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 Colchester Presented by **The Shoreline Journal**  
 be centred here.

For the past eight years, serving as your Mayor has been an honour. I value the trust Colchester County residents have placed in me and I would like to think I have earned that trust through hard work, integrity and professionalism, sound and stable leadership, competence and a deep compassion for the people of our communities.

My experience, in public and private service, and within our local organizations, has equipped me to navigate the complex issues we face, from growing our local economy to ensuring responsible housing development. I've worked tirelessly to make sure our community thrives, from revitalizing our infrastructure, to supporting growth and climate initiatives, to supporting major

events, and to increasing support for recreational facilities while prioritizing plans for Debert Business Park and regional tourism.

As we look ahead, I'm committed to continuing the work that matters most - expanding housing, improving public spaces and accessibility, supporting first responders, and ensuring sustainable growth that benefits everyone. Our community has shown incredible resilience, and I'm determined to keep pushing for a brighter, more prosperous future for Colchester.

With your support, we can build on the progress we've made and tackle the challenges ahead with confidence.

**Christine Blair** mayoralty candidate County of Colchester.  
 Website - [Blairformayor.ca](http://Blairformayor.ca) Facebook - 're-elect mayor Blair 2024'



Christine Blair

## Casting a Green Shadow

**A partnership of non-profits and businesses are lighting the way for African Nova Scotian youth interested in careers in sustainable building.**

By Sean Kelly, *Climate Story Network*

There's a lot of talk about diversity and inclusion across a wide range of sectors, including clean energy and green construction. But when it comes to actions not words, where does the rubber hit the road? Or the insulation hit the wall, and the solar panels hit the roof?

The ReCover Initiative — a Nova Scotia-based non-profit dedicated to reducing energy consumption through deep retrofits — is working with partners which include One North End, ZZAP Architecture and Planning, BMR Engineering, and others, on a job shadowing program for African Nova Scotians.

An initial pilot project was supported by the Halifax Climate Investment, Innovation and Impact Fund (HCi3), with ReCover teaming up with the One North End Community Economic Development Society to provide mentee opportunities for African Nova Scotians interested in the fields of construction, engineering, and architecture.

One of those participants was Zamani Millar, a Halifax resident (and ECMA winning musician who performs as Zamani Folade) in her first year of a Master of Architecture degree at Dalhousie University.

"We had interior design and Architectural Digest magazines in my house growing up, so I think it seeped into my subconscious," says Millar. "And I needed a plan B if music couldn't pay the bills — something that balances the creative with the technical stuff I also enjoy."

But growing up, she rarely saw a Black architect in-person or represented in the popular culture. "Since I started architecture, I've had many people in my community say to me, you know, when I was a kid, I actually considered architecture as a career, but then I just let go of that dream, because I never saw it around me."

Millar was fortunate that her family's circle of friends included Zahra Williams, an architect at Zwicker Zareski Architecture and Planning. Known as ZZAP for short, the firm has long supported job shadowing.

Millar studied environmental design while building her musical career. Rodney Small, the Executive Director of One North End (ONE), would tell her about an opportunity to job shadow in the green sector. "Rodney reached out and said, 'would you like to be exposed to what actually happens in the day-to-day at an architecture firm?'"

She became a mentee at Habit Studio, a women-led architectural and residential home design firm with over 20 years experience in green building and Passive House design.

"As a firm, we take our responsibility for the future of our planet very seriously," says Lorrie Rand, one of the founders of both Habit Studio and the ReCover Initiative. Working in partnership with historically marginalized communities, she adds, is another core value. "We know we can't just develop a solution and present it [to a community] as if we know all the answers. They have to be deeply involved."

Millar spent several days at Habit Studio, working on a collaborative design and participating in a research project while learning about the many angles to architecture.

"I got to see who does what, I learned about passive house design," says Millar. "We did a design charrette, and I went on a site visit and listened to clients and what their hopes were. And it was



Architect Lorrie Rand of Habit Studio at their office's Passive House retrofit. Photo by Sean Kelly.

great to be in the room with a lot of very smart women."

"This job shadowing is about helping close the African Nova Scotian employment gap," says ONE's Small. African Nova Scotians are four times more likely to be unemployed compared to other Nova Scotians.

"The jobs may be going green, but the gap remains," he says. "I want to help open the eyes of our youth to these environmental jobs."

There is a growing demand for people with experience in retrofits, green design, and climate action.

"We need youth going into this line of work if Canada is to meet its climate change goals," says Cheryl Hojnowski, Manager of Community Impact and Partnerships for ReCover. "In addition to the job shadowing, we're working with the Building to Zero Exchange (a non-profit helping grow capacity in the green building sector) to better understand what other training programs we need for youth."

Canada needs a massive scaling up of deep retrofits to fight climate change. For its part, ReCover was recently awarded \$17.5 million from the Federal Government to implement the Deep Retrofit Accelerator Initiative in Atlantic Canada. Green job shadowing will remain a core part of their business model.

A new round of job shadowing is about to start, with ReCover, ZZAP, and other partners launching this next phase at the North Preston Community Centre. Youth — high school and college students alike — will have opportunities to see the ropes at ZZAP, BMR Engineering, and EFP Engineering.

Through this hands-on job shadowing, the youth will work side-by-side with architects, structural engineers, electrical and mechanical engineers, and sustainability specialists.

Zamani Millar hopes that once she finishes her architecture studies and is working in the field, she can give back in a similar way. "I'd like to be on the other end and show people who are like I was that this is an option as a career, and that there's a lot it can do for our community."

She also sees this as a two-



Architecture student and musician Zamani Millar. Photo by Harmony Adesola.



Architect Zahra Williams talking about job shadowing at the North Preston Community Centre. Photo by Sean Kelly.

way street (framed, ideally, by environmentally sustainable buildings).

"The Black experience — as well as Mi'kmaq perspectives — have so much to offer design and architecture. Our concepts of beauty, of community, of resilience... I want to help bring those ideas to the design of the buildings that we all work and live in."

**The Climate Story Network is an initiative of Climate Focus, a non-profit organization dedicated to covering stories about community-driven climate solutions.**

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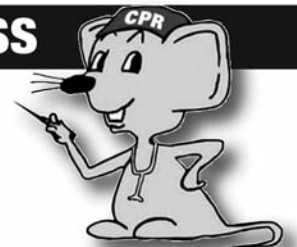
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