

Vancouver mother launches anti-racism library after young son faces racism in class

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Photo: I Dream Library

Vancouver's Aisha Kiani is forging the way for Black, Indigenous, queer, and transgender children to be "written into the B.C. education system," with the introduction of [I Dream Library](#).

The initiative connects students, their caregivers, and educators with access to diverse, anti-racist literature and resources that fit into K-12 lesson plans – which were designed in collaboration with B.C. educators, authors, and activists.

The idea for Kiani came when her young son faced ongoing racism, erasure, microaggressions at a Vancouver school.

"For me what I decided to do was not to take that story as a lead. It was to create new stories," she told *Vancouver Is Awesome*.

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"I need it to be something positive that people could support as opposed to something that was attached to a really ongoing problem, and just stop there."



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A GoFundMe webpage has been launched to fund the expansion of I Dream Library programs, with a minimum goal of \$250,000 to cover a year's base operating costs.

"We believe accessible BIPOC 2SLGBTQQIA+ educational representation in classrooms and other public spaces is a basic human right for all children," Kiani said. "This work is critical."

"We are writing ourselves into the education system and we want to see you support the long game to raise a different generation with all children having access to their stories and identities."

So far, as of Thursday, \$1,600 has been raised by 27 people who donated.

I Dream Library started as a pilot project lending resources to K-3 throughout the Vancouver School District in 2019. Kiani's own son, Rakim, 9, helped his mother create a "KidLit" book for Black History and Women's History month that year.

With the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic presented the 2020-2021 school year, the I Dream Library team even designed take-home learning packages so that students could bolster their learning at home.

"People are very, very grateful that there is a public, parent-led public education support system that can interrupt microaggressions that go on in classrooms for children of colour," Kiani added.

"Including parents who are investing in raising up future allies," she said.

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