Electronic Press Kit

DEEP ROOTED PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS 'CONSTANT CONTACT'
FEATURING MICHELLE MCKAY AND MEL LUCAS
WRITTEN, PRODUCED, DIRECTED BY TUNDE BALOGUN AND KARLI ZSCHOGNER
ASSISTED BY SYLVIA D. HAMILTON

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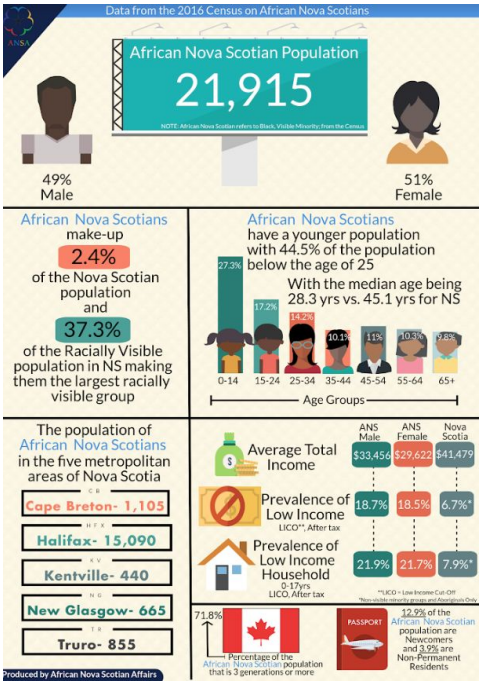
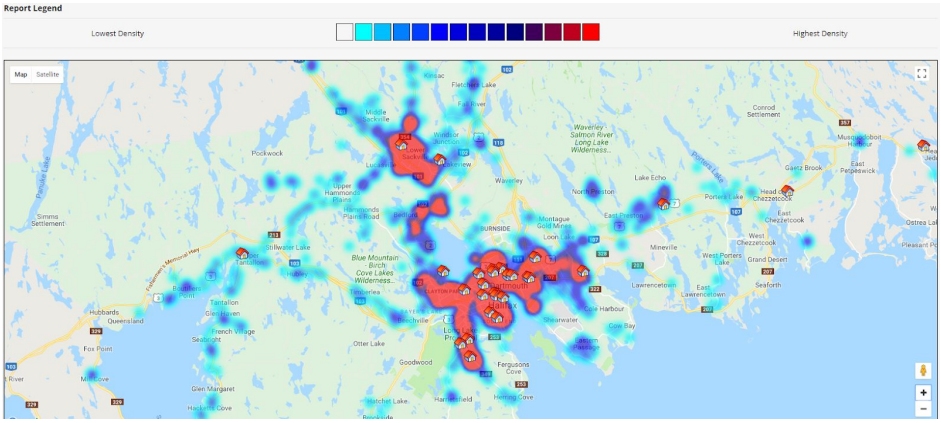
Directors' Note

Violence comes in many forms: physical to emotional, family to community, gender-based, terrorism, civil war, to international wars. But violence does not spring out of thin air.

Just like trying to break a habit or addiction, it takes will, persistence, and guidance from others to break the cycle of violent behavior. We were drawn with curiosity to Michelle McKay as the only female employed outreach worker for Ceasefire Halifax working with African Nova Scotian young men. Our first meeting Michelle, we believed there was something deeper as to why she was in this particular position at Ceasefire Halifax. This was revealed during our interview and concluded in lasting moments in the film.

She also touches on the underlying reasons as to why individuals act out of desperation including the lack of opportunity and access to services for African Nova Scotians.





According to Feed Nova Scotia, Halifax Regional Municipality has a very high density of individuals of served by food banks. For example, In March 2017 there was 7005 (FNS counts each person or households once, regardless of the number of times they received food support from the food bank over a given time). Of that number 6.4% were aged 16-24 and male (Feed Nova Scotia Client Registry. March 22, 2018. Interactive Household Report for HRM, March 2017).

In light of Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, we hope this documentary will help shed light on local strenuous and undervalued work of those in conflict prevention and conflict resolution. The film sheds light that McKay is one of many.

