COLUMBUS, INDIANA | APRIL 2022

CREATING AN *EQUITABLE* COMMUNITY

How local groups are advancing diversity, equity and inclusion



This publication has been funded by Heritage Fund — The Community Foundation of Bartholomew County.

Contributions made by local organizations share how the community is working toward an equitable environment.

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Archive photos provided by The Republic.

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CONTENTS

3 Transforming Our Community
A letter to the readers

4 Welcoming Community
A letter from the mayor

5 Bartholomew County by the Numbers
A look at diversity in the community

6 Building Trust
Columbus/Bartholomew County Area Chapter of the NAACP

8 Finding Common Ground
Columbus Interfaith

10 Facing Inequalities
Columbus Human Rights Commission

12 Creating a Safer Environment
Q&A with five local organizations

15 Moving the Community Forward
United Way of Bartholomew County

16 Reporting on Community Efforts
The Republic

19 Leading Change
Columbus Regional Health

21 From Diversity to Inclusion
Bartholomew Consolidated School Corp.

24 Focused on Equity
AirPark Columbus College Campus

28 Mapping Opportunity
Community Education Coalition and CivicLab

30 Equality in the Justice System
Bartholomew County Justice System

32 TIME for Business Success
Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce

36 A Competitive Advantage
Cummins Inc.

38 Building Financial Bridges
Centra Credit Union

40 The Business Case for Diversity
Greater Columbus Economic Development Corporation

43 Challenging Leaders Through Self-Discovery
LEAD Culture Consulting

44 What Gives You Hope?
Experiences from three community leaders

46 Continuing the Journey
Heritage Fund — The Community Foundation of Bartholomew County

47 Social Identity Wheel
Reflect on how you identify yourself socially

48 Cultural Competence - Self Assessment Checklist
Explore individual cultural competence

TRANSFORMING OUR COMMUNITY

To the readers,

The goal of this publication is to lift up and share the many ways organizations and people across Bartholomew County are working to create a more equitable community.

Social justice work has happened locally for decades but took on a new intensity due to the tragic deaths of Black citizens in confrontations with police over the past several years. The issue of inequitable treatment raised by the Black Lives Matter organization was more fully embraced in communities across the country that were shocked by the deaths of unarmed Black citizens in Minneapolis and Louisville. Nonstop news coverage and social media forced communities, organizations and corporations to have deep and uncomfortable conversations around difficult subjects like race, religion, culture, sexual orientation and gender identity.

It is critical that we take time to have these discussions and to work toward a community that embraces diversity, seeks to include all people and strives for equitable outcomes among citizens. Today's leaders inherited inequitable systems and structures that create barriers to being the kind of community we want to be, a community where equitable outcomes are experienced by all.

Transforming our community must start with a commitment to learn and to explore through open and honest discussions. We must build understanding and relationships between people who are not alike. It is by crafting statements of support for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), revising policies, creating new procedures, holding ourselves accountable, and having the courage to change that we will create an equitable community.

No one set of actions will fix centuries of inequity nor will those inequities be resolved as fast as anyone desires. However, we hope the examples provided in this publication will demonstrate the collective work taking place and spur you and/or your organization to advance the inclusion of all people of diversity, thereby creating a community where all people thrive.

Sincerely,

Jim Bickel, President and CEO of Columbus Regional Health
John Burnett, CEO of the Community Education Coalition
Johnnie Edwards, President of Columbus/Bartholomew County Area Chapter of the NAACP
Tom Harmon, Heritage Fund Racial Equity Committee Chair
James D. Lienhoop, Mayor of the City of Columbus
Tracy Souza, President and CEO of Heritage Fund — The Community Foundation of Bartholomew County
Mark Stewart, President of the United Way of Bartholomew County

WELCOMING COMMUNITY



STORY BY JAMES D. LIENHOOP
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS

J. Irwin Miller said it best in two separate speeches — one delivered here almost 60 years ago.

"We would like to see this community come to be the very best community of its size in the country ... the city in which the smartest, the ablest, the best young families anywhere would like to live ... open in every single respect to persons of every race, color and opinion, that makes them feel welcome and at home here."

We have long embraced his prescience as the bedrock of our community values. It led us to create a local Human Rights ordinance 50 years ago to fight discrimination in its many forms. It encouraged and nurtured the seed of the Welcoming Community initiative so that people of color, different nationalities, views, religions and partners could say with comfort: "I belong here. This is my hometown."

Just as foundational is a second speech from Mr. Miller.

"In the search for character and commitment, we must rid ourselves of our inherited, even cherished biases and prejudices. Character, ability and intelligence are not concentrated in one sex over the other, nor in persons with certain accents or in certain races or in persons holding degrees from some universities over others. When we indulge ourselves in such irrational prejudices, we damage ourselves most of all and ultimately assure ourselves of failure in competition with those more open and less biased."

Let us be clear. Diversity is both a social and a business imperative. Talent goes where it is welcomed. Today, almost half a century later, nearly 20% of us are first- or second-generation Americans, Americans of color, or foreign nationals helping to build and grow our economy and our community.

When we welcome all — and when all feel welcomed — we take that first, most important step, toward being our best. How we treat one another sets the tone for later accomplishments.

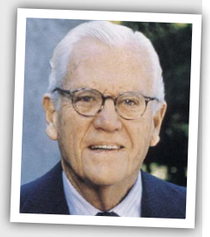
Today these notions are challenged nationally and — unfortunately — sometimes locally. Today's phrasing is different — diversity, inclusion, equity, social justice. But it is the same principle — equal rights, equal access to opportunity, a level playing field and a sense of belonging for all.

This publication highlights local businesses and organizations that are working to achieve these fundamental but noble aspirations. They make Columbus a better place to live, work and play.

I trust you will find these stories as heartening as I do.

ABOUT J. IRWIN MILLER

FROM THE REPUBLIC ARCHIVES



One of this area's most well-known activists was J. Irwin Miller. His positive influence on Columbus and the surrounding areas didn't end with his improvements of the Cummins Engine Company; he took a great interest in the Christian ecumenical and civil rights movements and was the first layman to be President of the National Council of Churches. As a strong advocate for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, he worked with Martin Luther King Jr. to organize the March on Washington. By establishing the Cummins Foundation to fund the architecture fees of some of the most prominent structures in Columbus, Miller brought architectural diversity, but he wanted to embrace diversity of all kinds. In recognition of his efforts, Dr. King once called Miller "the most socially responsible businessman in the country."

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY

BY THE NUMBERS

A look at Bartholomew County's demographic information shows a slow growth trend in diversity between 2010 and 2020.

TOTAL POPULATION

82,208

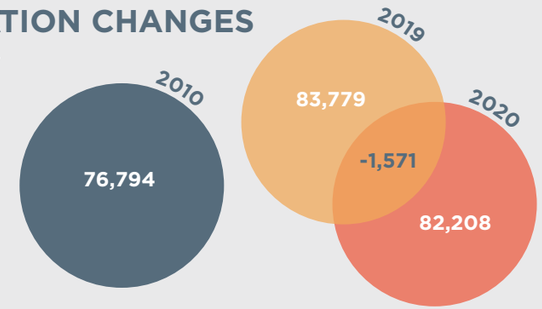
UNDER 5 YEARS OLD: **6.6%**

UNDER 18 YEARS OLD: **24%**

65 YEARS AND OLDER: **16.1%**

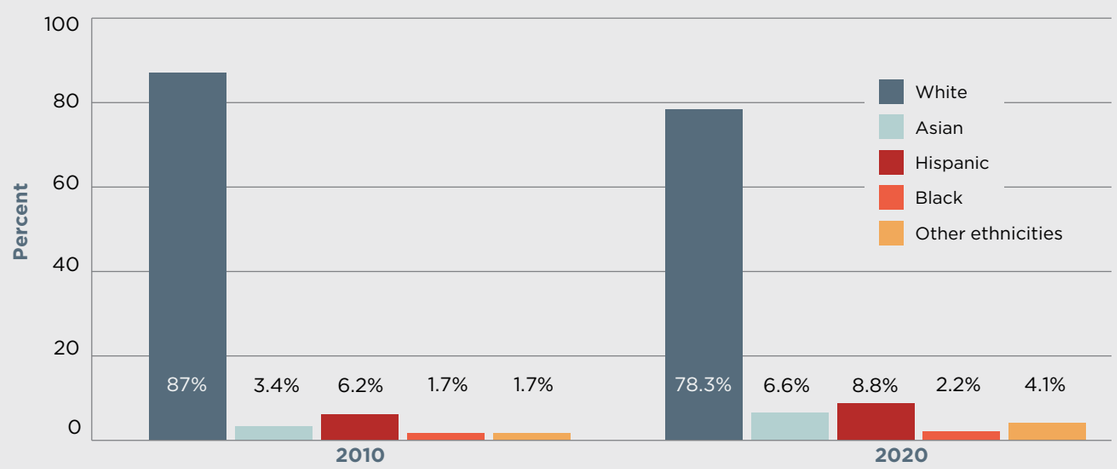
POPULATION CHANGES

Bartholomew County has seen an increase of 5,414 in the overall population from 2010 to 2020.



