

TOES Niagara and Brock University

2023 PARTNERSHIP UPDATE



Members of the Brock and Niagara community came together Thursday, Oct. 26, 2023, to mark the official opening of Brock's Black Student Success Centre. Nyarayi Kapisavanhu, Executive Director of TOES Niagara and Brock Board of Trustees member, is 3rd from right.

After years of working together on projects that empower immigrant and racially marginalized women and their families, TOES Niagara and Brock University signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on May 19, 2021, to formalize and strengthen their ongoing collaborative partnership to co-create mutually beneficial outcomes for Niagara. Building on years of research collaboration, the partnership is a commitment to continued collaboration, mutual exchange of knowledge, resources, and experiences, and exploring student experiential learning opportunities and service in support of the growth of TOES Niagara and Brock University. The partnership reflects Brock's commitment to community engagement and their shared priority to enhance the social, cultural, and economic well-being of Niagara.

Projects and Initiatives in 2023

Building on years of research collaboration, the partnership between Brock University and TOES Niagara is a commitment to continued collaboration, mutual exchange of knowledge, resources, and experiences, and exploring student experiential learning opportunities and service in support of the growth of the community. In 2023, these explorations and efforts have created the foundation for 2024 and 2025 activities that will lead to incredible impact in the community for Niagara's diverse community.

Research

Match of Minds with Joanne Crawford

- TOES Niagara initiated a research project in 2023, coordinated by Dr. Joanne Crawford, Associate Professor, Nursing, that looks at strategies to promote the social inclusion of immigrant women in Niagara.
 - This project was initiated due to a lack of documented data regarding the social inclusion of immigrant women in Niagara. To accumulate data, organizations participated in surveys and interviews on the subject.
 - This project now includes a major Experiential learning opportunity for a student researcher through Brock's Match of Minds program, providing connection to community-engaged research for Brock students.

Service

TOES Niagara and Brock University partner in service to community and to each other, most often focusing on reducing barriers to success for women and racialized community members, empowerment of young residents, and supporting educational initiatives.

In 2023, this included:

- Nyarayi Kapisavanhu, Executive Director at TOES Niagara and Brock University Board Member, supported the landmark creation and opening of Brock's Black Student Success Centre.
- Code of Conduct for Human Trafficking Prevention in the Niagara Region
 - TOES Niagara and Brock Professional & Continuing Studies are working to create a Code of Conduct, created by community stakeholders and businesses, that will encourage human trafficking prevention. Components include policy development, resource promotion, and education for community members.

- This project will focus on partnering with the tourism and hospitality industry, to make Niagara an inhospitable place for human trafficking.
- Project is ongoing to April 2026.
- TOES Niagara founder Nyarayi Kapisavanhu currently serves on Brock University's Board of Trustees, joining the Board in the Fall of 2022.
- Brock's Office of Human Rights and Equity helps to facilitate an ongoing mentorship program for Black youth through the Department of Canadian Heritage. This project between TOES Niagara and Brock has been ongoing since 2019.

Next Steps

Brock University and TOES Niagara are continuing to work closely together towards mutually beneficial outcomes in 2024. With the launch of the Code of Conduct for Human Trafficking Prevention, there is much shared activity to look forward to. Additional initiatives and potential collaborations are being explored to advance the partnership on an ongoing basis, including the development of creative student learning opportunities.