

YEAR-END REPORT

MARCH 2021

Adirondack Diversity Initiative

Contract #CO1068GG

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Administrative Manager

Approved by:
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ADI Director



ADI's Black, Indigenous, People of Color
hike at the VIC
(Photo by Mike Lynch)

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Saranac Lake Rally Demanding Justice for George Floyd
June 3, 2020
(Photo by Heather Gallaher)

ADIRONDACK DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

Who We Are

The Adirondack Diversity Initiative (ADI) is the only program of its kind in the region. It is the result of unprecedented bipartisan support at the state level and endorsement by more than 40 community agencies across the Adirondack North Country.

Our Mission: The ADI exists at the intersection of environmental and transformational justice. Working with regional stakeholders, ADI creates interventions that attend to the legacies of systemic racism and structural oppression that continue to plague our nation and the Adirondack Park region. Our interventions ensure the longevity and sustainability of the Park, thus guaranteeing a vital and sustainable Adirondack Park for future generations. **Our vision:** To make the Adirondack Park region a more welcoming and inclusive space for ALL New Yorkers and its visitors.

The ADI Family: ADI is committed to cooperative governance. Our staff work collaboratively with our Core Team – a vibrant, committed group of volunteers, who are integrated into, and are a part of regional communities – to advance racial equity and transformational justice for Black, Indigenous, other People of Color, minoritized and underserved groups in the Park. Our Core Team consists of 16 members and includes: Rocci Aguirre, Cali Brooks, Donathan Brown, Gerald W. Delaney, Kate Fish, Paul Hai, Clifton Harcum, Kim Irland, William Janeway, Jen Kretser, Kelly Metzgar, Chris Morris, Temnit Muldowney, Pete Nelson, Cindy Rodriguez, and Martha Swan.



Adirondack Wild awarded Adirondack Diversity Initiative Director Nicole Hylton-Patterson the 2020 Wild Stewardship Award on Nov. 27, 2020
(Phot by Ken Rimany)

"After watching one of her anti-racism seminars, I was just overwhelmed. She got to me. That's what convinced me to go to my board and say, 'If you're going to keep a wild Adirondacks, everyone has to take ownership of it.'"
~ David Gibson,
Adirondack Wild



Nicky Hylton-Patterson
Executive Director

Nicole "Nicky" is a Black Queer Activist Scholar and Community Organizer, who has spent the last 25 years working with marginalized and minoritized communities around the world to seek justice. Her extensive career includes the U.S. foreign service, a racial justice officer for the YWCA, Elmira, human rights coordinator for the Chemung County Legislator, and an academic who has taught courses in critical race and Black feminist theories, queer of color critique, Pan African studies and Africana philosophy. In her current role as the Inaugural Director for the Adirondack Diversity Initiative, she continues to mobilize and deploy the entirety of her personal, political, and professional experiences. Her mission: To equip communities in the North Country with the tools, strategies, language, and VOICE needed to dismantle systemic racism and structural oppression.



Melanie Reding
Administrative Manager

Melanie has been engaged in the fields of environmental education, diversity and inclusion, and communication for over 20 years. As an educator, she has focused on providing high-quality, conservation, climate, and cultural education programs that engage the learner while empowering them to make informed decisions and take responsible actions. Over the last several years she has focused on using research-based communication tools known as Strategic Framing to help elevate social issues by creating public understanding, unique partnerships, and building public will for social good. In her spare time she develops humane education curriculum for a number of elephant advocacy organizations in North America and Africa.

ADI STAFF

To learn about the ADI Core Team visit: <https://www.diversityadk.org/copy-of-our-team>



David Yisreal Epstein HaLevi
Scholar
ACTIVIST-in-Residence

David earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Chicago in Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities, where he focused on philosophy of education. David enrolled at Northwestern University's School of Education and Social Policy as the Ruth J. Simmons Fellow and earned his teaching license for all secondary sciences. He earned a masters in adolescent education, with a teaching license in social studies, from the College of Saint Rose in Albany, NY in 2011. Thereafter he began his PhD at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he was also managing editor for the Comparative Education Review journal. David transferred to UAlbany in 2013 and is now nearing completion of his PhD in Educational Policy & Leadership with a focus on eco-pedagogy, systems thinking, and their intersections with equity and justice.