DIVERSITY OVER TIME

Bartholomew County's diverse community has grown between 2010 and 2020 with increases in the Asian, Hispanic and Black populations.

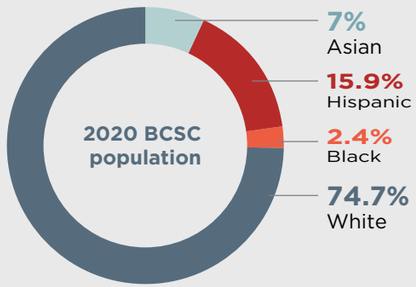


DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION

Diversity among students at Bartholomew Consolidated School Corp. (BCSC) reflects the county's diverse population.

30%

People of color represent 30% of the total BCSC population.



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, 2019 ACS 50-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2020 DECENNIAL CENSUS AND UNITED WAY OF BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY'S 2020 REPORT ON EQUITY AND INCLUSION



Johnnie Edwards speaks during a rally for racial equality in 2020 at Columbus City Hall in Columbus. **Photo by The Republic**

Building TRUST



STORY BY JOHNNIE EDWARDS

PRESIDENT OF COLUMBUS/ BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY AREA CHAPTER OF THE NAACP

The NAACP Columbus Branch has an essential role in assuring people of color that they are safe and that their voice plays a role in creating diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). For our community, DEI is more than just a statement but a responsibility to those children and families who will follow the leaders of this day and time. It is a must for the NAACP Columbus Branch to work with organizations that are helping to create opportunities for communities of color. To be successful in these efforts, people of color must be included and respected when we talk about unique needs and perspectives. Having a true DEI community means a deeper trust and commitment from all engaged in the process.

The NAACP Columbus Branch serves all communities of color. We believe it is vital to ensure that the voices of these communities are heard. We believe that communities can change. As more groups begin to discuss how they can achieve DEI, more trust can be built within communities of color. These conversations cannot occur if we do not have the right people involved in the discussion. Groups like the NAACP are working to bring these people to those talks, to encourage them to speak up and to ask for the resources they need. Our hope is that we will be listened to and steps taken to address true needs rather than perceived needs. Eventually, these conversations will lead to a more equitable community that places resources where they are needed for this generation and for those to come. As we look at the various community groups who are now involved with one another in that conversation there is much to be hopeful for.

The NAACP has continually worked to promote changes within our communities. Locally, financial institutions and other groups have acknowledged the wealth gap and disparities that exist in communities of color. By building relationships, we have been a conduit for black-owned businesses to build financial stability with lenders and other business owners. We are working with groups involved in mental health and addiction. We are building stronger relationships with the judicial system, a system where people of color have often felt victimized. Our aim is for communities of color to be equal partners rather than victims of these systems.

By building relationships based on trust with community organizations we have learned how the system works and created access to resources to help people of color better represent their concerns and attain their rightful place in the community.

The NAACP Columbus Branch battles every day with the reality of being left out of the conversation involving what our communities need to be productive and successful. Often, organizations want to tell people of color what they need to do to measure up to society's expectations. However, it is critical to understand that to build trust, you must recognize and acknowledge the challenges that have prevented communities of color from advancing. Ignoring or deprecating those challenges only makes the needed economic and social transformation more difficult. The challenge of this generation is how we discuss an issue that has plagued communities of color and society for centuries. Now we must find ways for these issues to be more than just a thought.





Top: Kamille Wilson, at left, performs an inspirational dance as people watch during the Ethnic Expo Juneteenth celebration June 19, 2021. // **Bottom:** Panelists Jerome Wood, Pastor Felipe Martinez, Kassidy Humes, Tosha Lafferty, Mayor Jim Lienhoop and moderator Pastor David Bosley listen during the NAACP "Fighting Hate in a Welcoming Community" event in 2019 at Columbus Learning Center. **Photos by The Republic**

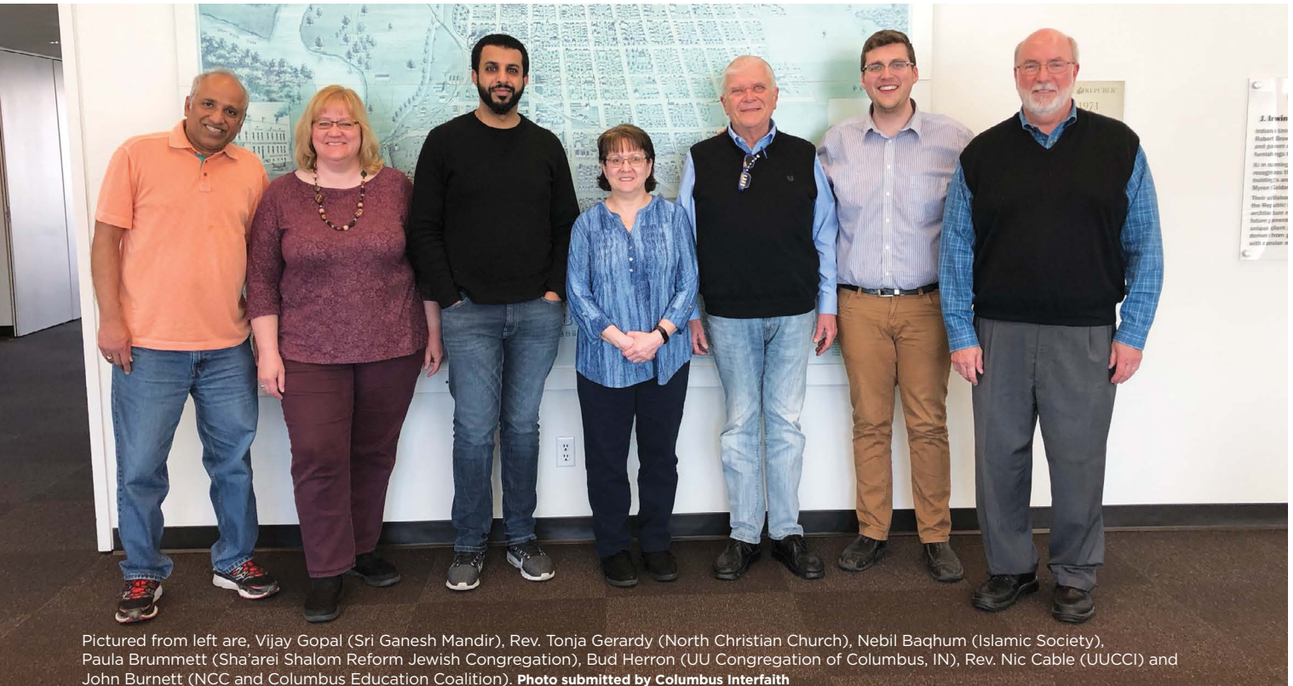
FINDING *common ground*

STORY BY COLUMBUS INTERFAITH

When it comes to other cities of our size in the Midwest, Columbus is pretty diverse. A 2021 Wall Street Journal article on the 2020 Census named Columbus as an example of the racial and ethnic shifts happening throughout the country. Our history as a community reflects this outcome. With leaders like J. Irwin Miller and the Rev. Bill Laws, this community has long supported diversity and equality efforts. Thankfully, in recent years, our journey has expanded to the work of inclusion, equity and justice. We have come to realize that diversity alone is not the goal; rather, our goal must be to create equity and inclusion across all areas of our society.

Importantly, along with Columbus' increase in racial and ethnic diversity, we have also seen a large growth of religious diversity and engagement. In the past two decades, Columbus has seen an increase in Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Unitarian Universalist, and Buddhist residents in this community. With reports of religious intolerance nationally, and with local efforts organized by faith and secular leaders opposing anti-Muslim bias, our growth in religious diversity offers Columbus a timely opportunity to work for equity and inclusion of people from a wide range of faith backgrounds.