Yours,

Tunde Balogun and Karli Zschogner

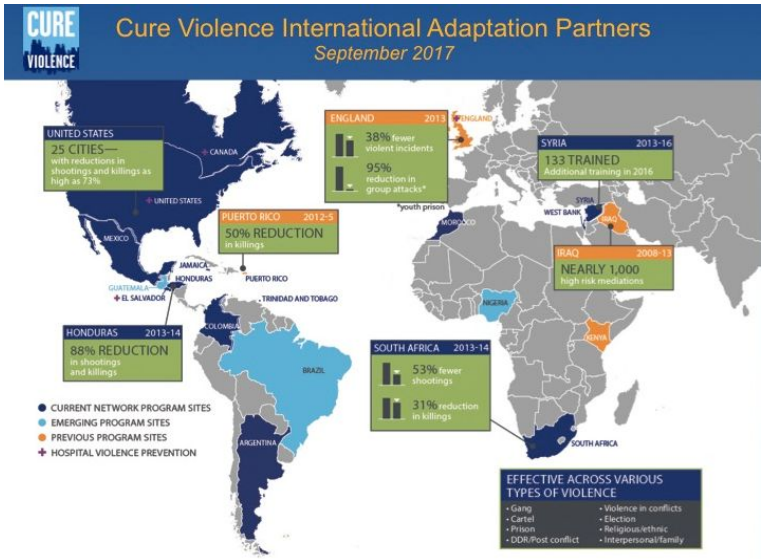
Synopsis

Constant Contact is a short documentary film about Michelle McKay and her story to becoming an outreach worker for Ceasefire Halifax, a mediation and non-violence program dedicated to helping young African Nova Scotian males find non-violent solutions.

Michelle went back to study for social services after 26 years because she felt unfulfilled with the work she had been doing. After her volunteering there, she joined the team at Ceasefire Halifax, a community-based group of mediators and support workers preventing violence, particularly gun violence. Michelle sees that all behaviours are learned and unlearned. As an outreach worker, she works under the Ceasefire/Cure Violence model of seeing violence like a disease. Her colleague Mel Lucas and her current client D, share just how the work Michelle is doing is critical to the stability and future of these individuals.

The model was chosen in a provincial and national response to Halifax's highest homicide rate in 2011, second highest national rate based on population. Some of the homicides were African Nova Scotian men, thus community members including Yvonne Atwell, executive director of the Community Justice Society, social worker Robert Wright, and lawyer Rocky Jones. Ceasefire Halifax was established in 2012.

Based on a public health model, Ceasefire Halifax is an international partner to Cure Violence, which recognizes that violence spreads much like medical epidemics. Street credibility and trust are key factors in mediating and prevention of violent situations. Violence Interrupters are the first points of contact for at-risk individuals, then referred to Outreach Workers as McKay towards regular individuals in the prevention of the further spread of violent behaviour. Community Mobilizers' work is shifting the norms through public education. To date Ceasefire Halifax has conducted over 200 conflict mediations and have serviced over 100 clients.



The film and trailer showcase local musicians.
"Man Down" by Keonte' Beals featuring Kin Crew is from North Preston of which Ceasefire Halifax also services. Cunny Ross of Family Over Fame is another active African Nova Scotia community member. His song 'She's Down' is complementary to the credits. Mody Gratis' "Look Back In", Vodovoz Music Productions' "The Road" and Kevin Macleod's "Bittersweet" provide important instrumental transitions to our film's story.

Characters

Michelle McKay
Outreach Worker for Dartmouth North
Ceasefire Halifax

"I don't think there are not enough resources for us that's the problem, and I find when there is a resource put in place, it's taken away, like the Skills Up program for example, they had that in place for African Nova Scotians in general they want to go back to school and get their high school diplomas, they took it away and they put nothing else in place."

Mel Lucas
Project Manager
Ceasefire Halifax

"*Going forward, beyond the pilot project phase, we would like to expand the demographic of individuals who we work with to include caucasian, females, indigenous populations because really there is violence in those arenas as well. There are individuals who need help other than the African Nova Scotians."*

D
Client of Ceasefire Halifax

"It wouldn't be a good road if it wasn't for Michelle... I look up to her. As a mentor and role model....I want to get other kids to come here so they can have the help too.

About Deep Rooted Productions

Deep Rooted Productions was created in the shared will to seeking out those in the who are determined to make their communities more holistic and equitable in tackling the underlying and deep-rooted causes.

Karli Zschogner

Karli moved to Halifax for her bachelors and masters in investigative journalism at the University of King's College. Her filmmaking started in high school when she was awarded Best Animation for the 2009 CTV's Best in Shorts and REEL Student Film Festival in Parry Sound, Ontario. She acquired her Bachelors in Social Sciences in Conflict Studies and Human Rights at the University of Ottawa as well as training in third-party neutral facilitation through the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution.

Her interests reach from trauma, gender-based violence, reconciliation, indigenous rights, and sustainable development which have led her to Guatemala with a local forensic anthropological group interviewing and documenting and to Rwanda with a local genocide survivor support group. As coordinator for Canada's All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and other Crimes Against Humanity, she hosted public round-tables alongside survivors, parliamentarians and experts. She has spent many summers with family in Nova Scotia and helping build an off-the-grid cabin in Cape Breton, NS.

