



PRIME MINISTERS' ROW

L'ALLÉE DES PREMIERS MINISTRES

Prime Ministers' Row emphasizes its commitment to Canada's unheard voices

The Black Lives Matter movement is showing Canadians how important it is to have the physical, psychological and emotional space for dialogue in order to create meaningful social, political and economic change. BLM and its many allies remind each of us that we have a role to play in dismantling systemic racism and in creating a more equitable society. Prime Ministers' Row takes this responsibility seriously.

PMR was established in 2015 by a group of community members in Sandy Hill — the neighbourhood where most of Canada's first settler leaders lived and worked — seeking to celebrate Canada's potential by better understanding its past. Against the physical backdrop of Sandy Hill's extraordinary heritage architecture, PMR aims to do three things:

1. To explore the legacies of Canada's former prime ministers and other historical figures who shaped today's Canada, for better and for worse.
2. To better understand, contextualize and learn from the impact of these legacies on people and communities across the country.
3. To feature lesser-known stories, silenced and unheard voices, fresh outlooks and contemporary viewpoints in order to paint a complete picture of Canada's past, present and potential future from multiple perspectives.

Prime Ministers are polarizing figures with personal and political legacies that both unite and divide. Traditionally, their stories are much better known than those of the people they affected. Addressing this gap has been central to our mission since PMR was created, and we welcome the emerging national conversation about whose history should be told, by whom, and how.

PMR's upcoming community consultations will actively engage people across Canada. We are eager to hear from Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC), 2SLGBTQ+ and other communities about the legacies of past Prime Ministers from their perspectives, and how to reflect them in the PMR initiative.

Sandy Hill, like all of Ottawa, sits on the unceded and traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation. The experiences and perspectives of First Nations,

Métis and Inuit has been, and will remain, central to this project. The ongoing and intergenerational trauma, discrimination and harm First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities have faced have their roots in power centres like Sandy Hill, where colonization, marginalization and systemic racism were entrenched by the laws, attitudes and institutions of various Canadian leaders, with the historical support of broader Canadian society.

During the lifetimes of many of Canada's first leaders, power was consolidated within the hands of a privileged few, in service of governance structures that were inherently racist. From the outset, PMR has sought to celebrate and advance the democratization of that power, to acknowledge the work that remains to be done, and to further empower Black, Indigenous, People of Colour and 2SLGBTQ+ communities, which have been specifically targeted by discriminatory practices for generations.

We are proud that Prime Ministers' Row is a woman-created organization, and that its multi-generational Board includes new Canadians and persons of colour, is two-thirds female and collectively speaks six different mother tongues. The PMR Board will continue to pursue diversity, inclusivity and equity through three lenses:

1. Future Programming and Events: Finding, illuminating and profiling previously silenced or unheard stories and perspectives from a wide variety of communities;
2. Physical Infrastructure: Ensuring PMR's urban design and architecture contribute to a safe, healthy, accessible and welcoming public space for all; and
3. Organizational Design: Guaranteeing that at least 50% of the Board of Directors is composed of members of equity-seeking groups; undertaking specific efforts to engage service providers (from advisors and architects to urban planners and engineers) from across all equity-seeking communities; and ensuring that our Expert Advisory Panel is bilingual, regionally-diverse and includes members of equity-seeking communities.

In this time of historic resistance, PMR remains more committed than ever to use our platform to empower, inspire and learn from Canadians from all walks of life and in solidarity with BIPOC and 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

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