A new group has emerged that seeks to harness the love, compassion, and goodwill of these diverse religions in order to support and promote the greater good for our wider community. Columbus Interfaith, representing about a dozen local religious groups, led by Rev. Nic Cable as executive director, was created to build bridges across our differences and work for inclusion, equity, and justice. Beginning in early 2019, the Guiding Team has spent the last three years focusing on its shared values and overlapping concerns. Examples include offering conversations, learning experiences, and service opportunities.



Pictured from left are, Vijay Gopal (Sri Ganesh Mandir), Rev. Tonja Gerardy (North Christian Church), Nebil Baqhum (Islamic Society), Paula Brummett (Sha'arei Shalom Reform Jewish Congregation), Bud Herron (UU Congregation of Columbus, IN), Rev. Nic Cable (UUCCI) and John Burnett (NCC and Columbus Education Coalition). **Photo submitted by Columbus Interfaith**

Members have also been seen speaking at rallies, on panels, and holding vigils.

It is important to notice the difference between a faith-based understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion compared to an interfaith-oriented approach. Interfaith community building inherently emerges from humility and a desire to connect and learn from people of different backgrounds and beliefs. Interfaith relationships are not intended to convert one another, but to encourage a positive transformation within a diverse community. Beyond humility, interfaith cooperation focuses on seeking common ground across differences to address issues that face any given community. By finding common ground, various faith communities can expand their impact in improving society, whether around issues of racism and poverty, gender-based discrimination and homophobia, or on climate change and environmental preservation. Not all issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion will find common ground with all faith communities. However, by focusing on what is of mutual concern our broader interfaith community can make a meaningful impact to improve our community.

2020 and 2021 have been tough years for our country. The world collectively wrestled with uncertainty, fear and loss created by the COVID-19 pandemic. American society faced a new moment of reckoning with a history of racial injustice in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd.

American armed forces evacuated thousands of Afghans to the United States for resettlement (including at nearby Camp Atterbury).

These situations sparked a lot of conversations and collective action for both Columbus Interfaith and Columbus in general, including an interfaith effort to supply emergency needs to Afghans at Camp Atterbury, and to relocate several Afghan families to Columbus. Supported by Love Chapel, we designated several donation drop-zones where we encouraged individuals to provide critical items. The work for racial justice, interfaith collaboration, along with the isolation from COVID-19, has and will continue to have a big impact on the direction of Columbus Interfaith.

> "Not all issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion will find common ground with all faith communities. However, by focusing on what is of mutual concern our broader interfaith community can make a meaningful impact to improve our community."
>
> — *Columbus Interfaith*

The most visible aspect of the work of Columbus Interfaith at this time is building the Columbus Interfaith Campus. The CIC is a physical space that houses multiple faith communities, spiritual groups, and any who seek to build bridges across differences in our community. The CIC is located just west of Columbus at 7850 W. Goeller Blvd. The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbus of which Rev. Cable serves as minister, Sha'arei Shalom Reform Jewish Congregation and Sri Ganesh Mandir are the main residents of the CIC. Sri Ganesh Mandir is completing its much awaited 10,000-square-foot temple on the campus in mid-2022. The temple will support approximately 800 Hindu families that live in the area. When completed, the CIC will support opportunities for both Columbus Interfaith stakeholders and the wider community who wish to promote values of diversity, inclusion and equity.

Faith communities have always been an important aspect of our success and strength in Columbus. The work of Columbus Interfaith reflects another example of uniting people and communities in hopes of making a positive difference. Without question, the time for bridge-building, equity work, inclusion efforts, and justice initiatives is now. Our industry and architecture put Columbus on the map in the 20th century. Perhaps the unexpected and unforgettable in this century will be seen in our interfaith efforts to nurture the community we know is possible.

FACING INEQUALITIES



STORY BY AIDA RAMIREZ
DIRECTOR OF COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

"Gentlemen and Ladies: I respectfully request the pleasure of your presence at my home ... on Fri. evening at 8:00 P.M. to discuss the Negro in Columbus ..."

So began the opening line of a short letter written by Benjamin "Mickey" King on November 21, 1963, to fellow Black residents in the City of Columbus. These get-togethers provided a safe environment to discuss the day to day barriers faced by non-white residents. Socially progressive for its time, Cummins, the community's largest local employer, had begun recruiting talent from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). With this influx of diverse talent, disparities were more perceptible. Examples of the challenges faced by non-whites included denial of access to housing due to racially restrictive covenants in a deed or plat, inability to get a haircut in town, and being refused (or delayed) sit-down service at restaurants.

Mickey King was a biologist who was asked by then-Mayor E. A. Welmer to join a new civil rights group called the "Mayor's Commission on Human Relations." Introduced in the June 5, 1962 edition of The Evening Republican (predecessor of today's The Republic), this new bipartisan group was created to investigate complaints in the areas of education, housing, and employment and to provide recommendations on "friendly relations" within the community. The Mayor's plea to the community was simple: "Your help, your understanding, and your cooperation in making sure that no citizen has less freedom, less opportunity or fewer rights than any other citizen will be a significant contribution to a better Columbus and toward making freedom more than a word."

The importance of accountability, inclusion by design, and the need for more equitable systems

In the nearly 60 years since its inception, the Columbus Human Rights Commission has expanded, grown and evolved to better meet the needs of the community. While no one can predict, prevent, or eliminate all discrimination, as a city department we can and do denounce it in all its forms and we endeavor to close the gap on disparities in equity, inclusion, and belonging, while holding parties accountable.

To that end, the Commission has a comprehensive set of enforcement and rule-making authority with which to hold parties accountable for illegal discriminatory practices. City Council has also expanded the anti-discrimination ordinance to provide protections to individuals who have been historically marginalized. For example, in 2015, the Indiana State Legislature passed a statute allowing businesses to claim a religious reason to avoid service to the LBGTQ community. Although the legislature later reversed course, the Columbus City Council stepped forward to expand local complaint enforceability on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Subsequently, we were able to negotiate a monetary settlement for an LGBTQ couple who were unfairly targeted and discharged in the workplace. This enforcement capability allowed us to hold a party accountable for their actions while making the workplace a safer place for the next LGBTQ employee.

The work of the Human Rights department staff is steered by volunteer Commission members. These Commissioners are committed to delving deeper into issues of equity in addition to fostering a greater sense of belonging for everyone. Today, the Commission is one of the most inclusive boards in Columbus. It reflects the LGBTQ community, various faith or no-faith affiliations, people of color, the disabled, those with socioeconomic-related lived experience and those who speak languages other than English. Department staff are also representative of an inclusive community, with personal socioeconomic lived experience, disabilities, and experience in navigating between English and Spanish cultures. This perspective helps us better understand the issues faced by members of our community as well as better collaborate to effectively solve problems.

> "Your help, your understanding, and your cooperation in making sure that no citizen has less freedom, less opportunity or fewer rights than any other citizen will be a significant contribution to a better Columbus and toward making freedom more than a word."
>
> *— former Mayor E. A. Welmer*

Department staff regularly collaborate with other departments throughout the city. For example, the department has spearheaded the acquisition of systems and implemented city-wide processes to better meet the needs of our residents. In the last 5 years, we have been able to accomplish goals such as increasing access to our website by making it both ADA-compliant and also accessible to non-English users, contracting with an over-the-phone interpreting service that is in use in each department at the city, and most recently, expanding this service to include video interpreting service for those who may require American Sign Language. To date, residents from nine different language backgrounds have been able to effectively communicate with city staff on over 250 interactions.

While much has been done to decrease barriers and increase access, the every-day experiences of our neighbors and residents indicate that there's much work to be done in order to create more equitable systems. Motivated by the collective efforts within the community to assess inclusion efforts, the Commission and staff will be evaluating challenges and/or barriers to equity and inclusion over the next few months, with the hope of providing recommendations to the city to advance those goals. While sharing his vision of Columbus as "the very best community of its size," J. Irwin Miller stated in 1964, that "no such community can be built without citizens determined to make their community best; without city government which works boldly — ahead of its problems, and not always struggling to catch up ..."

His straightforward observation continues to guide us today.

