

# Our Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

OECM's commitment to diversity and inclusion is reinforced in our business practices and corporate culture which endorses inclusive hiring practices, ensures fair representation, facilitates initiatives for staff to share cultural experiences, and cultivates an environment of unconditional acceptance. Our [Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion Statement](#) backed by OECM's Board of Directors, our President and CEO, and the entire OECM team, also acknowledges and advocates for the rights and freedoms of Canada's Indigenous communities, as well as for members from all communities and racialized groups that experience systemic and institutionalized discrimination and violence.

In today's ever-changing world, we know that we must be meaningful in our actions and strive to make an impact that matters to our customers, suppliers, staff, stakeholders, communities, and country. In 2024, we will review our commitment statement to ensure that our actions continue to accurately reflect our values and our words. Through our collective efforts, accountability, and continued learning, we can aim for a more just and equitable future for generations to come.

The following is a snapshot of events and initiatives in 2023 to support our ongoing Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion.

Additional details on the various actions we have taken this year to continuously foster relationships, build partnerships, listen, and learn from Indigenous leaders and community members, are included throughout this report.

## Inclusivity and Diversity in the Workplace



At OECM, we know that our differences are what make us stronger and help us create a dynamic and engaging workplace. We strive to cultivate an equitable and impartial environment that embraces our differences through professional development activities, workplace initiatives, and internal policies and procedures. Early in 2023, OECM initiated a mandatory **Respect in the Workplace** training for all staff. Offered by Respect Group, a leading workforce training company, this virtual, 90-minute, module-based interactive training aims to educate and empower employees with practical tools to identify harassment, discrimination, or bullying at work and address the issues through constructive, healthy, and assertive approaches. As part of our work to integrate diversity-based components in our day-to-day operations, we continue to develop and share a regular monthly Diversity Calendar with all staff, intended as a resource to recognize and celebrate cultural, religious, spiritual, and general awareness days observed nationally and internationally. Staff members also share their individual stories, anecdotes, experiences, and the occasional tasty dish!

## Indigenous Community Initiatives



OECM made significant strides in strengthening ties with Indigenous and Métis communities in Ontario through visits to the North, promoting Indigenous-based engagements, recognizing Indigenous businesses, and supporting Aboriginal organizations through fundraising and greater representation among our sector partners. In September, we acknowledged the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to commemorate the tragic and painful history of children in the residential school system, as well as the ongoing impacts they, and their family members, as well as communities across Canada face. OECM staff donned orange shirts branded with the message, "Every Child Matters," in memory of Indigenous children who suffered the atrocities of residential schools. OECM invited Dr. Paulette Tremblay, President & Chief Executive Officer of the First Nations Education Administrators Association (FNEAA), to speak to our staff about our continued and collective journey toward truth and reconciliation. We continue to prioritize our work in this area with open dialogue, community-based learning opportunities for staff, partnering with Indigenous organizations, and determining the procurement needs of diverse groups.

