

ONYX INITIATIVE MARKS ITS 5TH ANNIVERSARY WITH MAJOR MILESTONES IN SUPPORT OF BLACK POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS

EY and WSIB join PwC, BMO, Unilever, Air Canada, Cadillac Fairview, The Home Depot, CIBC, and more in creating opportunities for Onyx's program participants

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA, October 21, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Onyx Initiative](#), a Toronto based non-profit established by philanthropists and serial entrepreneurs, Drs. Wayne and Nigela Purboo, to bridge the pervasive gap in the recruitment, selection, and retention of Black college and

university students, and recent graduates for roles in corporate Canada, is celebrating five years of making meaningful connections between highly qualified and ambitious talent and companies and organizations seeking to create more inclusive and innovative work environments.



Onyx Scholars meet with corporate leaders during a professional development workshop.

"To reach this milestone is truly a testament to the age-old, but still very relevant, adage, it takes a village," said Nigela Purboo, Co-founder and Executive Director, Onyx Initiative. "When we established Onyx in 2020, there was a groundswell of support coming from all sides; but as the focus on DEI waned at home and abroad, so did some of the enthusiasm for creating places of employment that accurately reflect the rich, multi-ethnic, multicultural fabric that makes Canada the envy of the world. Luckily, Wayne and I have a trusted and dedicated network, and are well versed in the importance of building a solid foundation in the form of people, purpose, passion and priorities, which has sustained our organization and continues to propel our mission."

For the Purboos, and their small but mighty team, welcoming more than 2000 Black post-secondary students and young professionals into their Onyx Scholars Program, and providing them with a range of crucial, job readiness resources over the past five years like 2500+ hours of career coaching, over 1700 hours invested in free LinkedIn Learning courses with more than

15000 upskilling videos completed, 350+ opportunities to meet with, learn from, and get hired by top tier employers via a variety of events, and a curated job board with hundreds of roles posted weekly, are some of the achievements that fill them with immense pride. Onyx's annual virtual Black Professionals Career Fair is also counted amongst the organization's numerous highlights; the most recent edition of the fair garnering more than 600 job seeker and employer registrants over the course of two days last month.

Although the latest addition to Onyx's slate of signature events, an annual Celebration Gala that takes place during Black History Month in February, is only entering its third year in 2026, the sold-out event has played a pivotal role in bolstering Onyx's brand identity thanks to comprehensive social media, outreach, and networking campaigns to drive ticket sales and attendance and extensive post-event exposure via media hits and attendees' online mentions and photos. The gala has also helped to offset critical operational expenses and economic shortfalls that have resulted from a decrease in the DEI grants and goals that were once a top priority for the public and private sectors.

"As a non-profit, access to capital is always a concern, one that requires ongoing discussions and decisions about where to direct our financial and human resources. Thankfully, the relationships that we have established and nurtured with the more than 30 companies and organizations that we are privileged to call employer partners is rooted in mutual respect, empathy and the recognition that fair and equitable employment practices is the only pathway forward for conscientious leaders and innovative businesses that are laser focused on the future," said Wayne Purboo, Co-founder, Onyx Initiative. "With the rapid advancements in technology and the firm grasp that younger generations have on emerging systems, embracing a multiplicity of ideas and experiences is now more important than ever for our country to retain a competitive advantage, globally, and unlock the dormant talent pools whose industrious nature and expansive thinking will produce results that benefit all Canadians. Diversity is about addition; exclusion is the gateway to diminishing returns."

Onyx's national network of educational and community partners, as well as professional



Onyx Scholars participating in a career readiness session.



Drs. Wayne and Nigela Purboo, co-founders of the Onyx Initiative, at their annual celebration gala.



Our dual value proposition is predicated on the notion of attracting and maintaining a strong supply of high potential talent to meet the recruitment and retention needs of our employer partners.”

*Nigela Purboo, Co-founder
and Executive Director, Onyx
Initiative*

mentors and volunteers, are an equally important part of their coalition, especially as it relates to supporting the organization’s marketing and promotional efforts to drive applications for new participants in the Onyx Scholars Program and attendance at events that are geared toward helping the scholars forge beneficial connections with key corporate decision-makers.

“Our dual value proposition is predicated on the notion of attracting and maintaining a strong supply of high potential talent to meet the recruitment and retention needs of our employer partners. We would be remiss if we didn’t acknowledge the vital role that campus career centres and Black Student Associations, as well as

community organizations and industry-specific clubs have played in amplifying our purpose and helping us to sustain momentum,” said Nigela. “But our vision is not limited to the professional development of our future leaders, we are just as invested in their personal enhancement and are forever grateful to the 170 mentors and countless speakers and presenters, from a myriad of backgrounds and vocations, who have diligently provided our scholars with the mental, emotional, physical and financial tools necessary to successfully navigate all aspects of their lives.”

ONYX SCHOLARS IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

“The Onyx Initiative has helped me bridge thoughts with reality, proving that with the right support, anything is achievable.” ~ Keshana King

“The connections I made with recruiters through these events have been invaluable in enabling me to land this opportunity and I am forever grateful for all the work done by the Onyx team.” ~ Wonuola Adelus

“Thanks to the Onyx Initiative, I now see challenges as opportunities to grow and excel.” ~ Josh McBain

“The Onyx Initiative is more than just a program. It provides us with the support and time we need to figure things out, helping to light a path to a future I never thought was possible.” ~ Jania Husbands Jackson

“The Onyx Initiative program has been a catalyst for change, inspiring me to be an agent of change in my community and beyond.” ~ Joel Offeh

“The Onyx Initiative is not just preparing us for the workforce; it's also preparing us to lead.” ~ Daynelle Des Vignes

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Onyx Initiative and to become a partner.

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