

## **Deputation to Toronto Police Services Board**

Scadding Court Community Centre (SCCC)

June 18, 2020

### **Re: Anti-Black Racism and Policing**

Dear Members of the Toronto Police Services Board:

I am writing to you today as the Acting Executive Director of Scadding Court Community Centre to ask that you consider, support and champion the motion put forward by Councillors Matlow and Wong-Tam as they relate to the redirection of **a minimum of 10%** of the Toronto Police Service budget towards underserved systems, programs and supports that will better meet the needs of Black, Indigenous and racialized members of our city.

Given the ongoing realities of anti-Black racism, as most recently highlighted by the deaths of George Floyd in the United States and Regis Korchinski-Paquet, here in Toronto, it is clear this path of structured violence cannot be allowed to continue. Located in the heart of downtown west Toronto, serving a very diverse, racialized, low-income urban population, Scadding Court is not unfamiliar with the complexity of what change will mean, and we are willing and eager actors in the processes to come, as allies, as those impacted, as those in service to residents in our communities, to help build a fair and accountable system.

We support the Board of Health in acknowledging and clearly stating that this is a public health crisis we are in.

Founded in 1975, SCCC is a multi-faceted, community-based organization with programs and services geared toward under-serviced, culturally and racially diverse groups including low-income women, children and families, at-risk youth, people with developmental and/or physical disabilities, and seniors.

One area of focus for SCCC historically has been policing, given the neighbourhood we serve and the history of over policing in the Alexandra Park community. Beginning with renewed racial tensions in the community in the mid 2000s, SCCC worked with levels of government, agencies across the city and institutions to begin to think on how to tackle racism, and community-police relations. This led to the Community Education and Access to Police Complaints demonstration project, in partnership with over 45 agencies across Toronto (CEAPC: <https://scaddingcourt.org/ceapc-demonstration-project/>). SCCC and the coalition at the time, was a participant in helping to inform the development and establishment of the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD).

SCCC and partners, with the University of Waterloo, co-hosted a Forum on revisiting Police Complaints in 2013 (<https://scaddingcourt.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/2013police-forum-report.pdf>), and since that time, the Centre has run several programs, from hate crimes education with youth and the Toronto Police Service (TPS), ongoing programming to assist with

youth leaving the justice system, to many programs involving racialized youth, the TPS and particularly the mental health system.

Scadding Court strongly believes that a reallocation of funding is necessary. Statements have been made by limitless individuals, groups, and organizations that reiterate the need to direct resources to the systems that are able to effectively respond to crisis situations, in non-violent ways. Too often, too regularly, we find ourselves with lost lives, avoidable interactions, aggression vs de-escalation tactics that lead to violence, criminal charges and incarceration compounded by consistently growing underfunded systems.

To this end, knowing that there is so much work yet to be done with details, we stand in support of:

- Community-led alternatives to policing including a significant increase in restorative justice practices and systems;
- Emergency front-line mental health mobile units;
- Completely reviewing and implementing new measures to facilitate equitable access to justice and public safety systems for Black and Indigenous communities at all levels of government;
- A reduction in the size of the police force, and a complete stop to sending armed/uniformed cops on mental health-related calls;
- Programs identified in the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy, Childcare, Affordable Housing, Tenants' Defence Fund (or housing more broadly), Skills Training, Employment Counselling and Food Security;
- Stronger financial and dedicated resource support for the Indigenous Affairs Office
- Reviewing the roles of law enforcement officers in our school systems;
- Reforming the police complaints process to guarantee true civilian oversight over both the investigative and oversight processes related to complaints against law enforcement.

We stand in solidarity with our residents, sector partners, allies and others who believe in a better Toronto. We look forward to understanding what the plan forward will look like, and how we can play an active role in the creation of a set of more fair, and just systems that serve and protect us all, equally.

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