



The Power Within: Tamisha Parris - Committed to Her Community

Tamisha Parris is the National Youth Representative for the National Council of Jamaicans and Supportive Organizations of Canada (NCJSOC). She is currently working with that organization on a National

Youth Conference "The Power Within: Organizing Black Youth for Civic Participation", which will take place at OISE in Toronto during the weekend of May 19-21 this year. The conference was conceived and will be led by a team of young people. It will provide a venue for youth to engage in meaningful dialogue on a theme that resonates strongly with participants from across Canada.

Tamisha is a continuing source of pride to her grandfather, Neville Watson, a twenty-seven year veteran of, and now retired from, the Toronto Police Service. Mr. Watson, a former detective in the Jamaican Police Service, was the fifth black police officer to be hired by the Toronto Police Service. Tamisha's mother Winsome Parris, a columnist for the AFRO News in Vancouver, is not only supportive of her daughter's community work, she was instrumental in bringing Tamisha to the NCJSOC. Winsome Parris is currently a member of the Vancouver Chief Constable's Diversity Advisory Committee. Tamisha now brings her heritage to bear on her work as the assistant to the human resources manager as well as assistant to the Professional Development and Diversity Officer at the Durham Regional Police Service.

Ms. Parris grew up in Mississauga and graduated with a BA from the University of Toronto majoring in Equity Studies. Her course load included African and Caribbean Thought, Women's Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, Religion and Law.

A commitment to volunteerism and a love of community has drawn her into working with the African-Canadian Heritage Association teaching



Black History to youth between the ages of twelve and seventeen. She is currently a member of the Youth Advisory Committee with the City of Toronto and acts as a labour coach and relief worker with the Massey Centre for Women.

The National Council of Jamaicans and Supportive Organizations in Canada is a national non-profit umbrella organization established in 1987. Its primary purpose is to help identify and respond to the needs of Jamaican-Canadians and other racial minorities, and act as a coordinating and resource facilitator on public policy and other matters affecting its membership.

As the National Youth Representative to the Youth Conference, Tamisha Parris will welcome youth advocate Kehinde Bah and Farley Flex as keynote speakers. The conference will also offer a panel discussion that will include Deputy Chief Keith Forde and Dr. Tamari Kitossa.

This conference promises to be an important stepping-stone for many Black youth and an opportunity for the development of civic skills that will make them effective participants in their larger Canadian society.