Babatunde Balogun

Tunde has a Bachelors of Arts with a concentration in political science and sociology from Saint Mary's University in Halifax Nova Scotia. He also attended Beijing Normal University in Zhuhai China, and was one of 50 students selected worldwide to attend the UIP Program at University of Ulsan in South Korea. The program is designed to give the worlds top students an opportunity to learn Korean business, economics and trade under the supervision of the Hyundai Motor Company.

Currently, Tunde is a Masters in Journalism candidate at the University of King's College in Halifax Nova Scotia. Tunde is also a member and communications director for 902ManUp, a Black men's volunteer group in HRM dedicated to mentoring Black youth in the community. Tunde has recently finished a project with the media division of Metro Halifax called *Black in Halifax,* in which Tunde filmed profiles of prominent members of the African Nova Scotian community.

Public Service Announcement (Broadcast)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Halifax, NS (March 28, 2018) - Deep Rooted Productions is presenting its premiere screening of short documentary around an African Nova Scotian woman working to help at risk young men in her community. The film Constant Contact will be presented this Thursday March 29 at 2:30 pm in the KTS Lecture Hall at the University of King's College.

Admission is free to view the film which follows through the eyes of Michelle McKay, an outreach worker for Ceasefire Halifax. She, alongside violence interrupters who conduct mediations, works with young African Nova Scotian men currently are and at risk of being involved in the criminal justice system.

The film touches on deeper issues that African Nova Scotians face including access to educational programs. Writer, director, and producers Tunde Balogun and Karli Zschogner showcase surrounding public art as well as personal photographs as well as local music by Keonte' Beals and Cunny Ross.

"Shadowing and interviewing Michelle McKay, as a woman in the field conflict resolution and her path to this work was incredibly insightful in the daily challenges African Nova Scotians face," says Zschogner. "The team collectively has much to offer Canadians in helping us put on the shoes of others."

News Release (Print)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Halifax, NS (March 28, 2018) - Deep Rooted Productions presents its premiere screening of Constant Contact, a short documentary about African Nova Scotian community members who mediate and support non-violent behaviour in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), Thursday March 29 at 2:30pm in the KTS Lecture Hall at the University of King's College in Halifax.

The story is told through Michelle McKay, who is currently the only female Outreach Worker for Ceasefire Halifax working with African Nova Scotian young men in the North Dartmouth region.

Written, directed and produced by Tunde Balogun and Karli Zschogner, the film features a variety of footage and photographs including public art across the HRM to give a glimpse to the work and community Michelle serves. Local African Nova Scotian music artists are also featured including Keonte' Beals and Cunny Ross.

"Shadowing and interviewing Michelle McKay, as a woman in the field conflict resolution and her path to this work was incredibly insightful in the daily challenges African Nova Scotians face," says Zschogner. "The team collectively is has much to offer Canadians in helping us put on the shoes of others."

All are encouraged to attend. Admission is free.

Deep Rooted Productions Contact Information

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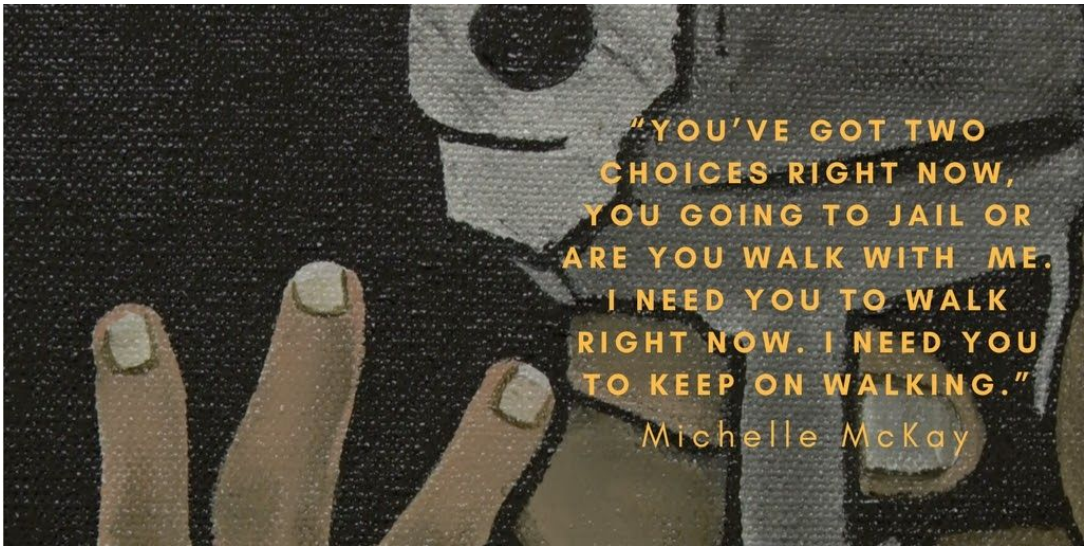
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