CREATING A SAFER ENVIRONMENT

It's my desire as a community leader to understand what kinds of initiatives are happening in my hometown of Columbus, Indiana. I know as a person of color living in this space that the challenges are real. Dismantling racist structures in our communities takes dedication, community and time. But what resources are there for people like me to feel safe in the place we call home? I met with five organizations that are actively doing the work to create a safer, more inclusive environment in Columbus. Here's what they told me:



STORY BY ALYSE TUCKER BOUNDS
OPERATIONS MANAGER AT GANGGANG CULTURE, VICE PRESIDENT OF COLUMBUS/ BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY AREA CHAPTER OF THE NAACP

Alyse Tucker Bounds: Can you summarize the purpose of your work in our community?

United Way of Bartholomew County Representative Magen Pillar: United Way of Bartholomew County works for the health, education, basic needs and financial stability of everyone in the community.

SU CASA Representative Whitney Amuchastegui: The primary goal of Su Casa in Columbus is to Increase Latino self-sufficiency, health, economic independence, education, and ensure Latino families feel safe and belong here. When our Latino communities thrive, it benefits the entire community as a whole.

The Library Group Representative Kim Wadholm: We are a new group in Columbus focused on providing a safe space for people to foster community. There are a lot of faith communities in Columbus and if you do not belong to one — and do not wish to — it can be difficult to cultivate community. We want to close that gap.

PRIDE Columbus Representative Katie Herrick: Our mission is to celebrate diversity, foster inclusion with an intentional concentration on the LGBTQ+ community in Columbus and surrounding areas.

CAMEO Leaders Shannon McDonald, Tyshaun Allen, and Rajib Panda: CAMEO stands for Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization. We are a group founded by multi-ethnic leaders fostering belonging for all people living in the Columbus, Indiana community.

ATB: What types of challenges has your business/organization experienced around inclusion and equity challenges?

United Way: One of the largest challenges our organization has faced has been understanding equity and inclusion and what it means personally for members of our staff, community partners and the people we serve.

SU CASA: One challenge is flipping the script to highlight the importance of having diverse people and the roles that they play in our community. Another huge challenge in the past two years has been the effect of COVID-19 on the Latinx community. Thankfully, with the help of United Way and Cummins, we were able to create a COVID-19 emergency fund to support struggling members of the Latino community.

PRIDE: We have received tremendous support from the community but we still regularly experience pushback. The rights of LGBTQ+ members in our society are constantly in question and we try to combat this negativity with educational material and our yearly Pride festival that brings allies and members of the LGBTQ+ community together.

CAMEO Leaders: Our biggest hurdle in the past two years has been COVID-19. Because multicultural connection is so rooted in in-person interaction and especially food ... The organization has had to take a break. However, we plan to ramp back up again in 2022.

ATB: Why is working toward an inclusive and equitable community important to your business/organization?

United Way: It is our job to take care of everyone in our community and utilizing diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging principles is a large part of achieving our mission.

SU CASA: Su Casa was established to provide a helping hand and remove barriers to make essential services in our community accessible for Latino families. A community cannot thrive unless its Latino community is thriving.

The Library Group: People who do not have a faith community still deserve the mutual aid that is offered in community like transportation, food, assistance with small or large tasks, connection, childcare, etc.

PRIDE: We want to make the community a better place for LGBTQ+ youth and adults to live. We want them to know that they have support no matter how they identify.

CAMEO Leaders: With diversity, you need inclusion: CAMEO is that safe place where people from all backgrounds can gather and connect. In a lot of ways, Columbus has the diversity down. CAMEO is necessary to bring the inclusion aspect of DEI.

ATB: What types of programs, policies or activities has your business/organization implemented to address inclusion and equity issues?

United Way: Some of the programs and activities we have implemented include:

» Imagine Columbus Community Conversations Report provides insight into over 300 diverse voices in Columbus including the seven tangible actions to move this community forward in racial equity. Since 2018, United Way has established a slow and deliberate process to figure out where we can help create more bridges between organizations and the community. The biggest thing that has emerged is a clear desire for more organizations to collaborate on







Pictured clockwise from left: Members of the Ballet Folklorico Columbus dance group perform a traditional Mexican folk dance in 2017 during the annual Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization meeting. // Grey Nyffeler wears a LGBTQ pride flag and transgender pride flag during the 2019 Columbus Pride Festival. // Karla Guerrero poses in front of her butterfly project, "Nuestra Alas - Our Wings," symbolizing migration and unity during the 2021 Ethnic Expo Fiesta Latina. **Photos by The Republic**

resources and best practices and be more in tandem.

» Our Yearly Equity Report studies the issues in our community and provides community reference data for decision-makers where disparity gaps exist, and improvements can be addressed.

SU CASA: An education program in Columbus we are most proud of at this time is Tu Futuro. It's a program built to help Latino students graduate from high school and identify their next steps. With the help of Tu Futuro, students can:

» Have access to educational coaches they can go to when they are in need

» Benefit from partnerships with McDowell Adult Education Center and teachers at BCSC

» Take part in after school programs which are both educational and pure fun!

The Library Group: The Library Group meets every first and third Saturday of the month 9:30-11:30 a.m. at the Bartholomew County Public Library. There is no proselytizing or advising: "We come to connect, not to make people more like us." We will not tolerate discrimination, prejudice and derogatory behavior.

PRIDE: Our biggest effort in the community right now is our annual Pride festival. We have vendors come from all over — everyone is welcome at Columbus Pride.

ATB: What gives you hope for the future?

United Way: We have found that Bartholomew County residents genuinely understand that the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging should be celebrated, embraced, and valued and are working toward a more equitable future with us.

SU CASA: We hope to see all residents have equitable access to the tools and support needed to be successful regardless of socioeconomic or immigration status, gender identity, sexual orientation, race or beliefs.

The Library Group: In our Columbus community, the hope is that people will have the support that they need and the ability to connect and feel seen and heard regardless of their lack of religious affiliation.

PRIDE: Every year we are inspired by how many people come out to support the LGBTQ+ community in Columbus, Indiana. We are also so thankful for the organizational support we have received to help us create a more equitable and safe place for LGBTQ+ children and adults across the Midwest.

CAMEO Leaders: We are excited to see the momentum in the last few years. Although our community took a huge hit from COVID-19, we are coming back stronger than ever, and ready to create a community that everyone can feel safe in.

Contact local organizations

United Way

» Contact: info@uwbarthco.org

» Get updates, make a donation and become a partner: www.uwbarthco.org

SU CASA

» Contact: sucasa@sucasaindiana.org

» Get updates or make a donation: www.sucasaindiana.org

The Library Group

» Contact, get updates and make a donation: Instagram @thelibrarygroup

PRIDE

» Contact: info@columbusinpride.org

» Get updates or make a donation: www.columbusinpride.org

» Instagram: ColumbusINPridefestival

» Facebook: ColumbusINPride

CAMEO

» Website: cameocolumbus.org

MOVING THE COMMUNITY *FORWARD*

7 TANGIBLE ACTIONS ON RACIAL EQUITY

United Way's Imagine Columbus Coalition conducted over 300 individual conversations on the openness of the community toward diversity, equity and inclusion and belonging during 2021. Most participants were people of color and when asked what tangible actions they would take to move racial equity forward, seven themes arose. Columbus' diversity is a community asset if acknowledged and celebrated, but we still have more work to do to get there.

People of diverse backgrounds in Columbus want to feel included, but often they do not. To achieve continuous progress on diversity issues, we need to bring people together from all areas of the community (institutional, organizational, individual) to make progress on the complex issues of racial equity in Bartholomew County. These seven actions provide the high-level themes that were clear from the voices of the individuals that participated in the community conversations over the past year.

We invite you to join us in the planning steps supporting these tangible actions during a community engagement workshop on racial equity. If you have any questions or would like to sign up for the Community Engagement Workshop planned for early summer 2022, please email jking@uwbarthco.org.

1. **DIVERSIFY LEADERSHIP**
   Work towards having community and organizational leaders reflect the demographics of our community members.

2. **CREATE EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES**
   Provide underserved groups opportunities to access resources that enhance personal and professional development. Ensure our current systems provide people of color the same support and advantages.

3. **SUPPORT RESOURCE-BUILDING FOR HISTORICALLY UNDERSERVED GROUPS**
   Give individuals fair access to the tools they need for economic mobility. Invest in minority-owned businesses.

4. **DEEPEN KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING AROUND DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION**
   Educate employees, stakeholders and the broader community on race history, privilege and bias while providing resources that encourage self-exploration. Incorporate in schools practices that meet the needs of students of various backgrounds, cultures and ethnicities — in part by increasing representation within the curriculum.