What We Do

ADI works with local communities to design and implement strategies and tools that advance racial equity and transformational justice. Our philosophy privileges the lived experiences of members of the community in all aspects of our work. This stems from our belief that communities must play a central role as actors and stakeholders in articulating, facilitating and executing efforts at combating injustice in the Adirondack Park region.

ADI's Strategic Initiatives focus on five key areas:

- 1) Environmental Justice
- 2) Cultural Consciousness Education & Mass Literacy
- 3) Business & Commerce
- 4) Recreation & Stewardship
- 5) Public Interest & Policy.

We provide programming, outreach, mobilization, and rapid response to aid and empower local stakeholders to become change makers.



ADI Emerging Stewards:
Alternative Spring Break Program participants
at the Wild Center, Tupper Lake, NY
(Photo by Clifton Harcum)



Adirondack Diversity Initiative Director Nicole Hylton-Patterson
talks with state Adirondack Park Agency board members at
their December 2019 meeting in Ray Brook.
(Enterprise photo by Aaron Cerbone)

Adirondack Research Consortium and Paul Smith's College 2021 Webinar Series
LINKING PAST TO PRESENT: A LOOK AT DIVERSE PEOPLES WITHIN THE ADIRONDACKS
March 26th 2021 | 10AM | Free Registration



Dr. Nicky Hylton-Patterson
Adirondack Diversity Initiative
Director



Dr. Donathan Brown
Rochester Institute of Technology
Moderator



Amy Godine
Historian, Independent Scholar and
Author

An Understanding of How Far We Have Come in Confronting and Addressing Bias and Discrimination

Register Online in Advance at <https://bit.ly/2Z5oyNb>

Have questions for our panelists? Email them to adkresearchconsortium@gmail.com

Panel Discussion on March 26, 2021 in
partnership with Adirondack Research Consortium
and Paul Smith's College.

ADI BY THE NUMBERS

ADI Staff members

3

Mailing list subscribers

370

Media articles featuring ADI

67

Social media followers

2,491

ADI Virtual Education sessions offered

68 (over 5,200 views)

ADI networking events

over 130 (reaching over 7,200 people)

College Interns hosted by ADI

14 (from SUNY Potsdam & Clarkston Universities)

ADI OBJECTIVES

2020-2021

Objective 1, Hiring: Director

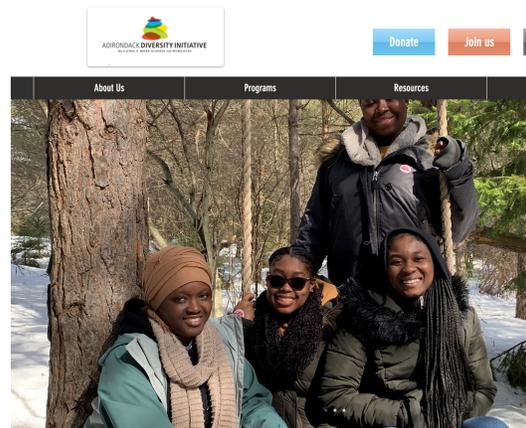
The Adirondack Diversity Initiative (ADI) welcomed its inaugural director, Nicole Hylton-Patterson on December 3, 2019. Hylton-Patterson brings a unique cultural perspective to her new role. Born in Jamaica, she spent her formative years in Northern Norway as part of a gifted child program. Hylton-Patterson has 25 years designing and implementing interventions in the public and private sectors and working with community stakeholders to advance solutions focused on culture change that is unique to local ecosystems across the United States and around the world.

Objective 1, Hiring: Administrative Manager, ScholarACTIVIST-in-Residence

In October 2020 and January 2021 (respectively) ADI was able to expand staffing capacity with the hire of an Administrative Manager, Melanie Reding, and visiting ScholarACTIVIST-in-Residence, David Yisrael Epstein HaLevi.

OBJECTIVES CONT.

www.diversityadk.org



Objective 2: Program Brand Development

This cycle, brand development objectives focused on (re)design and development in four (4) areas: Website, Logo, Newsletter, and Video Diaries.

In June 2020, we initiated the **logo redesign** process, which is now in the final stages of review by our Core Team. In October 2020, the ADI **e-newsletter** was launched and has a **direct mailing list of 370**. Additionally, ADI's work is featured in ANCA's **monthly newsletter that reaches 5,700 people**. Social media presence includes: **Facebook Group (1,211 members), Twitter (25 followers), Instagram (1,034 followers) and YouTube (232 followers)**. We are currently developing a TikTok portal that will feature the anti-racism mass literacy project completed by our Spring 2021 interns. In January 2021 ADI relaunched a new user-optimized **website**, to showcase and highlight our work.

Objective 3: Outreach and Engagement

In order to develop a network of stakeholders and partner organizations numerous meetings, introductions and discussions were held with community organizations, non profits and the business community. **During this project year there were over 130 ADI networking events**. Through these outreach and engagement activities **ADI has engaged with over 7,800 people**.

A small sampling of the groups ADI has met with and/or presented to are: Adirondack Park Agency, Department of Environmental Conservation, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, Unitarian Universalist of Saranac Lake, Common Ground Alliance, Joy to the Children, Adirondack North Country Gender Alliance, North Country Community College, Paul Smith's College, SUNY Canton, SUNY Potsdam, Adirondack Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Mercy Cares for the Adirondacks, Adirondack Experience, John Brown Lives!, The Wild Center, Hamlets to Huts, Kiwanis Club of Saranac Lake, Adirondack Research Consortium, Newcomb Diversity Collective, Keene Valley School District, Hamilton County Government, NY State Police, Essex County Sheriffs, ROOST, Double H Ranch, North County School, Eagle Island Camp, Camp Sagamore, Travel Unity, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, Behan Communications and many more.

ADI was featured in 67 news articles through the following media outlets: WAMC, Sun Community News, NCPR, NYup.com, Adirondack Daily Enterprise, NBC5, Adirondack Almanack, NNY 360, Albany Times Union, Daily Advent/ Opera News, The Alton Telegraph (Illinois), Adirondack Sports Magazine, LMT online, Plattsburgh Press Republican, CNY Business Journal, Hudson Valley 360, Adirondack Explorer, Lake Placid News, USA Today, Politico, ABC News via AP, Minneapolis Star Tribune via AP, Washington Post via AP, Troy Star Tribune, Glens Falls Post Star, Northern Forest Center, I love NY, Hamilton County Express, and Oneida Daily Dispatch.

Objective 4, Training System Development: Workshops, Trainings and Seminars

1) The Antiracism Education and Mobilization Campaign (AEMC), was created in response to national and regional demand for a racial reckoning after the murder of George Floyd. Each session provides language, tools, techniques, and most importantly strategies to identify, understand, and build more racially just and equitable communities in the Adirondack North Country. Due to Covid 19 restrictions all are virtual. Working with our partners at the Adirondack North Country Association, Adirondack Experience, North Country Community College, and John Brown Lives!, ADI designed four (4) virtual series that explore the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, and the environment. AEMC series include: 1) Antiracism 101, 2) The Black Experience in the Adirondacks, 3) Black History in the Adirondacks, and 4) Queer of Color Voices.

- **Antiracism 101** was created to focus on activating, mobilizing and engaging our community on issues of racial equity and transformational justice in America.
- **The Black Experience in the Adirondacks** is a partnership between ADI and the Adirondack Experience, the Museum at Blue Mountain Lake.
- **Black History in the Adirondacks** series is a partnership with North Country Community College, ADI, ANCA and John Brown Lives! Focuses on the Adirondacks abolitionist history and black history in the Adirondacks.
- **Queer of Color Voices** is a partnership with the Adirondack North Country Gender Alliance. The series centers the lives of LGBTQI+ in the Adirondack North Country.

To date **ADI has created 68 virtual sessions** that explore the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, and the environment. These sessions are currently being utilized by several colleges/universities and organizations across the Adirondack North Country and have been **viewed over 5,000 times**.

2) The AEMC also features two (2) **Antiracism Book Clubs** with our partners at Paul Smiths College and the Unitarian Universalists of Saranac Lake. The first, is a community-led project with our partners at the Unitarian Universalist of Saranac Lake and provides opportunities for building community knowledges and cultural consciousness related to the lived realities of Black, Indigenous, and other Peoples of Color. The second, emerged from a request by Paul Smiths College for ADI to spearhead a staff-led antiracism literary project, as part of the boarder institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic process.

