

# Update on the 'I am the Bridge' Campaign to Ending Racism in Partnership with Saskatchewan Sport Organizations

## ISSUE

In Saskatoon, racism and discrimination continue to perpetuate the historical disadvantage experienced by Indigenous peoples and other racialized and diverse groups. Naming racism and other forms of discrimination is powerful in the work to eliminate unequal social outcomes and validates the experiences of marginalized communities. Public awareness and anti-racist education are essential for the City of Saskatoon (City) to effectively work towards the elimination of racial discrimination and inequality.

## BACKGROUND

In 2014, the City expanded its scope from a focus on multiculturalism and cultural awareness to also include a comprehensive anti-racism and equity education initiative.

Administration has since developed a public education campaign that provides education on the issue of racism and encourages everyone to be leaders in the elimination of racism in Saskatoon and Saskatchewan. '*I am the Bridge*' was the theme of the campaign that puts personal responsibility on each and everyone of us to address racism; it also incorporates the reference to Saskatoon's reputation as the iconic bridge city.

The '*I am the Bridge*' theme is a multi-phased marketing campaign. Earlier phases of the campaign launched in 2017 included a mix of billboards, transit shelter ads, bus backs, Captive Audience ads, posters and social media. The next phase launched in 2018 included a partnership of athletes from World Cup Saskatoon and the Saskatoon Soccer Center with messages of ending racism in sport. An example of the Soccer Center poster and messaging is provided in Appendix 1.

The campaign objectives are to increase awareness and recognition of racism in Saskatoon, develop a better understanding of how to eliminate racism, and educate the public on mitigating racism and finally, to engage residents and spark a dialogue in the community.

## CURRENT STATUS

The current phase of the '*I am the Bridge*' campaign strives to combine the success and underlying messaging of the previous two phases of the campaign by using sport as the vehicle to continue to encourage a dialogue within the community. For this phase of the campaign, the City is partnering with some professional, semi-professional and amateur sport organizations in Saskatchewan to increase the awareness and recognition of racism in the province. Hearing and seeing respected athletes of home sports teams may inspire people who may not otherwise be exposed to anti-racist messaging to 'be a bridge' to ending racism.

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Organizations participating in the program for 2022 include:

Participant	Role
Saskatchewan Roughriders	Campaign participant
Saskatchewan Rattlers	Campaign participant
Saskatoon Blades	Campaign participant
University of Saskatchewan Huskies	Campaign participant
City of Saskatoon	Development and production of materials

The campaign deliverables are:

Item	Description
Video	Theme: I am the bridge to ending racism in my community Length: 90 -120 seconds Recognition: all campaign participants
Digital Ads	Theme: I am the bridge to ending racism in my community Creative: Group photo of athletes from participating teams, standing both individually and together for eliminating racism Recognition: all campaign participants
In-venue displays	Theme: I am the bridge to ending racism in sport Creative: Group photo of athletes from participating teams, standing together for eliminating racism Recognition: all campaign participants

Delivery of the campaign will be launched this Fall to coincide with the Saskatchewan Roughriders and the City of Regina hosting the 109<sup>th</sup> Grey Cup in November of 2022.

Participation by partnering sports teams and organizations will be at no cost, with the City of Saskatoon handling all photography, videography and design costs. In-kind support for athlete and coaching staff participation, logo use, and ad placement in/on facilities, website and social media channels is requested from partnering organizations.

Materials will direct audiences to the City of Saskatoon's website to learn more about the campaign and how to be a bridge to ending racism at school, work, home or on the sports field.

### DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

There was an overwhelming response to both previous phases of the *'I am the Bridge'* campaign. The initiative accomplished its goal of engaging various groups in conversations about racism and drew national attention. The content and nature of the

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response to the campaign is a direct indication of how important the continuation of the '*I am the bridge*' public education initiative is.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implication or considerations. All activities and expenditures are from within existing budgets.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no privacy, policy, social, CPTED, or environmental implications identified.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Additional public education initiatives aimed at understanding systemic and institutionalized racism are planned to be launched in 2023 with a 'Call to Action' to other organizations to share how they also embody the '*I am the Bridge*' theme. This campaign and further public education efforts will be done in partnership with the Anti-Racism Network.

### **APPENDIX**

1. '*I am the Bridge*' to ending racism in sports poster campaign

#### Report Approval

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