5. **SHARE BEST PRACTICES**
   Share experiences and knowledge on best practices in inclusion, personal experiences and efforts toward organizational change.

6. **ADVOCATE**
   Keep conversations going and momentum alive. Be vocal and call out aggressions, knowing that silence hurts our underserved and underrepresented community members.

7. **EXPAND MULTICULTURAL EXPERIENCES**
   Invest in more events that deepen cultural understanding and celebrate our community's diversity.

REPORTING ON COMMUNITY EFFORTS

The Republic in Columbus has a unique and important role in the community, particularly when it involves reporting on efforts to increase inclusiveness, equity and a welcoming attitude toward all those who wish to make this place their home.

The Republic reports stories on the myriad of efforts within the community to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in every part of the community, from government, to education, to business and public service agencies.

On the flip side, we also report efforts by those who would oppose these ideals, sometimes in very public and hateful ways.



STORY BY JULIE McCLURE
EDITOR OF THE REPUBLIC

In order to explain how we approach these types of stories, and why they are important to report, we are including here coverage of an event that shocked local residents in September of 2017.

Below, the story we reported is summarized, and following that, an explainer column by then-AIM Media Indiana Group Editor Scarlett Syse, explaining how we approached the story of a white supremacist group marching in downtown Columbus and why we handled it as we did.

We hope this is illustrative of The Republic's role in holding a mirror up to our community, not just for the positive and happy moments, but also showing where our weaknesses continue and where we all need to work as individuals to re-examine what we stand for as a community.

A nationalist message

The Republic covered a practice march conducted by an organization labeled as a hate group

On Sept. 13, 2017, Republic reporters covered an incident in which an organization labeled as a hate group conducted a practice march in downtown Columbus, espousing beliefs that were condemned by city officials.

About 12 or 15 members of the Traditionalist Worker Party, labeled by the Southern Poverty Law Center as a white nationalist group that advocates racially pure nations and communities, marched down both sides of Washington Street, handing out fliers that sought to end admission of refugees into the United States, an organizer said.



THE REPUBLIC

Woman rescued from burning car

Witnesses use tire iron to break window after crash

'NO REFUGEES WELCOME'

Labeled as hate group, organization brings nationalist message to Columbus

STEPPING UP

Device found on ATM at bank

MEN TAKE A STAND EVENT SET

WHY WE COVER HATE

With good information, you can make a difference

Here is the column by Syse, published days after the ongoing coverage of the march:



SCARLETT SYSE
FORMER AIM MEDIA INDIANA GROUP EDITOR

A few weeks ago, after the racial violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, our journalists got a note from me.

The Associated Press and Poynter Institute, a journalism training center, had sent out reminders about handling racist words and images.

Frankly, the guidance they offered is how we approach nearly every story, every video and every photo whether we are writing about skinheads or school boards: Use precise language. Don't generalize. Describe what happened. Put it in context. Don't overplay. Don't underplay. Make sure readers understand what labels mean. Ask challenging questions. And report, report, report.

Consider this discussion from the Poynter article:

"Finding language to describe the violence in Charlottesville is also tricky. The words 'riot' and 'melee' aren't quite right. But this was more violent than a 'civil uprising.' Generally, 'riot' describes an unruly mob engaging in violence, involving mayhem. Inciting a riot is a crime and it includes a legal description. 'Civil uprising' is a phrase that we usually associate with a justifiable action against tyranny or injustice. Sometimes, one thing can turn into another."

Whew, that's a lot of fretting over a few phrases in just one story. Imagine that kind of contemplation over nearly every word in the many stories we publish each day.

But that's what we are trained to do.

For the most part, the reminders that came about covering extremist groups were pretty much theoretical.

We've been busy reporting on recent community celebrations — Exhibit Columbus and the movie "Columbus."

But then a group that believes white people should be given their own nationalist homeland marched into our city on a beautiful Saturday night. They carried a flag, wore black shirts and arm bands, handed out fliers and described their march on Washington Street as a training opportunity.

You, no doubt, understand the journalistic balancing act that has gone on for centuries when it comes to hate groups: Ignore them, and they will go away. Write about them, and it gives them oxygen.

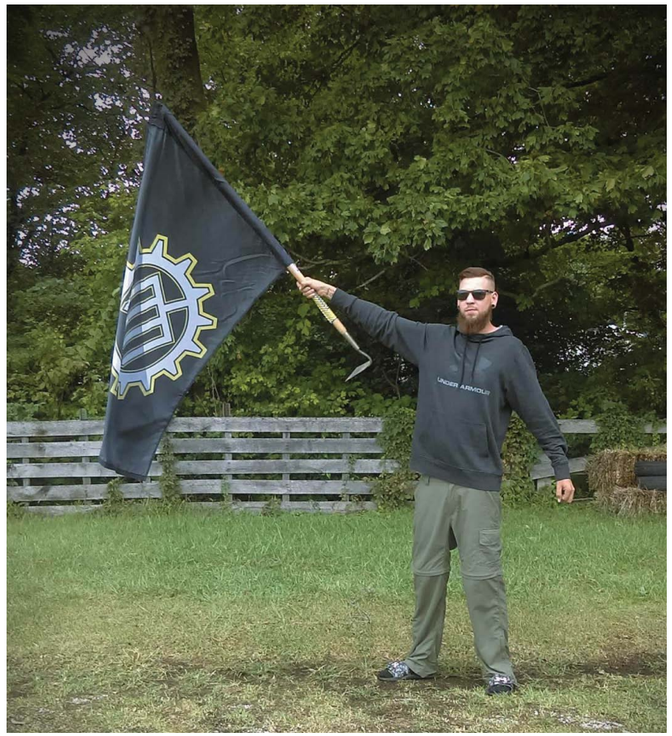
I wish life and issues were that simple. We live in complicated times, with automated bots and social media sites pushing out misinformation often in attempts to ignite simmering flames and promoting confusion and uncertainty.

Now more than ever, you have a right to know what is going on in your community. Our job has always been to tell you about the good, the bad, and the unsettling and uncomfortable.

You cannot change, counter, support or fix what you do not know. Learning that even the most disgusting ideas and rhetoric are in our midst, be it from five people or 500, gives you the opportunity to take action if that is what you want to do. Rather than being shielded, we know you and communities can work through even the most upsetting issues if given solid information.

The problem is that in today's world, it's hard to tell when you are getting accurate details. We have a dizzying array of information being pushed at us from everywhere — social media where little legitimate reporting is done, television where news personalities pander to the lowest common denominator and operations where fake news is coming at us from countries far, far away.

That's why the guidelines we follow in covering extremists and everything else in our community are more important than ever. You deserve to get accurate information, to know where it is coming from and how it has been verified.



Jeremy Bowman is shown holding a Traditionalist Workers Party flag. **Photo by The Republic**

So when you read our story about this group that waved its black flag in our town, you also noticed how we handled it.

We precisely noted the number of people involved and their ties to other leaders. That's context. We talked to police, asking them about the legalities of the march. That's reporting. We interviewed the group's leader to try to understand exactly what he believes and wants to happen. That's avoiding generalizations. We looked at pictures from the march. That's allowing us to accurately describe what happened. We sought out other voices. That's more reporting.

With good information, you can talk to your kids about the flier they might have come across on a downtown street. With good information, you can understand when a social media post you come across tells just one part of the story or is misleading.

And with good information, you have what you deserve — the power and knowledge to stand up to hate.



LEADING *change*



STORY BY JIM BICKEL

PRESIDENT AND CEO OF COLUMBUS REGIONAL HEALTH

Denise Neawedde, NP-C, checks the vital signs of Carlos Ortega Dominguez during a follow-up appointment at VIMCare Clinic. **Photo submitted by Columbus Regional Health**

As a healthcare provider and major employer, Columbus Regional Health continuously evaluates feedback from our patients and workforce to help ensure we are meeting their needs and providing an excellent experience. CRH patients and workforce members represent many races, ethnicities, genders, sexes, religions and abilities. However, we stepped back in light of national and local issues of racism and discrimination to examine our processes, policies and practices through a diversity, equity and inclusion lens to make sure we are also being equitable and inclusive across all aspects of our organization.

CRH has worked on DEI initiatives for many years, though these efforts have often been designed to address a specific healthcare access need. Examples include the launch of Volunteers in Medicine (now VIMCare Clinic) in 1996 to provide healthcare services to uninsured/underinsured residents and Proyecto Salud to address language and cultural barriers for Hispanic patients.

I believe that DEI should be woven into our organizational

DEI VISION

Diversity

At CRH all people are valued for their unique qualities, experiences and backgrounds.

Equity

The intentional consideration of all people's needs and the elimination of disparities and barriers for our workforce and those we serve.

Inclusion

The behaviors that result in the fostering of positive and healthy relationships, where all people feel welcome and respected.

DEI Vision Statement

We will be a health system where all people feel welcome, respected, and valued, and where diversity, equity and inclusion are integral to achieving the CRH mission to improve the health and well-being of the people we serve.

culture, strategic plans and daily operations, and not viewed as an initiative or program. CRH's DEI approach is multi-pronged. Our goal is to develop a framework and strategy to ensure that 1) our health system workforce is appropriately diverse and culturally competent, 2) equitable patient care is always provided and delivered, and 3) both the care and work environments are inclusive.

In 2021, we selected an outside partner, CulturaLink of Atlanta, GA, to conduct an organizational assessment of CRH. The assessment focused on organizational culture and communication, workforce policies and practices, physician recruiting and cultural competence, patient care practices and language access, data collection processes and community engagement.

Through this assessment and many conversations regarding DEI, we learned people interpret DEI differently, and a critical success factor was DEI definition clarity and continual transparent communication of strategy to our workforce and community. The CRH DEI Steering Committee first defined what diversity, equity and inclusion each means to our health system. Next, an overall DEI vision statement was created.

I look forward to building on the work underway and to keep conversations and learning about DEI going throughout the process. Through this work and the broader efforts from the many community organizations and individuals working to advance DEI, we will all help our community be more equitable and inclusive.

Action plan

Upon review of the assessment results, other relevant data, feedback, and conversations, CRH established the following 2022 priorities. The DEI Steering Committee will oversee and support the implementation of these priorities, while a DEI Council will develop implementation action plans and monitor and measure results.

» System-wide strategy development and implementation infrastructure to ensure real and lasting impact.

» Data analysis to understand health outcomes and workforce inequities.

» Learning opportunities and communication to create conversation and further understanding.

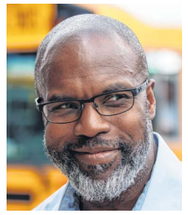
» Community engagement to accelerate progress.



Kindergarten teacher Kim Stamper works with student Addyson Hobbs on her journal in 2014 at Taylorsville Elementary.

Photo by The Republic

FROM DIVERSITY TO INCLUSION



STORY BY CHARLES EDWARDS

DIRECTOR OF TITLE SERVICES OF BARTHOLOMEW CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL CORP., CO-CHAIR OF BCSC DIVERSITY COUNCIL

As a school corporation, we have the awesome responsibility of making sure that no BCSC student's success or failure is ever determined by any part of his or her identity — because Identity should not matter, whether an opportunity to learn or an opportunity to lead. With over 12,000 students, we know that no two individuals entering any of our buildings on any given day will be the same, and that presents a challenge for us. At the same time, it presents an opportunity.

There are over 60 different languages spoken across BCSC, and those languages are spoken by students representing 48 different countries. They come from different cultures, and they bring different values. How do we ensure understanding, acceptance, and inclusivity? Also, stop and consider that our nation is experiencing widespread polarization not seen in this country since the 1960s. We know that schools closely mirror society; as such, we would be naive



Suzuki Airi, an English teacher from Miyoshi, Japan, shows a photo of her dog to seventh-grade students at Northside Middle School in 2019. **Photo by The Republic**

to believe that the same issues that plague our society aren't present in our hallways and classrooms. This is our challenge, and this is our opportunity.

From diversity to inclusion

Our vision is simple. In a word, that vision is inclusion. And even though it is a simple vision, in no way can it be described as easy. There is a lot of diversity in Columbus. Just being diverse, however, is not an accomplishment. We are diverse by nature because everyone is different. Our vision is genuine appreciation for those differences. Before we can get to a place where we believe everyone deserves to be included — which is what we mean when we say inclusion — we have to get to a place where we know and understand that being included is a basic human right. That means we all have to actively learn to recognize, appreciate and value the differences in one another.

What we are doing about it

The BCSC Diversity Council meets quarterly and focuses on the identification and study of factors that affect equity of access and the quality of education for all students. Most of the time, those factors can be grouped into the categories of people, processes and environments, but we also pay special attention to equity as it relates specifically to our underrepresented populations.

For many years, BCSC has employed a multicultural coordinator. Prior to 2021, the position had always been part time, but because of the importance and scope of work, in 2021 the position was shifted from part time to full time. In addition to other duties, the multicultural coordinator is responsible for leading four different guide team committees. Their work is focused around the following initiatives which directly impact the quality of diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in BCSC:

» The Diverse Curriculum guide team focuses on ensuring that our instructional practices and our instructional materials are culturally responsive. Being culturally responsive simply means instruction is focused on the assets students bring with them to the classroom rather than what students cannot do. It is also based in research, connecting students' cultures, languages and life experiences with what they learn in school. These connections help students access rigorous curriculum and develop higher-level academic skills (Breiseth). The team is also currently exploring "Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors" as a framework to highlight and enhance multiple cultural perspectives across the curriculum. In 1990; Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop, Professor Emerita at Ohio State University, coined the phrase "Windows, Mirrors and Sliding Glass Doors" to explain how children see themselves in books and how they can also learn about the lives of others through literature (Potter).

» The Family Academic Achievement Network guide team aims to support traditionally underrepresented students through the use of a network of community members who serve as mentors and role models.

» Restorative Practices is an approach to discipline that seeks reconciliation between participants (McClure). Appropriate consequences still exist, but the goal of restorative practices is to repair the relationship and change the behavior of the offender while providing an opportunity for everyone to learn and grow.

» The Underrepresented Teacher Recruitment and Retention guide team is working to increase applicant pools of teachers and leaders from underrepresented populations in order to build a workforce that more closely resembles the demographic make-up of the district. Just this school year, BCSC utilized COVID-19 related federal dollars to begin a recruitment initiative that would allow non-traditional college students an opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree and a teaching license. Of the initial pilot group, 4 of the 9 individuals were persons of color.

Instructional practices

BCSC strongly adheres to Universal Design for Learning as a framework for classroom instruction. UDL shapes the design of learning environments physically, socially-emotionally and instructionally in order to provide equity of access by leveling the playing field for all learners.

Choosing the right books and materials to use during classroom instruction is a months-long process. UDL facilitators, department chairs, and a representative from CEA work together to choose appropriate materials for use in the classroom. The process is always tied to UDL, and recently the team has begun thinking about ways to integrate "Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glassdoors" into the materials. When you look into a mirror you are able to see yourself. A mirror acts exactly the same way in the curriculum — You are able to see yourself represented in the materials. By contrast, a window gives you the opportunity to look into another culture. It's an invitation to view things through the lens of someone with a background different from your own. Finally, a sliding glass door is an opportunity to step into another culture and experience life from a different (cultural) perspective (Bishop).

The emphasis we place on performing best practices and curating the best materials and establishing the best environments is secondary to having the best people in our organization. People are the most important part of any organization, and BCSC is no exception. It's extremely difficult to be great and do great things without great people at every level of involvement. The biggest investment we make is in our people.



Students gather outside the AirPark Columbus College Campus. **Photo submitted by Community Education Coalition**

FOCUSED ON EQUITY

STORY BY OLENER "O" PRINCE, IVY TECH ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND MENTORING; CAMPUS DIVERSITY LEAD; **LORI MONTALBANO,** IUPUC ASSISTANT VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS, DEAN OF STUDENTS; **JOE FUEHNE,** PURDUE POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE DIRECTOR AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR; **JOHN BURNETT,** COMMUNITY EDUCATION COALITION CEO

Higher education comes together at the AirPark Columbus College Campus. The campus serves a ten-county area with more than 4,000 students enrolled. Represented by IUPUC, Ivy Tech, Purdue Polytechnic Columbus (PPC) and supported by the Community Education Coalition (CEC), the campus is focused on equity and supporting students who are often first-generation college students and working full time. Special attention is being paid to racial and income inequality as barriers to academic success.

IUPUC has been involved in creating an equitable educational experience for many years. Its work has included the creation of scholarship programs for under-served Latino students, diversity circles to support students academically and emotionally, and programming and service work centered on MLK Day.

The challenges that IUPUC has faced include limited opportunities for sometimes difficult conversation, bringing multiple voices together to represent the diversity of the region it serves and creating a plan that brings about positive change. IUPUC faculty has begun an anti-racism task force to begin discussions on equity and fairness and their roles as educators.

Both IUPUC and Ivy Tech have made diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) part of their strategic plans. Through its plan, Ivy Tech is working to establish a culture of diversity, equity and belonging that includes five strategies: eliminating systemic inequities for students, leveraging leadership's power and privilege to drive positive change, implementing new structures to ensure faculty and staff diversity, increasing diversity in leadership and ensuring that everyone in the college community feels that they belong.

Under the guidance of Olener "O" Prince, the campus diversity lead, the Diversity Council is engaged in implementation of the campus diversity plan, providing professional development opportunities, reviewing data to identify equity gaps, celebrating the cultures and achievements of historically underrepresented groups, and providing space for honest conversations that drive change.

An example of Ivy Tech's commitment to providing intentional support for students transitioning to college is the Summer Bridge Program. Implemented in 2018, this coaching and mentoring program was designed for high school graduates of the iGRAD program. Since 2020, the program also includes Black, biracial, Latino and first-generation students. Students enroll in a free student success course with the option of taking an additional three credit-hour course, giving them a head start for fall. Oswaldo Ramirez Flores, a first-generation student, credits the program with his success. He is set to graduate from Ivy Tech in May and plans to complete his bachelor's degree at IUPUC. Oswaldo found a sense of confidence and purpose through connections he made with his instructors and classmates. He said, "the Summer Bridge Program was a valuable and fun experience … activities and topics I learned are still helpful in other classes."



"Importance of work: Diversity, Equity, and Belonging is essential to Ivy Tech because we strive to create a supportive and equitable environment for our students, faculty, staff and community. Our goal is not only to create an inclusive culture, but to also have a culture in which we are all stakeholders working towards sustaining equitable outcomes."

— Olener "O" Prince, Ivy Tech



"There are talented individuals in our community who can have rewarding careers in engineering and manufacturing that also greatly benefit our communities if only they can see and experience what is possible. Our programs to engage young people with robotics attempts to help them see those possibilities and give them the opportunity and the confidence to pursue them locally at the AirPark Campus."

— Joe Fuehne, Purdue Polytechnic Institute

"We are experiencing a critical time in history, an imperative to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. The IUPUC community recognizes this need, and is working closely with community partners to create strategic and sustainable efforts to enhance lives and celebrate inclusion. We, along with our partners, have a steadfast commitment that reaches throughout policies, practices, and attainment, and seeks to uplift the lives of diverse individuals in our community and campus."

— Lori Montalbano, IUPUC



Through its work around diversity, equity and belonging, Ivy Tech Columbus is building an educational environment where the unique contribution of each individual is respected and affirmed.

Like Ivy Tech and IUPUC, Purdue Polytechnic Columbus (PPC) is working to reach Black, biracial and Latino students who may be interested in pursuing a degree in engineering and technology fields from Purdue. Under the direction of Dr. Joe Fuehne, PPC has offered summer robotic camps to area communities since 2006, including Columbus, Shelbyville, Greensburg, Scottsburg, North Vernon, Seymour and Rising Sun. Until 2021 there had not been any Black or biracial students in any of the camps. Likewise, very few Latino students had been involved. The lack of participation raised the question of why? In part, the answer was that there had been no specific effort to enroll students from these populations and the lack of role models to encourage them.

In 2017, Dr. Fuehne offered the first camp for the Latino community, and it was an immediate success. An important aspect of this camp is the support it receives from Latino representatives from the CEC, local companies and PPC talent and resources. In particular, recent Latino graduates from PPC have visited the campus to provide a direct example from our community that earning a Purdue degree in engineering is possible.

A similar effort was begun in 2021 with Black and biracial students. The camp was an immediate success due in part to the support received by retired Cummins executive Lori Thompson and Paths to Success, an organization that supports STEM activities for Black and biracial students in Bartholomew County.



Students walk outside AirPark Columbus College Campus.
Photo submitted by Community Education Coalition

The Columbus AirPark Campus serves as a key component of our region's future and that of the students who will study at the campus. The CEC plays a coordinating role with all three institutions especially in pursuit of DEI priorities. Formed 24 years ago as a partnership of education, business and community leaders, the CEC seeks to advance equity — paying special attention to income and racial inequality — to ensure each person thrives educationally, financially and civically.

In Southeast Indiana, educational attainment rates are below state and national averages. This is the region from which employees are drawn to work in Columbus. One in three people live below self-sufficiency income levels. There is a growing Latino population with higher poverty rates and lower education levels. At the same time, our region boasts strong manufacturing employment and the highest per capita income in the state. There are many open jobs for those with the needed skills and knowledge. And, we have strong education programs from pre-K through post-secondary and adult education.

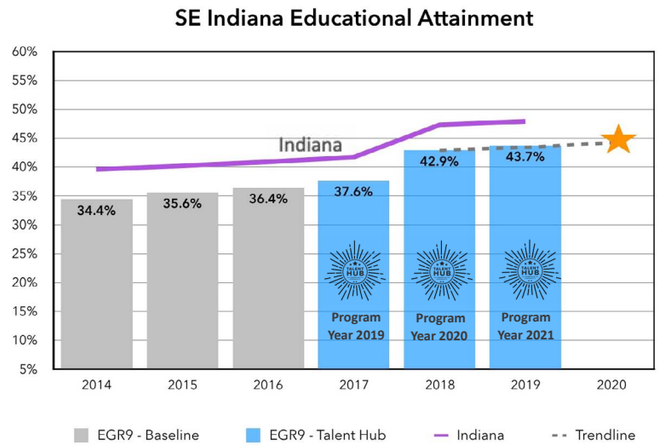
To meet the needs of the region, the CEC has worked with education, community and employer partners to develop programs based on what students and those who serve them have identified as needs including mental health, food insecurity and internet access as examples. Specific programs help students graduate on time from high school; work with low-income students and families; and assist Black, biracial and Latino students and families to meet their potential.

Making education barrier-free and available for everyone has taken on new importance as we better understand how race and ethnicity, culture, language, financial ability, where you live and other factors have prevented equal access and fair outcomes. The AirPark Columbus College Campus is furthering the community's efforts to become the most equitable community for students of all ages in the nation.

SUMMARY OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OUTCOMES

Educational Attainment of adults, ages 25 to 64, is increasing at a faster pace since the launch of the Talent Hub.

Includes industry certifications, postsecondary certificates and degrees



Source: US Census, ACS, 5 yr. est. and Lumina Foundation Stronger Nation Report

EcO Network
Goal
44.4%
by 2020

Vision
60.0%
by 2025

Launched in 2008, EcO Network (EcO stands for Economic Opportunities through Education) is an initiative of CEC. Its mission is to create a regional system of life-long learning connecting residents in Southeastern Indiana to better economic opportunities through education.

MAPPING *Opportunity*



STORY BY JOHN BURNETT
CEO OF THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION COALITION

Equity Works! is a groundbreaking effort undertaken by a group of community partners, representing a broad cross-section of interests, that is working together to make Columbus, Indiana the most equitable community for children in the nation by 2030. Facilitated and organized by CivicLab, a program of the Community Education Coalition, and with the expertise of Dr. George Towers at IUPUC, new insights are coming into focus as the group incorporates some surprising information that reshapes the way we look at equity, opportunity and success.

Dr. Towers has developed data that breaks census tracts down by variables including age, number of children living in a census tract, race and ethnicity, income, poverty level, home ownership and value, rent level, educational level and internet access. By looking at this information a picture emerges that shows where community resources and needs could come together to ensure that children have equitable access to what they need to succeed at home, in school, in the community and in future careers.

The community partners have formed a Guiding Team to address how Columbus can become the most equitable community for children. It includes people from the local school corporation, the court system, social service organizations, youth and ethnic groups, businesses, healthcare and local foundations. The Guiding Team has created a 10-year plan and is already developing strategies regarding equitable access and neighborhood engagement, identifying barriers children face in their daily lives, and determining ways to begin to break down these barriers.

> "Our geo-demographic work has two goals. First, by displaying similarities and differences between neighborhoods, we want to help people visualize diversity. Second, by furthering our understanding of the spatial dimensions of diversity, our work can help craft strategies to advance social equity in our community."
>
> *— Dr. George Towers, IUPUC*





BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY DEPRIVATION

Where you live shouldn't determine your outcomes and full potential in life.

