

Hanifa: Whatever complexion that you are, just love yourself. I guess just throughout high school I just learned to like appreciate my skin and realize like hey, there's people out there like getting tans and stuff like that. They are like trying to look like us, like what's up? So I'm really - I'm very, very blessed to see myself in this way. And I'm very happy with it. If anyone wants to tell me to bleach my skin, I'll be like, no, my face, like my melanin's popping, it's enough. Like leave me alone. That's it.

Rose-Eva: This is the Unheard Youth Podcast. We're focusing on newcomer youth voices all across Canada and featuring what they have to say about migration, identity, and belonging. I'm your host, Rose-Eva Forgues-Jenkins. We've started off this episode with some words from Hanifa. I chose this section because I loved hearing the passion in Hanifa's voice as she talks about her journey with self-appreciation. Her words inspire the title for this episode, which is "learning to appreciate your skin."

Hanifa's words remind us how important it is to celebrate who we are. It also shows that this is not always an easy process for everyone. When we say learning to appreciate your skin, it's a metaphor for appreciating who we are as people, but at the same time, this title can also be taken very literally as the youth talk about the way that they're treated due to their skin color.

In this episode, we hear more from the members of Edmonton-based newcomer youth group, Sky Club. This is the second episode where we hear from the group. They were also featured on our previous episode, Balancing Cultures, where they talked about the community that Sky Club provides.

On this episode, we hear more from that conversation as the youth discuss their challenges and successes when it comes to celebrating who they are. Later on in the show, we also feature a conversation with Bashir Mohamed, Andrew Jimaga, and Barnabas King about the power of words.

But first, here is Juan, Juru, Hanifa, and Sarah from Sky Club.

Juan: Hi, my name is Juan -----.

Hanifa: Hi, my name's Hanifa -----.

Sarah: Hi, my name is Sarah ----.

Juru: Hey. My name is Juru -----.

Do you feel safe in this country?

*[pause]*

Hanifa: Yes and no. Mostly because of like, because I'm like I'm Muslim but I'm also African, too. So, I have both of those going on. And the reason why I said yes is because it's not as crazy

as it is in the States and in other countries when they see a Muslim or a black person in general. Like here in Canada, there will be incidents where you're going to come across a racial incidents where kids when they question you or they judge you in any way, like there's one time I took the bus and I got off and this old guy, he walked right past me and he told me to go back to where I came from. And that's kind of me being me, like my initial reaction was to yell back and be like, "Just because I'm not from here like I'm allowed to be here. You're not from here, too. You're just as much an immigrant as I am, too, so don't be coming for me like that."

Sort of thing or being told that my religion is a bad thing, like it's saying, you know, we're nothing but like terrorists or something like that. It's difficult. It's kind of hard to live here. Because there'll be times when they're going to attack us and they tell us to go back to where you came from or like they'll tell us how bad we are when they really don't know us like that.

J: With the racism, my parents we are – our religion, we're Catholic, and throughout my whole entire life I've been in a public school and the reason to that is because my brothers experienced racism in a Catholic school. So, my father came out with a solution to trying and shield us from racism and he also tried to do that by trying to convince my mom to take us back home. Yeah.

Voices: Where even? I'm sorry. *[laughter]*

J: But my parents were well aware of racism and they tried to get us not to face it but like it's hard. Because no matter where I go, my race is following me. I embrace my race to a full extent.

J: And so, it's my sister and I, we were not given like Bible names because my father believed that it's a form of assimilation to try to get us to change our names to fit into society. With ethno- Eurocentric names and... In a sense, I'm thankful for that because I don't want to be assimilated, just try to fit into this culture just because my name is seen different when it should be embraced to a full extent for being different, diverse. So yeah.

