

Online workshops encourage residents to see ?Courage is Possible?



Courage means different things to different people.

It can be as bold as skydiving or changing careers, or as seemingly simple as finding your voice and raising your hand in a meeting.

However you define it, courage is yours to find and a series of online workshops with local leaders hosted by the Aurora Black Community Association, is helping residents shine a light on the strength they have within.

Kicking off on January 15, and continuing on January 22 and 29, the Courage Is Possible Workshops look at ?The Courage to Leave or to Say Yes?, ?The Courage to Show Confidence?, and ?The Courage to Lead.?

Local leaders bringing their views to the table include mental health advocate Karen Carrington, therapist Latoya Reid, business leader Sandra Ferri, and, among others, cultural leaders like Reccia Mandelcorn (The Aurora Public Library), Suzanne Haines (The Aurora Cultural Centre), and Nelia Pacheco (The Aurora Film Circuit).

?This is something that fits into my personal mission: What do I want to teach and pass on to people?? says Phiona Durrant of the Aurora Black Community (ABC) Association. ?It really takes a lot of courage to do absolutely everything, even to get involved and volunteer for something. A lot of people have things inside them that they care about, whether it is work in the community or to lead, but we just don't have the courage. We're hoping that if we can even change one person and give them that green light it will enable them to find their own green light and get started. That's how we're going to make change in our community.

?There's a lot of work to be done and I thought if we can start this year to help people find the courage to be a part of the change, then we're helping them to be mentally, emotionally and physically ready because nothing is easy. Courage gives you the endurance to finish what you start. That's the end goal: that people will be engaged and ready to implement or finish what they started.?

Once registered for Courage is Possible, participants can take part in the meetings via Zoom where they can interact with guest speakers and with each other in a safe and welcoming environment. If you're not sure it's for you, highlights from each session, respecting privacy, will be shared by the ABC via its social media platforms so viewers at large can still benefit from what is being presented.

Registrants, however, get the added bonus of interaction with the leaders well after the seminar is finished.

'We want people to be genuine and show up and everyone who goes to our website to register will have that private piece where they can be transparent about what they are trying to find the courage to do,' says Ms. Durrant. 'We will have a safe space where people joining can speak genuinely and express their concerns and what they're finding the courage to do. We will follow up with everyone who attends within two weeks of the workshop. In the workshop, we will have something to say, 'I will start?', 'I will stop?', and 'I will be?' and once they write it down in the workshop, we will follow up with them, they will be able to choose one of the speakers they want to follow up with them and that person can have that mentorship if they need it.

'Our next session will be on January 22 and it will involve the healing we need to get: how do we deal with those pains that prevent us from showing confidence? We will be talking about confidence, and how to be you and different. A lot of people are afraid to be themselves and we want to fit in.

'It doesn't matter what your title is, we all need courage. We all have something we're afraid to share, afraid to be vulnerable about. We all have a testimony and it is our responsibility to share that so we can deliver or release one other person who believes they are the only one going through this. During the pandemic, how do we find the courage to leave one career and go into another? During this time, how do we find the courage to say 'yes' to the call to run in an election? We're afraid to do a lot of things. We don't want to say 'yes.' We just want to give people hope and access to find courage ? because I feel we all have it!'

To register, visit www.aurorablackcommunity.com/event-details/courage-is-possible-workshop.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter