



YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce

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Media Release

For immediate release

YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce Honours Jillian Lyman with Peace Medal

A Peace Medal ceremony was held on Wednesday, November 18th at the YMCA's Health, Fitness & Aquatics facility. Peace Medal committee members, Michael McLuhan and Brian Minielly, presented the award to Jillian Lyman with her parents present. Due to COVID-19 the ceremony was kept small and private but a video will be shared to the YMCA Facebook and Instagram accounts.

Owen Sound, Ontario, November 18, 2020 — The YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce honoured Jillian Lyman, organizer of the Owen Sound Solidarity March for Black Lives Matter in Owen Sound, with our annual Peace Medal for making significant contributions toward peace-building.

The medal is awarded annually to a nominated individual or group who, without any special resources, demonstrate a commitment to the values of PEACE through contributions made within their local, national or global community. As we navigate through 2020, the urgent calls for action for diversity, social inclusion, and equity are challenging us, as individuals, as communities, and as a country, to reconsider where we've been and where we want to go.

Jillian Lyman rallied more than 1,000 members of our community to march peacefully between city hall and Owen Sound's Black History Cairn in support of the Black Lives Matter movement following the death of George Floyd. On a sweltering hot summer's day, during a time when COVID-19 had many of us secluded in our homes, Jillian's call to action was heard. The message was clear: racism and injustice have no place in our community.

Following a moment of silence where participants kneeled at the cairn, Jillian spoke to the crowd at Harrison Park, urging the community to continue the work to fight racism and inequity.

"This is not where it ends. This is the beginning. This doesn't stop here. I'm glad that you all came out to march today, but put your signs on your lawn, put them in your window. Educate yourself on this. Donate. Share with your friends, have a conversation," she said.

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As a local university student, Jillian showed incredible poise and determination in organizing, marching and speaking for her cause. Her work highlights not only anti-racism in the black community, but also acknowledges other people of colour, including Indigenous and Asian residents and the growing number of immigrants in the region.

Lisa McAllister, friend and nominator, said, "She organized volunteers and guest speakers to talk about the difficulties that do exist for Black people in Owen Sound and around the world. She wanted to make a difference in rural Ontario, where so many think turmoil and race relations are non-existent. The magnitude of such an event in Owen Sound was profound for all involved."

Twenty-three people and 12 groups, including Jillian Lyman, have been awarded Peace Medals by the YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce. The award recognizes those who have shown a demonstrated commitment to the values of PEACE: Participation, Empathy, Advocacy, Community and Empowerment. We are very happy to present this award to Jillian; a worthy recipient.

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