To date, ADI's Antiracism Book Clubs have convened **15 meetings** and engaged **26 participants** during the award period.

3) Our Community Wellness Initiative (CWI) is an umbrella program designed to empower individuals and community leaders with the knowledges, strategies and tools needed to identifying and grapple with systemic issues related to racism bias, equity and belonging in their communities. The program emphasizes critical thinking on the impact of local policies and programs and actively engages residents in equity and anti-racism educational opportunities.

The CWI includes the following programs:

- **Community Policing & Cultural Conscious Development** – In Progress
- **ADI School Board Liaison** – In Progress
- **Community Advisory Council** – In Progress
- **ADI 100 Non-Violent Dialog Facilitator** – Launch Fall 2021

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

ADI Community Policing Initiative

Goal: To strengthen the relationship between police agencies and the Adirondack communities they serve with specific focus on eliminating racial disparities that disproportionately harm Black, Indigenous (and) People of Color (BIPOC) and other marginalized residents and visitors by engaging in a positive process that affirms the importance of police agencies in realizing communities are safer, healthier and free of racism and inequity.

- Fostering community involvement in policing
- Providing expert resources to help with police reform, including meeting Governor Cuomo's Executive Order #203
- Providing Cultural Consciousness and Anti-Racism education to help realize more equitable policing.

The Community Policing initiative is a core component of the Adirondack Diversity Initiative's groundbreaking **Community Wellness Program**. The Community Policing initiative was born out the Adirondack communities collective call for accountability and reform after the death of George Floyd and Governor Andrew Cuomo's Executive Order #203: New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative, which states that "urgent and immediate action is needed to eliminate racial inequities in policing, to modify and modernize policing strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, and to develop practices to better address the particular needs of communities of color to promote public safety, improve community engagement, and foster trust."

RENZ Community Policing training in Essex, NY
(Photo by Lorenzo Boyd)



ADI has contracted with RENZ Consulting, LLC (www.renzconsulting.net) a firm that specializes in strengthening police-community relations at the state and local level and within urban or rural settings. Working with the needs of our Adirondack communities they assess the needs of all stakeholders and identify strategies to address issues head on through training and workshops supported by empirically sound, evidence-based research, in order to bridge the gap between police officers and the communities they serve.

The Community Policing Initiative is a commitment to work with State and local police agencies in the Adirondack region, to help them fulfill their commitment to equity and inclusion, by building stronger relationships between the agencies and diverse

The first training workshops will take place May 5th through May 7th, 2021. **Adirondack agencies being trained in May include NY State Police, Lake Placid Police Department, Essex County Sheriffs, SUNY Potsdam University Police, Potsdam Police Department.** Additional agencies have signed on for the fall 2021 trainings. **In total over 49 officers will begin training in May.**

ADI has secured \$135,000 in private donations to fund the Community Policing Initiative's first year. Fundraising efforts will continue to seek full funding of the five year initiative.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Cultural Consciousness Program

It's not diversity training, it's cultural consciousness.

Standard diversity trainings might make participants feel good, but they do little to expose structural racism or change behaviors. In fact, diversity training can have the unintended effect of obscuring and thus reproducing structural racism. **ADI's Cultural Consciousness program uses a cognitive-behavioral approach to deepen understandings of culture, socialization, race and racism so that participants can become aware of why and how they think and act in certain ways, and then effect positive behavioral changes.** Cognitive journaling and reflection are key components of this work- this is not passive learning! Building cultural consciousness is a necessary first step to building critical consciousness, which is a precondition for meaningful action against oppression.

ADI's Cultural Consciousness Project includes:

- Welcomeness Audit – In Progress
- Four Courses
 - Introduction to Cultural Consciousness – In Progress
 - Antiracism 101 – Spring 2022
 - Implicit Bias & Micro-Aggression: A Primer – Spring 2022
 - Ally, Accomplice, and the Active By-stander: Finding Your Voice – Spring 2022
- DIY Toolkit for Cultural Consciousness Certification/Micro-credentialing – Fall 2021

"Building Diversity & Inclusion" workshop facilitated by Nicky Hylton-Patterson (Photo by ADK Research)