H: Yeah, even with the whole entire name thing like growing up, it would be difficult for teachers to like say my names like my name's Hanifa like spelled H-A-N-I-F-A and for some reason, when it came to a time that they saw my name they'd be like Hanifa? I'm like, my "I" is not silent, it's there. It's there. It's very clearly there. And like it was very difficult and the kids would just kind of laugh, "Ha, ha, Hani, Hani, Hanifer," something like that. Or like even though in the announcements when they're going to say like your full name, that, too, kids would just kind of look at me weirdly, like "How do you say your last name?" and then I'd just kind of explain it.

There's this one – there's this one point – I don't know, this was elementary, I don't know which grade it was, but there was this kid in my class, and he'd make fun of my last name and it was --- --and he'd call my "Gary." I don't know where and why but he'd be like, "Gary, hey Hanifa Gary," or something like that and I just – I never really understood it at the time. I didn't know what he was doing. But now that I look back on it, I'm just kind of sit there and like, that was

like my name. You really should not made fun of it. We're both foreigners. We're like we're not from here, like, I wouldn't have not done that to you.

Like whatever your last name was, that's your last name. Like do you, have a chance to embrace it and stuff like that? And I've rarely had the chance to because when it came to tests and stuff like that and we're handing in projects, I don't put my last name. I just put my first name. Because kids – I had a feeling kids would make fun of it like now, I just don't care, it's my last name now. It's a part of me.

S: Yeah, building off of what Juan said, me and my brother were both given Catholic names. My name in the Sudanese community is ----- and that's what my mom and my dad and all my cousins and family call me. But in school and like on my official documents, my name is Sarah ----. Because my mom didn't want me and my brother to get bullied or face racism based on my name.

And I think it's ridiculous. Like and you, like Hanifa like your name's not even --- like that. Like if you can say Arnold Schwarzenegger you can say Hanifa ----.

J: Living here in Canada, do I feel safe? I agree, yes and no. Because one, I'm, black and I see so many things and actually experience things where, you know, I go through where people and myself share experiences through discrimination, racism faced in the real world basically. So, I was – how old would you be in the seventh grade? Thirteen, right? Thirteen. I was thirteen.

And I was walking home and I was with my friends who were – one was Vietnamese, the other was – she's Indigenous and El Salvadoran and the other one was Irish, right? So, we were walking, pretty diverse group, you know, we'd go, we'd get Slurpees, we were having a good time going home from school and I remember, there was this group of white guys in a car. It was a black truck, I remember. And they just like – can I say the word?

Rose-Eva: Go for it

Rose-Eva (hosting): I stopped Juan here because I wanted to pause and think about the question that she just asked. As you can probably guess, what Juan is about to say next is a controversial word. As a white person, I don't think it's ever appropriate for me to say it. So, I'll just say, the "N" word. When making the podcast, I also had the question, can this word be used on the podcast? And should it be used? This word was said in the context of a real-life experience that happened to Juan. This is Juan's story and I want to represent that story in the way that feels most authentic to her.

My first instinct, as you might be able to hear me saying in the background, was to tell Juan to go for it. But I don't think I'm the right person to decide whether the word should be included or not. So, I asked some folks who could tell me about the history of that word being used in Canada. I had a discussion with Bashir, Andrew, and Barnabas about the historical uses of that word, as well as their own experiences with it. But first, I'll let Juan finish the rest of her story. I'll also give a content warning for explicit language.

Juan: Can I say the word? It was like “nigger.” They drove off and I’m over here like, whoa, this is the first time someone’s ever called me like that word. Like not who was, I guess, European or whatever they were and I was shocked. That was like, whoa, what’s happening? And I was fuming like I was so mad. I chased the car two blocks and they finally stopped. But they were harassing us so I took that as an opportunity to say what I had to say and I went off. I don’t remember what I said, but I almost slapped the guy in the back seat. Like I feel like it was a coward move for you to say that word and then drive off. So, if you’re listening, I want you to meet me at the same spot. *[laughter]* I’m still mad. I was a whole child and I guess that’s when I – I think – I feel like that was when I experienced racism for the first time...so directly and – I don’t know. It was just crazy and wow, I was so mad. And ever since then, I’ve experienced other things but that one situation just stood out for me. I hope that never happens to me or anyone around me. It’s not a good feeling.

