



**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH**
FEBRUARY 2021



**SUPPORTING OUR
COMMUNITY**

EVAN ST LOUIS (Operator)

I grew up in mid-town Toronto, at the Sheppard Avenue and Weston Road area, and was very fortunate to be surrounded by a diverse community. Public transit was essential to our community. I often took bus 165 and other routes, to get to my school, college, friends and community events.

I was able to experience the good and the not-so-good a community can offer a child. So I understand how an area can flourish, especially children, when people choose to give back to communities.

I now live in Brampton with my family and continue to support my old neighbourhood by getting involved in volunteer opportunities. During the Christmas season, my family and I take time to give back by serving meals to the less fortunate at the Salvation Army. Being a father of two active boys is very demanding on my time. So, when my boys' soccer schedules required a larger time commitment, I had to stop volunteering as a driver for Peel Children's Aid. Fortunately, working with the TTC gives me a chance to drive and help people get around.

I came to the TTC after being an assistant manager in the food industry for about 10 years and 13 years in the telecommunications field in various leadership roles. Working for the TTC for 3.5 years now gives me a chance to reconnect with my old neighbourhood and even drive by my very first job! I always bring a customer service approach to my work. It helps me interact well and connect with people with patience and understanding. I really love working in transit.

I'm proud to be a member of 113 and see how they give back to the community like with the Back-to-School Backpacks program. It is important that we help our communities, especially now.

With the murder of George Floyd in the US which was a direct result of systemic racism, there has been a lot of racial tension. I reached out to President Carlos Santos, about the Union putting out a statement regarding this issue. Carlos assured me that something was already in the works. Within an hour of us speaking, there was a statement out on our website and a Tweet sent out. This acknowledgement means a lot to my community and others fighting anti-black racism.

The conversation around racism will be uncomfortable. We can't change everything, but the first step is recognizing and acknowledging racial injustice. Acknowledgement of a wrong is an action. By doing this, we are doing something.

As a member of ATU 113, I look forward to finding ways to help improve conditions for our brothers and sisters within our work community and city:

We must have open and honest conversations with a mindset to understand racism issues and find hopeful solutions. The responsibility of having these tough conversations and taking actions should not fall only on the Executive Board or President. We *all* have to act. We must interact with people in the black and non-black communities, with the police, and so on.

I feel strongly about the need for opportunities for youth, mentoring programs, talking about trades as a career option and to create awareness about the benefits of unionized jobs among the youth.

There is also an urgent and pressing need to support Food Banks in our community. The current COVID-19 situation has impacted those who are already disadvantaged in our community.

I look forward to continuing to serve the Mount Dennis area.

