

Corner Brook Status of Women Council

NEWSLETTER - June 2020

Equality

We want equality!

Well yes, but what does that mean?

Equality means that all people, regardless of gender, age, race, sexuality, religion, economic status or ability have access to opportunities in all facets of life. It is the realization of every mother's promise to their child that they can grow to do or to be anything.

Right now we are standing at the cusp of a new era. A new era that could move equality forward or that could erase a hundred years of progress. So what actions need to be taken to ensure that we move equality forward?

To fully achieve equality will require a culture shift. What is socially acceptable and what feels normal needs to change. As we've seen this is completely possible, on March 17th, we all woke up to a new normal. What was socially acceptable and felt normal changed over night. Unfortunately, changes to culture can not be mandated, those changes happen slowly and with a great deal of persistence and patience.

What we can do is adjust legislation and government funding in a way that promotes equality and in turn normalizes equality. Suggested changes include a guaranteed basic income for all adults, ensuring that everyone

participates in the economy. Minimum wage and benefit reform, providing all workers with a living wage, standard benefits and holding major employers to a higher standard. Tax reform with significantly steeper tax rates for international corporations. Free quality childcare for all those who require it for work, school or medical reasons. Guaranteed access to clean water. Affordable access to healthy foods and physical activity. Spending on health, education and enforcement sufficient to provide the population with health, education and safety as required. Affordable access to meaningful post secondary programs. In fact, countries that have adopted these practices show a higher quality of living and of equality.



We realize that critics will be quick to mention that neither the federal or provincial government could afford these measures, however, it is all affordable through a redistribution of wealth. The money must be moved out of the hands of corporations and into the hands of people. Think mandatory trickle-down. Economic critics warn that stringent taxation and legislated minimum wage and benefits might persuade some major corporations out of the Canadian market.

This, however, is unlikely. A smaller piece of the pie is still better than no pie at all.

But for arguments sake, what would happen if the suggested changes caused a major corporation like Walmart to leave Canada? Where would the Walmart associates work? Where could people buy affordable necessities? The associates may need to depend on the guaranteed basic income for a minute but then, just maybe something wonderful would happen. Locally owned stores and Canadian made goods may emerge, providing people with jobs, goods and services. Goods and services the average person can afford to buy because of living wages and guaranteed basic income.

Regardless of whether the taxes come from a few large corporations or lots of small companies, if Canadian money is moving around inside Canada then we can afford to legislate equality. And equality will mean that every mother's child will have the opportunity to grow to do or be anything.

Upcoming:

On Monday June 8th Newfoundland will be moving to covid alert level 3.

Monday June 15th - World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Acknowledging the significance of elder abuse as a public health and human rights issue.

Sunday June 21st - National Indigenous Peoples Day. A day for all Canadians to recognize and celebrate the unique heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

Sunday June 21st - Father's Day. Remember to let your dad know how much you love him.

The final word:

As we watch American history repeat itself this week through shocked gasps and tearfilled eyes, it is crucial we remember that racism exists here too. It exists here and we all must do better, we all must use our privilege to ensure that people of colour (POC) here do not experience the fear, discrimination and hate that has been normalized in the US.

If you are like me then you want to be an ally but have no idea where to start. Luckily, there are currently lots of articles available with tips and advice. After reading several articles three pieces of advice stood out. The first suggestion is to do some research; the murder of George Floyd was the catalyst for today's protests but the cause was 400 years of abuse, inequality and mistreatment. The next suggestion was to simply listen to POC and allow those voices to be heard. There is no need to whitesplain anything, now it is our turn to listen.

Once we have listened and learned, then it is time for action. We must reject and correct racist speech and action, each and every time it is witnessed. These steps will not end racism but it's a pretty good place to start.