But the funny thing is, I saw them again and they were just smirking and laughing because I guess they thought that I would – I don’t know. I think they took it as an opportunity to go like viral on social media. And it was just - it was whack.

Rose-Eva: Hello. My name is Rose-Eva Forgues-Jenkins for the Unheard Youth Podcast. First of all, can I get everyone to introduce themselves?

Bashir: Yes. Thanks for having me. My name is Bashir Mohamed. In my day job, I work for the provincial government but in my free time, I like looking into Edmonton’s black history.

Andrew: Hello. My name is Andrew Jimaga. I’m a student at MacEwan University right now. And I also work with PYEP. It’s Police and Youth Engagement Program under REACH Edmonton.

Barnabas: My name is Barnabas King. I just graduated this year and I’m going to MacEwan in September. I also worked with PYEP as well.

Rose-Eva: So, just to explain why I work here, so previously I was recording with a youth and they told a story where this youth was walking home from school and a truck full of white dudes, basically, yelled the “N” word at her. And when she told the story he said, “Oh, can I actually say the word?” And I was like, “Yeah. Say it.” When I thought about it afterwards, whether we should have that word on the podcast or not, that’s something I’m not really sure about. There’s words that you’re not supposed to broadcast and that’s one of them. But then, again, this is a real story that someone went through.

So, I kind of don’t really know what the answer is to that question. I’m a white person. So, it’s not really my place to make a decision about that word. I’ve never experienced that. I don’t know what it’s like, so I’m really grateful for everyone else to share their experiences with this topic.

First of all, I thought we’d start with Bashir giving a history of the way that the “N” word is used in Alberta in certain contexts and then other folks can jump in when you feel comfortable, and then at the end of the conversation, maybe you can give some opinions onto whether to include

the word in the podcast or not. So Bashir, you wrote a blog post entitled, “Canada’s Racist Geography and What We Can Do About It.”

Bashir: So I guess to provide some context. So, I came to Canada when I was relatively young. And that word, I heard it while I was growing up. I never really understood the context for it in Edmonton. Especially because when I was growing up, I thought black people were a new thing to Edmonton. But a few years ago, I started looking into Edmonton’s black history and I guess, to put it simply, ever since white people have been here, black people have been here, too. The earliest recorded black Edmontonian was here in Fort Edmonton in the 1700s and they’ve been here consistently.

When they are documented, though, they are often not referred to by their full names. They’re often referred to by the “N” word and then their first name, so, for example, John Wares is a famous example. He was a black cowboy in southern Alberta. He introduced cattle into southern Alberta and he was one of the pioneers, actually, for the Calgary stampede. But, when he passed away, the provincial government wanted to honor him so they found a mountain and they called the mountain, “Nigger John Ridge” and that lasted until 1970.

And there was also a 4H Club, which is like, it’s a rural club that raises animals. They had a club called, “The Nigger John 4H Club” and that was the name put on him. There was an interview with his daughter talking about how no one would say the name to his face and if they did, there was actually one case where he was in a bar in Calgary and he knocked the guy out and actually paid his hospital bill. So, this name was put on these black Albertans. And the legacy persisted through geography and locations.

So, if you go on the Federal government website, you can search whatever slur and you look at a few dozen results. Some of them are rescinded but a lot of them still exist. For example, there’s still a “Negro Lake” in BC. There’s still a “Nigger Rapids” in Quebec. And this is a legacy from that time where black people in the historic text and news articles were robbed of their names. So, that’s just kind of some background.

When we talk about Edmonton and the place we’re at, through a lot of the research, an interesting trend I found was a lot of the famous black Edmontonians, black Albertans, they don’t have sites named after them, and if they do, it’s with the slur. But, a lot of the people who were prejudiced towards them have places named after them. So, Frank Oliver, for example, he was in charge of immigration policy federally when the large waves of black Americans came into Canada. He has the neighborhood, “Oliver” named after him.

