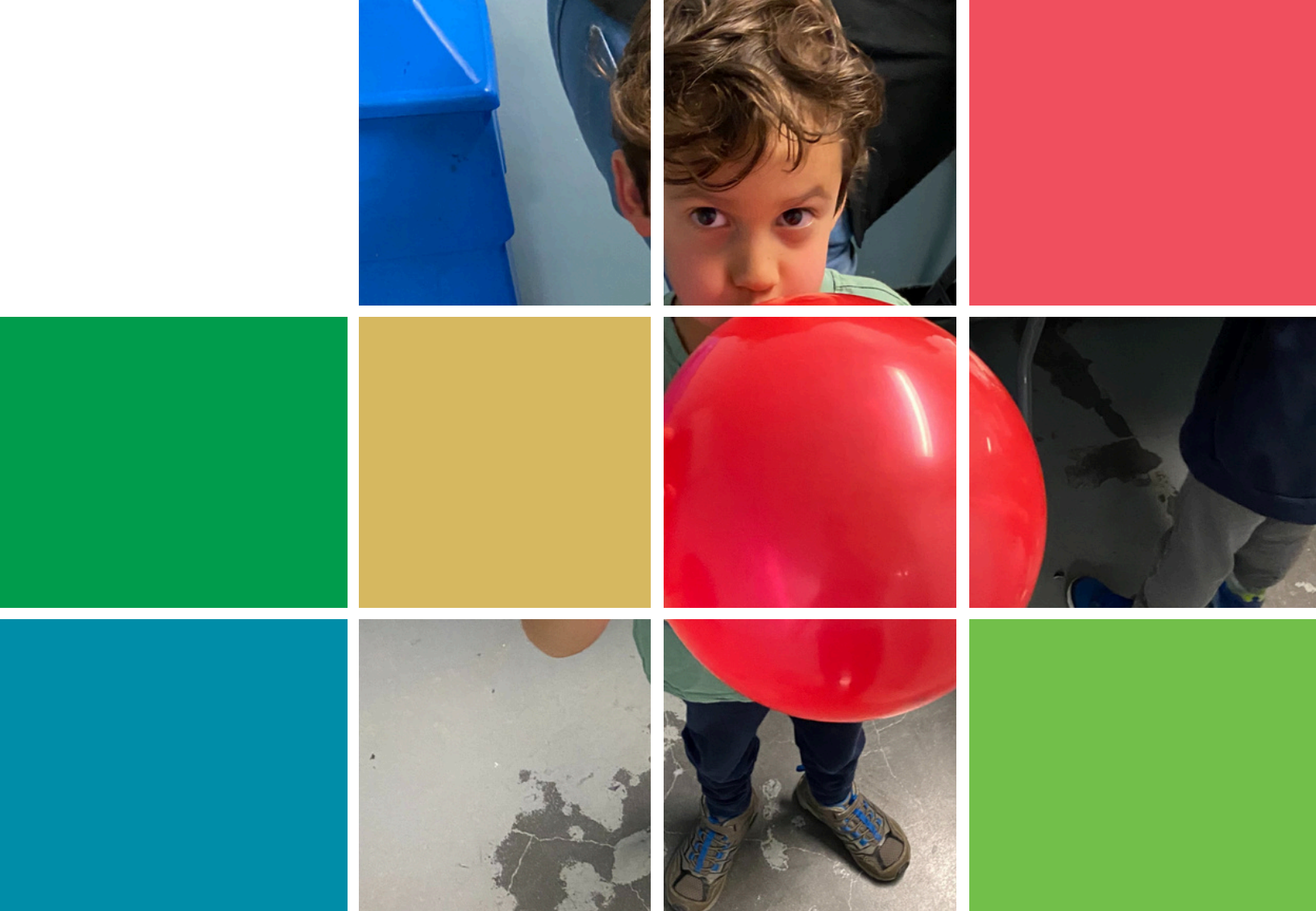
- Review of our program planning processes and practices to ensure more activities include DEIB principles, engagement, content and learning across the agency.

Learning and Training

- Continue to offer and share trainings with staff and board members while intentionally creating staff development opportunities within the agency and through our partners.







Applegrove is a vibrant and welcoming place that delivers programming to foster joy, promote wellbeing, enrich lives and build community.



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