

Sport Aurora has a new Director for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Sport Aurora will turn their heads to Auroran resident Claude Nembhard as the Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Nembhard, who is currently the Interim Director for Ontario Basketball, is also the chair of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committee for the organization as well.

As the new director, Nembhard is ready to give back to Aurora and he isn't here to merely check a box.

'I want to give back to Aurora. It's kind of my drug. I'm trying to do it with basketball. The opportunity presented itself. From Ron (Weese) and Laurie (Mueller) and I said I would help get this going,' Nembhard told The Auroran.

'I'm not just doing this to check a box. The last thing I want to do is put my name here, check a box and then all of a sudden people realize we're not really that diversified in this community. What we're doing right now, and [are] in the process of doing is an audit of Sport Aurora and where they're at right now with regards to DEI, do maybe some surveys of the community with regards to demographics and figure out where the gaps are. Then you put some policies and procedures in place for Sport Aurora.'

Once that is all done, Nembhard confirmed that will be the moment where he can examine where the funding can come from, to provide programming to groups that don't have access or cannot afford them.

Specifically, Nembhard is planning to help underserved groups such as BIPOC, women and girls, people with disabilities, newcomers to Ontario, people with low incomes, 2SLGBTQIA+ Community and Indigenous people.

In his aim to develop programming for all of these groups, Nembhard said he would like to develop sufficient programming for these groups that will be here for the long run.

With his connections in Ontario Basketball, across the province, and with Mayor Mrakas, Nembhard is excited to get started.

First up, he is currently searching for partners in the community who can be his volunteers.

'Let's say I have a program for girls. And I want to get girls in the gym playing basketball, for example. Could be low-income girls from different ethnic groups, kids that can't afford IEM or can't afford YNBA. I will have to find volunteers in the community to help with that,' Nembhard explained.

'So maybe I go to IEM or go to YNBA and say, 'I need volunteers from your organization to help me coach these kids.' That's how this would work.'

For Nembhard's services, or to reach out to him with any questions, you may contact him at cnembhard@basketball.on.ca.

By Robert Belardi