Near the Hotel MacDonald where we’re nearby, there’s a Frank Oliver Park, for example, and a lot of that history is either whitewashed, actually, in Gibson Block, which is the – it’s a flatiron building just a few blocks from here, there used to be a sign that said, “White help only” but it’s literally washed with white paint.

This history hasn’t really been acknowledged. And at the end of the post, I talk about how one way we can do it is by a) honoring those sites with those people’s names. For example, “Negro

Lake”, that’s named after somebody who drowned in the lake. Let’s find what their name was and name the lake after them. So, that’s one approach but I’m sure there’s many others.

Andrew: I had a conversation and these – you know, when you get into a certain level, or to school you go all the way and then you – let’s say you become a doctor, right?

Bashir: Right.

Andrew: And then one of your friends who’s there with you or maybe one day there comes along someone and they’ll be like “you’re only there because you’re a minority and they – the minority is there”. And it doesn’t matter how much contribution you’ve made there, they’ll discredit you there and it’s only because you’re like these minority just ‘cause you’re black they want black people there, that’s why they got you there, or just ‘cause you’re whatever, you know. Or just ‘cause you’re female. That’s why they got you there.

Bashir: Yeah.

Andrew: Which is kind of like it’s kind of bad. I guess really bad, I guess, because if you worked so hard your whole life to achieve this and then only for someone to say that oh, you’re only here because you’re black. So your qualifications and stuff don’t matter at all. They don’t.

Bashir: Yeah. Yeah. It’s really interesting. And like, if you look at some fields like health, like health care, like you mentioned, in Edmonton, actually in the 1920s and 30s, black people were refused entrance into some hospitals. And they were also refused entrance into training to be a nurse. So, there was a case in 1938 where a black woman applied to be a nurse but she was denied. And if you look at the legacy of that, all the way to the 1980s at the U of A nursing graduation class, you don’t see a single black face. And that’s from that decision in 1938. So, it’s interesting, because like when people mention, “Oh, you know, you’re here because of you know, because you’re black or whatever”, they’re ignoring all the barriers it took you to get there. The historical barriers but personal barriers, too.

It’s interesting because any time I go to the archives, the archivists don’t really know what I’m looking for or they don’t really understand my research question. And a lot of it, too, is destroyed, for example. Lulu Anderson, she was a black Edmontonian and in 1922 – you know the old Enbridge building on Jasper and 102? That used to be a theatre called the Metropolitan Theatre and she went to purchase the ticket but she was denied entry. She had a six month court case. I tried to find her case file but it was destroyed in the seventies. So, a lot of it, too, is either like whitewashed or destroyed. I don’t think they destroyed it just because it was a case about a black person, but I think it’s they didn’t find that case important. Which says a lot about archivists back in the day.

And it does have a lot of effects now. You know, if you’re a young black youth growing up in Edmonton and you hear stories about Viola Desmond, she’s going to be on the ten-dollar bill, and I was talked to this one class and I asked them if they anything about black history and one of them she raised her hand and she said, “Viola Desmond.” Which, when you have heroes to

look up to growing up, they can connect to locally, it just makes you feel more connected to the province.

Barnabas: I think like growing up personally, there's not like there's not a lot of talk or like in school, for instance, you don't hear a lot about black history in Canada. Especially in Edmonton. Growing up, say like in Social Studies class, you know, it's something I'd always look for it but it's not anything I would find in class, at least.

And I also feel like – I feel like the more as we became less of minorities here, the more people started showing like somewhat of respect, in a sense. They were like someone like hiding their racism. For instance, no one's going to call you “nigger” or a “nigger” like in front of you but like behind your back there's always that low-key racism that's there. But we don't see it. It's not really apparent to us but like it's still there.

Rose-Eva: Hmm. I'm curious as to what that low-key racism looks like?

