

June 6, 2020

As board members of the Kiwassa Neighbourhood House, we endorse the [Vancouver Just Recovery](#) (VJR) statement. In endorsing this statement, we join the Just Recovery Coalition and individuals and organizations signed on to the statement in calling for the “City of Vancouver to prioritize lessening existing inequities, respecting Indigenous rights, and tackling the climate emergency.”

For us as board members of the Kiwassa Neighbourhood House, just recovery means prioritizing values-based, proactive, community-driven services and initiatives that are responsive, and not reactive, to the ongoing needs of people and issues that require the most urgent support during times of crisis as well as through recovery and in creating and sustaining equitable futures where everyone in our communities can thrive.

As a values-driven organization, Kiwassa Neighbourhood House has continued to operate throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to provide, in conjunction with our partners, essential services such as child care, food security, employment services, and settlement support to the residents of Hastings-Sunrise, East Vancouver neighbourhoods and beyond.

Although the work that our staff are doing to deliver services to our community has not paused, the COVID-19 pandemic has been an occasion for us as an organization to sharpen our focus on our commitments and the road we must walk towards change. As part of delivering our vision, mission, and values, we want to continue to learn how to decolonize our practices and unlearn Anti-Black racist thinking and behaviour. We need to support and amplify local, community-based, grassroots efforts that are working towards racial justice and building movements that are fighting for the world we want to see and be.

As we transition through this time of global health crisis, we reaffirm our commitment to networks that build capacity within communities and contribute to social, racial, environmental, and economic justice not only during crisis and recovery, but equally important—in the everyday and towards a transformative future.

The VJR statement also calls upon provincial and federal governments to provide emergency funding and fiscal resources to municipalities to support a just recovery. In light of recent instances of police violence against black and Indigenous people across Turtle Island that have highlighted the need for systemic change, we extend the call of Just Recovery to mean defunding police, and instead funding, supporting and listening to grassroots, community-based



organizations that will transform systemic inequities and address the racial injustices and violence that we continue to see in our communities.

Kiwassa Neighbourhood House is a place for learning, support, and solidarity, guided by the following values: “We live socially just. We live inclusively. We live respectfully, We live courageously. We live here.” By investing in the work we are already doing--and have committed to do alongside community--we share our strengths and resources to come up with solutions for the inequities and problems that impact us. We believe that by coming together and learning from each other in this way, we can work across our differences to shift the focus of justice based on white supremacist notions of criminality and incarceration towards more transformative notions of justice that better serve the diverse people in our community and our relationship to the land where we live.

Grassroots, community-based organizations such as these listed below have been the first responders in times of crisis, are the most knowledgeable about the issues and solutions facing their communities, and continue to do the most meaningful work with the least resources. As an organization, we advocate for moving in the direction of a just recovery that includes supporting the efforts below, as well as identifying the learning we need to do to show up for these communities and to shape the services of Kiwassa Neighbourhood House to be responsive to the needs of Black, Indigenous and racialized migrant communities.

Racism and police violence--especially against black and Indigenous people--are Canadian realities and not exclusive to the US. We want to amplify the grassroots organizing and work of the communities most impacted by COVID-19 measures, the settler-colonial police structures, and by white supremacy ideology.

- [Black in BC Community Support Fund for COVID-19](#)
- [Black Lives Matter Vancouver](#)
- [Hogan's Alley Society](#)
- [Black Women's Program at Battered Women's Support Services](#)
- [Vancouver Black Therapy & Advocacy Fund](#)

In this transition, we want to continue our commitment to creating spaces of access without fear by building a Neighbourhood House that aligns with the [Sanctuary Principles](#) to address the needs of families with precarious or no immigration status.

Fund to support families with precarious or no immigration status

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/2rh9k-food-for-people-with-precarious-or-no-imm-status>

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