

## JM Drama Alumni – Black Lives Matter Statement

Addressing the urgent message of the Black Lives Matter and similar movements, we at JM Drama Alumni, operators of The Registry Theatre, are obligated to examine what “supporting the community through the arts” should mean.

JM Drama was founded by graduates of St Mary’s and St Jerome’s, Kitchener’s former downtown Catholic High Schools. The group was conceived of as a place where friends could share the joys of making art while mentoring students from their alma mater. They were privileged to have access to the resources of the Catholic School system and, while circumstances made them demographically homogeneous, making a space for those who did not belong elsewhere was a foundational principle.

As the organization grew and continued to benefit from strong ties to established community leaders, JM Drama’s mandate evolved to supporting the broader community through the arts. In today’s context, we are reflecting on our evolution as an organization to ensure that we are aligning ourselves with anti-oppression movements we value so strongly.

JM Drama Alumni stands for community, and works to make The Registry Theatre a space where all feel welcome. We have opened our doors in invitation, and have been proactive, in a variety of ways, to welcome, empower, and collaborate with individuals and groups who reflect the diversity of our community. However, given the reality that has been revealed by Black Lives Matter, it is clear that we can do more to amplify our efforts in order to become more inclusive.

We will reframe our mission statement to ensure that principles of anti-racism are actively declared as priorities. We will work to further build relationships within diverse communities on their terms, in their spaces, honoring their protocols and traditions. We will further extend our attention and activities beyond our walls.

The Registry Theatre has a rich history of presenting BIPOC (Black/Indigenous/People of Colour) artists, however we have only recently begun to benefit from BIPOC leadership within the organization. More - and more diverse - representation is necessary. The people of Waterloo Region should trust that equality is not only valuable but fundamental to JM Drama Alumni.

Our commitment to anti-racism and the principles of the Black Lives Matter movement do not begin and end with this statement. We will act in solidarity with our diverse communities to ensure that JM Drama and The Registry Theatre are truly reflective of all of our citizens.