Barnabas: Well, for me like personal experienced it. Like for instance the school I went to for my high school, I was like a really big minority, I guess, because there wasn't a lot of black people in our school, right? But as I got to know some people in the school and stuff like that and then they talked to me about their first thoughts of me when they saw me. And some people like, “Oh, I thought you were like scary or something, something like that.” It was kind of weird. And there's stuff that they would do, like events or activities they would do and people wouldn't expect you to come and join them or like they wouldn't think you would be interested in that.

Andrew: I think it all goes back to how when once someone is racist they don't talk to you. They don't call you names in your face, right? Like two summers ago, I was working construction, right? One of the companies in west end. And then some guy just drove by and told me, “Go home, you fuckin' nigger” right? And I was like, “Wait, what?” By the time I realized he say this and then he sped off, right? He just sped off. And then my co-worker came and she was like, “Are you okay?” Like and I was just like, “Oh...Wow.” You don't expect someone to say this like they wouldn't normally say in front of your face because they're ashamed or I don't know, just some kind of ignorance but they don't have energy to come – they don't come with the same energy but they will do it when you're not looking or when they feel like they're already safe and there's nothing you can do.

Bashir: Actually, the most I've heard it is when I'm riding my bike and someone yells it out the window. Or like whatever. And the funniest thing is, sometimes they catch a light and then I'm able to catch up to them and they don't look at me. They just keep looking straight. Yeah, it's always – it's just weird. Like if they think they can just say it and run away, then – and now people are more afraid because of cameras. Because like if they take out their camera, they're going to be more cautious.

Barnabas: Yeah, I feel like specifically, for Canadians, no one wants to be labeled as racist. Everyone wants to be seen as a good person and stuff like that. But it seems like everyone already has their standards for certain groups and their beliefs for certain groups and like it won't come out, you won't see it, but the way they interact with you, you kind of feel it.

Bashir: It's interesting because like historically, I've also noticed that people don't like being called racist, even though they do something that's racist. Like in 1924, you know Borden Park? Like on the east side? Black people are not allowed to swim there and the city counselor who was pushing that motion forward, he said, "I have nothing against the colored races but there is one distinction that must be drawn between the white and black races." And he was like very offended when they called him racist.

Rose-Eva: I think that's kind of where my role as a white person steps in because you don't know how this is anonymous, right? This is like people who like you said, they bring it up behind closed doors. They might not be racist to your face but behind those closed doors, they are. Since I'm a white person I get to experience them being racist behind closed doors, right? Like white people think they can talk to me about like oh, you know, like what those people are like.

And that's like I think that's where it's my role as a white person to be like, "No, what are you talking about? What do you mean? Let's have a conversation about this." Like... What do you think white people's role in racism should be?

Bashir: I mean, I guess, the very first thing is to listen. It's very easy to have a really defensive reaction but to listen and understand. Be open to understanding. I guess that's like the most important thing. Because I think like the reason why – the reason why I don't confront racism a hundred percent at the time is because I'm worried about their reaction and their backlash. And if that could be lessened then that would be okay. And I think that could happen with this being a universal understanding rather than defensiveness.

Andrew: If they see something not right, they should challenge it and like try to educate the people around them because a lot of things we see happening is out of fear or ignorance, really. And if you're at a family function or get together and someone's like yeah, "You know, these people like this and like this" and you're like, "No. Actually no. I know a few people and they're not like this. Not everyone's like this. Maybe this is just 2 percent of the people. But I can't generalize the whole people like that, based on that." You know.

Bashir: I guess one example is this podcast because it's not just like us having this conversation that's going to go out to a fairly decent audience who probably works in these areas. So, yeah, I guess this is one example, being able to have these conversations without us having to feel defensive or anything. It's interesting because a lot of those reactions are fairly defensive. But like if there is a genuine will – like I don't know. I don't really hold grudges that much but if somebody was racist to me and they had the general will to correct that or reconcile it, then I'd be totally fine. But a lot of it is that very defensive crying or maybe they'll even – I've seen Go Fund Me fundraisers set up for people who lose something because they did something like that. It's like blows my mind.