Cultural Consciousness Training is currently being engaged by five institutions/organizations in the Adirondacks: Eagle Island Camp in Saranac Lake, Northern Lights School in Saranac Lake, North Country School in Lake Placid, Saranac Lake Chamber of Commerce and ANCA.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR ADI

Upcoming Strategies for 2021-2022

BI-DIRECTIONAL EXCHANGE

Bi-directional Youth Exchange match K-12 students from New York City with a peer from a school in the Adirondack park. The visiting students spend a week learning about the park, each other and working together with ADI and camp staff to develop their cultural consciousness. Though short, these foundational experiences build sustainable relationships for long term investment and care for the park. As an intervention focused on younger learners, ADI Emerging Stewards offers the following opportunities:

- **Creates** ethical partnerships- students from each of these communities meet in safe, supportive spaces, guided by instructors/facilitators who have all completed ADI's cultural consciousness program.
- **Provides** opportunities for peer to peer cross-cultural interaction and knowledge building of NYC and ADK school-aged children.
 - Opportunities for environmental and cultural consciousness knowledge and skill acquisition that accounts for sociocultural hierarchies
- **Cultivates** an entire generation of ADK stewards from BIPOC communities across New York State who are invested in the sustainability and longevity of the Park.
 - Empowers youth to be agents of change in their homes/schools/institutions of socialization
 - Functions as a bridge to other ADI programs such as K12 to Ranger School Pipeline with SUNY ESF.
 - Facilitates teacher/worker exchanges between partnering ADK campsites and recreational organizations and NYC participant schools
- **Expands** access to BIPOC from NYC to the Adirondack Park and its offerings

MICRO-CREDENTIAL

In March 2021, ADI started convening local thought leaders and stakeholders who could help facilitate the creation of a self-paced fully online cultural consciousness micro-credential. We are seeking to collaboratively create a short series of courses that are accessible and approachable to adult learners to enhance critical consciousness and make the Adirondacks a more equitable and welcoming space. ADI has assembled a team of 17 community members that have agreed to work on this vital addition to our cultural consciousness training program.

ADI 100 NON-VIOLENT DIALOG FACILITATOR- FALL 2021

The ADI 100 Facilitator Project is an attempt to facilitate dialogue between members of our Adirondack Communities and find ways to elevate voice and engage in meaningful conversation and dialogue. The ADI 100 program will annually engage a cohort of 100 persons, representative of the communities from across the Adirondack region in Non-Violent Dialog "training" and development. The ADI 100 will serve as gatekeepers, facilitating access to our local communities: Haudenosaunee, working class, rural, BIPOC, LGBTQ, and any other minoritized, underserved and underrepresented voices in the Adirondack region.

BIPOC RESIDENTIAL & VISITOR STUDIES – FALL 2022

The design and execution, data collection and reporting of relevant studies, tools and instruments being used to assess community needs and center community voices relative to Diversity Equity and Inclusion and ADI's strategic outcomes.

The design and execution of the following studies will commence in Fall 2022:

- Economic Impact of Diversity in the Adirondacks
- Tourism and Attitudes of Diverse Visitors

Collaboration

Perhaps the strongest expression of ADI's forward momentum to date are our partners that currently include many of the leading civic, educational, marketing, and environmental groups in the Adirondacks. Along with lending their names, input, and feedback to our efforts, Partners agree to provide resources and expertise to ADI projects and programs for which they have an affinity. ADI Partners have assisted with funding, sponsorship, marketing, media, training facilities, and more.

MEET OUR PARTNERS

Our Partners include but are not limited to:

Adirondack Almanack
Adirondack Council
Adirondack Experience
Adirondack Foundation
Adirondack Mountain Club
Adirondack North Country Association
Adirondack North Country Gender Alliance
Adirondack Park Institute
Adirondack Research Consortium
Adirondack Wild
Camp Sagamore
Clarkson University
Cloudsplitter
Common Ground Alliance
Creative Healing Connections
Eagle Island Camp
John Brown Lives!
Lake Placid Institute
The Nature Conservancy, Adirondack Chapter
North Country Community College
North Country School
Northern Lights School
Paul Smiths College
Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism (ROOST)
Saranac Lake Chamber of Commerce
SUNY-ESF Northern Forest Institute
SUNY Potsdam
SUNY Canton
The Wild Center
Unitarian Universalist of Saranac Lake
Union College
St. Lawrence University