

Villa Charities Retains Columbus Centre Name Based on Independent Research Study Findings

May 20, 2022

The subject of Christopher Columbus and the use of his name is clearly an important issue on many levels. There is considerable media attention regarding institutions renaming due to negative perceptions of their name and Villa Charities also received inquiries and feedback on this issue.

As leaders in the Italian-Canadian community, we believed we had an obligation to engage in this necessary and relevant discussion.

Our vision at Villa Charities, “Inspiring people to explore the Italian in all of us,” requires us to be a responsible and engaging partner to all those we serve and those we represent. As stated previously, to do so effectively we were committed to examining and responding to the forces that shape and contribute to our culture.

From January through April 2022, we conducted a research project through a third-party firm to examine the use of the name ‘Columbus’ from multiple perspectives in an objective, thoughtful, meaningful, and balanced manner. The research included one-on-one interviews and online panel surveys.

The research gathered feedback from over 990 participants from a broad range of stakeholders including our patrons, staff, Board, founders, donors, partners and the community at large, with representation from Indigenous, Black and Italian-Canadian populations.

While we considered the input from everyone, overall, the findings suggested that there is limited support for a name change and across a wide variety of issues probed.

In addition, based on the interviews and surveys, the findings showed that a name change would likely cause more divisiveness.

Therefore, the Villa Charities Board has decided to maintain the Columbus Centre name for its community centre. Our due diligence has brought awareness to the issue, and we will produce and display a Land Acknowledgement plaque in the Centre, along with a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy.

We thank everyone for sharing their views and helping us to move forward in a way that we believe will best meet the needs of the multigenerational and multicultural communities we serve, now and in the future.

To request a copy of the Columbus Name Review Research Report, please contact:

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