Rose-Eva: In terms of using the "N" word on the podcast...

Bashir: I mean like, just my thought is if they use the word and they're comfortable after the fact of having it included then personally, I think it's fine. Because it's a part of their story.

Andrew: Same

Barnabas: Yeah, thing is totally fine. Like I feel like the truth shouldn't be censored and the people need to like – because people like to hide behind stuff so I feel like people need to actually hear it and actually feel that kind of...

Rose-Eva: You just heard my discussion with Bashir, Andrew, and Barnabas. Thank you so much for your valuable input. The youth at Sky Club also had some thoughts about the use of the word on the podcast. They also discussed the context for when the word should and shouldn't be used. Here's what they had to say.

Aysha: I feel like censoring that word is like censoring our past. Because it was said in the past and I feel like people who don't want to hear it, don't want to accept that yeah, that happened, they're conscious-, I mean unconsciously or consciously not wanting to believe that my ancestors did that, they don't want to believe that. But in all fact, it happened and no one's going to – we're not going to move forward by ignoring what has happened. We're going to move forward by talking about it so that everybody else understands the impact that it has had on the world. And I feel like white people don't really understand that. They – I feel like the ones that do say they hear us saying it and they're like "okay. I can say it because they're saying it." No, you can't because you don't actually understand the pain that's behind that word. You know, that's where I stand with why white people can't say it.

Lorit: If you're not black, don't say it. That's all I gotta say, don't say it.

Juan: The "N" word was used to make black people feel inferior. And to this day, it's still being used, so for people to choose or people do not want to hear it, like I understand, but to this day [laughs] black people are still being called the "N" word and it really just shows how history, like nothing has really changed. There's always going to be someone feeling like they're superior and we are the Unheard Youth voices, so you have to listen.

Rose-Eva (hosting): You just heard Lorit, Aysha, Juan, and Juru sharing their thoughts on the use of the "N" word. Next up, we return to the original conversation with Juan, Juru, Hanifa, and Sarah. In the next section, they talk about their experiences with colourism. To give a quick definition, colourism is the prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group. Here's more from Sky Club about the impacts of colourism and how they learned to appreciate their skin.

J: I don't know what to say about colourism because like for me growing up, I never realized how different people would treat me because I am a lot of a deeper complexion so for me, it took me till I was – I want to say the seventh grade – to like really fully – or like the sixth grade – to really fully acknowledge how people portrayed me as. And I don't know, I was growing up I just see as in elementary kids that wanted to play with me, like it's just stuff like that. But growing up, I used to have this perspective, okay, I'm going to marry a white guy so like we can have light skinned kids and lighter complexioned kids. I had a weird fantasy about having lighter complexioned kids. And you know, as I grew up, I realized it was more of a self-hatred thing because then at that time and still do notice that I got treated a lot different. In my

head, being dark-skinned wasn't beautiful because I never saw dark skins being displayed. Like today's day and age.

And I want to say it impacted me like growing up in a bad way and a good way. Because in a good way, it taught me how to love myself and be like, you know what? I'm that girl like I am the shit. *[laughter]* Regardless of how I look or what my complexion is like I am the shit and you know, it contributed to the way I viewed myself and viewed how I wanted myself to be in the future. Like as weird as this sounds, my family or just people I know, like women, they always like bleach their skins and then they have the audacity to tell me, "Love yourself." My voice is cracking like, they tell me love yourself and it's like how am I supposed to love myself if you can't even love yourself and you're putting these products, chemical products, on your skin so that you can be more lighter and fairer complexion? Just to fit in society, like how does that work?

H: I don't know, I guess I just didn't realize until I entered high school and then I started to really see like a lot of role models just growing up and coming up and whatnot, like Lupita, Naomi Campbell, like I didn't know about Naomi Campbell. I did not know about these black models at all. I didn't know about Tyra Banks. I didn't know about any of those people until I was in high school and I started to see them talk about it and then just be like, "Whatever complexion that you are, just love yourself" and I just – I guess just throughout high school I learned to appreciate my skin and realize like hey, there's people out there getting tans and stuff like that, they're trying to look like us, like what's up. So, I've very, very blessed to see myself in this way and I'm very happy with it. If anyone wants to tell me to bleach my skin I'll be like, no, my face, like my melanin's popping, it's enough like leave me alone. That's it.

J: For the longest time ever, I did not see color. I know it's hard for people to like – it's the truth. I did not see color. Everyone was my friend, regardless of yeah, I did not care what complexion you were. If you were my friend, you were my friend and – and also, I didn't realize I was black, to be honest. I did not realize I was, you know, black. I didn't realize it until the seventh grade. It took me the longest time ever when I experienced a fake friend. And this person – I was yeah, we were friends, at least I thought we were, and she told me one time, well, she didn't tell me, her friend said that she was talking about me and she said, "This is what this person calls you, she calls you a shadow." And I'm just like, "I'm a shadow." I look at my skin, I'm like, I'm dark. I did not realize I really did not, and I think that was a awakening call for me, that of my complexion. Yeah.

H: I can relate to that. I didn't really realize it until like I think when till I entered high school. I was very late on this because in my house, we never really talked about it, honestly, about the whole dark complexion part. And just growing up, in my head I had this image, I'm not that dark, I probably look like everyone else. I look cute. Like whatever, it's not a big deal. And it didn't hit me until I was in Junior High, throughout the years, kids would always make jokes, like when the lights went out, they'd be, "Hanifa, where are you?" I hated it so much. Always, always, always.

If not that, they'd be like, "You're really dark. You're dark as the moon or whatever" or – not the moon. The moon's white, what am I saying? "You look like charcoal." Like all those things. And even in elementary, too, kids, they were so ignorant during that time.

J: Yeah, and again, what Hanifa said earlier about how she didn't – I think it was Juan or Hanifa, who they didn't realize they were black. Or like just dark-skinned. Because yeah, for me it was the same thing, like I never really – I never really acknowledged it. Like I knew I was black but I didn't think it was a problem. I was like, you know, I'm living my best life, you know, playing outside, having fun and then for me, what I feel like contributed to that is the fact that I went to a public school so I was around diverse people. I always befriended people who were diverse. My group of friends my whole life were always diverse, you know.

Rose-Eva: This episode is entitled "Learning to appreciate your skin." In this episode, the youth showed us how learning to appreciate your skin can be very difficult. We heard about the many challenges that these youth have faced. From hearing comments from others at school to strangers yelling at them from the street and the lack of representation in the media.

These are barriers that youth should NOT have to face. However, the youth that we hear from move through these situations with a strength and confidence that is inspiring and that we can all learn from.

That's it for this episode of the Unheard Youth Podcast. Thank you so much to Juan, Juru, Lorit, Aysha, Sarah, and Hanifa for sharing your stories. A big thank you as well to Bashir, Andrew, and Barnabas for their conversation. Thank you so much for sharing some important Canadian history as well as sharing your own personal experiences and opinions.

We would like to thank our friends and partners at CJSR 88.5 FM and the Edmonton Community Foundation. Thank you to Chivengi for providing the music featured in the podcast.

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And don't forget to check us out on social media. Let us know your thoughts by commenting on our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Our username is unheard youth podcast. We wanted to tell you a bit more about the land where these recordings took place.

The City of Edmonton is also known as Amiskwaciwaskahikan, which means Beaver Mountain House in the Nêhiyaw language. It is located on Treaty 6 territory, which was signed on August 23, 1876 in Fort Carlton, Saskatchewan. The total area of the treaty stretches from western Alberta through Saskatchewan and into Manitoba. It includes over 50 First Nations.

The Centre for Race and Culture acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 Territory, traditional homelands for many indigenous peoples including the Nêhiyaw, Sauteaux, Niitsitapi, Metis, Dene, and Nakota. We pay our respects to the ancestors past and present who call this land home.