CURRENT STATE
Bartholomew County is not one homogeneous place, but fifteen distinct ecosystems.

Today, there is a wide range of disparity across the fifteen census tracts within the county.

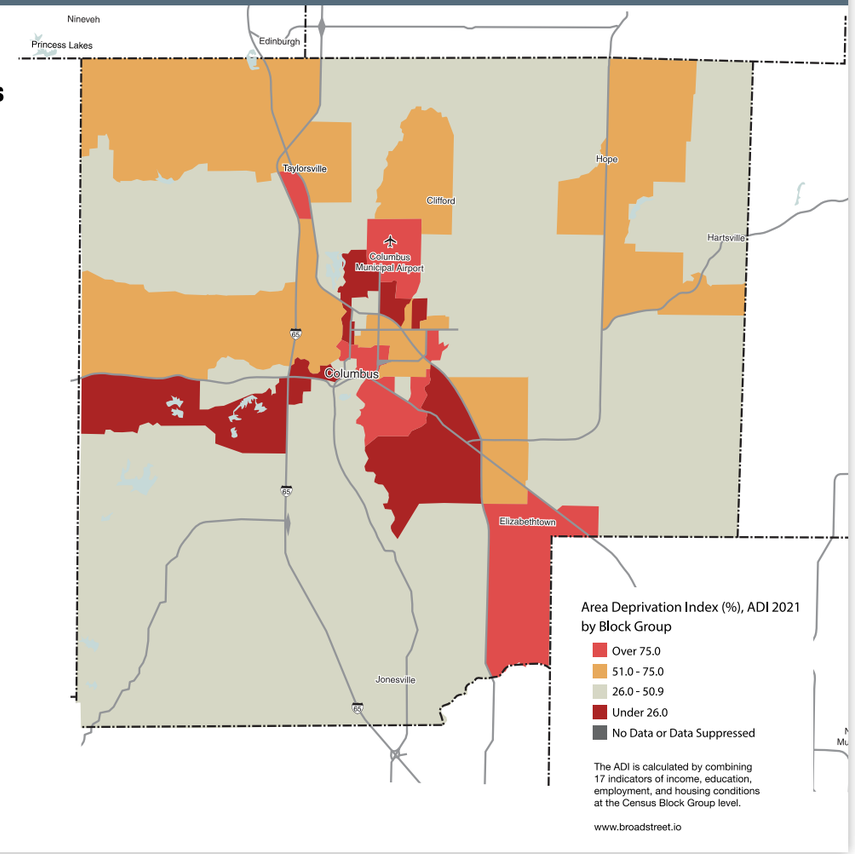
POVERTY RATE
20% Range difference among the 15 census Tracts

UNDER 18 YOUTH POVERTY RATE
42% Range difference among the 15 census Tracts

MEDIAN INCOME
$66K Range difference among the 15 census Tracts

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
58% Range difference among the 15 census Tracts

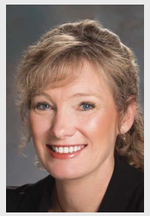
LIFE EXPECTANCY IN YEARS
17.3 Range difference among the 15 census Tracts



The leadership team is working to understand the inequitable outcomes for children resulting from where they happen to live. The team is committed to finding solutions to the inequities children and families face regarding educational attainment, interaction with the local court system, access to healthcare, access to well-paying jobs and careers, and financial stability. For example, the Youth and Family Community Connections hub operated by Bartholomew County Youth Services is working to connect youth and families with the services they need to be successful in life and to reduce the number of youths entering the justice system.

With the active participation of numerous community partners, this grassroots effort is developing approaches to be more "systems-focused." The partners seek to redesign the systems that serve children and families (including the interconnections of health, education and youth services as examples), so that all children and youth can fully participate in their own future and that of the community. For Columbus to become the most equitable community in the nation by 2030 is an ambitious goal. It will require an uncommon commitment and determination to make sure that where a child lives does not determine what they can achieve in life. The community partners are committed to seeing the goal of Equity Works! become a reality.

Equality IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM



STORY BY KELLY BENJAMIN
BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

I'm a white female, born and raised in a small, predominantly white middle class community. He's a black man, born and raised in east St. Louis. I joined the track and volleyball teams. He joined a gang. I was raised by both my parents together. He was raised by his mother who worked multiple jobs. His father was absent. I have a history and benefit of community support. He has a history of hardly any support and of being in and out of jail. I sit on the bench as a Judge. He sits before me to be sentenced, head down and in handcuffs. "We the people ..."

"We the people" assumes all people should be treated equally, especially in the criminal justice system (CJS). We know, however that this has not always been the case. Many communities across the nation chose to ignore and defy the laws that were put in place to ensure equality and equity. Voting rights, property rights and access to public accommodations among others were denied and the CJS turned a blind eye and often abetted these activities. Did that defiance not lead to different opportunities and outcomes for different people? So, why do I now get to judge someone so perceivably different from me? Shall I remain "color blind" as our legal history asks as I sentence him? ... or finally say, "I see you."

Some people look at the CJS and believe it is systemically racist given our country's troubled history no matter how much effort is put into making it better. This is the price we pay for the disintegration of trust formed by decades of persistent discrimination, broken promises and ignored laws. The CJS for both adults and juveniles has historically been plagued with issues surrounding higher rates of incarceration in our black and brown populations.



Many people of color across America were, and still are, treated with more hostility and less consideration in this system which includes law enforcement, the courts and court services (probation).

High profile examples of police misconduct across the country have cast a bright light on issues of racism and inequality in the CJS. Fortunately, people of color are being joined by their fellow white citizens and are standing together, rather than apart, to better understand our history and its effects on our communities and each other. Former Supreme Court Justice Kennedy in 2014 noted that "... democracy has the capacity — and the duty — to learn from its past mistakes; to discover and confront persisting biases; and to engage in respectful and rational deliberation to rise above those flaws and injustices."

President John F. Kennedy described racial tension and equality as a "moral crisis." If there ever was a time to provide leadership in law, equity, wisdom, respect and example ... it is now. Most people do not actually see or understand the work that occurs each and every day in the CJS, but after decades of mistrust, we can and will set a positive example.

In Bartholomew County, we are committed to rising above the flaws and injustices. There has been, and will continue to be, a welcoming change surrounding race, equity and inclusion (REI). Those within our CJS have taken efforts to learn, listen, be open to new approaches, and to implement new policies and programs to address and avoid discrimination. We have made addressing this issue a moral priority.

Every day we are taking action to improve the CJS to build trust with all those who we are sworn to serve. And as we continue to improve, maybe people will watch and find that they can trust that those who come before us are judged not on the color of their skin, but by the content of their behavior and actions.

I start out the sentencing of the black man by acknowledging to him some of the differences between us. As I tell him there is no way I can fully understand what it was like to be him, growing up in east St. Louis, he slowly raises his head to finally look at me. Our eyes lock. ... I see you.

Local CJS initiatives

Some examples of initiatives within the Bartholomew County Criminal Justice System:

» Since 2014, the Juvenile system has partnered with state and community members through the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative to address race, equity and inclusion. Assessment tools were implemented to remove subjectivity and personal biases to assure fair and impartial treatment.

» The CJS helped secure a grant to bring a two-day workshop, "Interrupting Racism," to the community. With the support of Heritage Fund, nearly 300 community members have gone through the program, which helps people understand the history of racism and biases, and provides steps that can avoid racist outcomes.

» The CJS is working with the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation to develop a restorative justice program. The goal is to repair relationships and change behaviors of offenders while keeping students in school.

» Columbus Police Department and the Bartholomew County Sheriff's Office have partnered with Cummins Inc. and have updated and improved policies and procedures to assure the highest level of excellence in all interactions with the public. Led by Cummins resources, a path to close two identified gaps — diversity recruiting and resources to assist law enforcement on mental health calls — has been created.

» All Bartholomew County Judges have received training on how to better recognize and address REI in sentencings and all cases before them.

» Newer problem-solving courts (Veterans Treatment Court and Adult Recovery Court) are offering more accountable oversight of criminal offenders but with a more positive "meet you where you are at" approach. An increased rate of high-risk people are improving their lives upon graduation from these court programs instead of remaining repeat offenders.

TIME FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS



STORY BY CINDY FREY

PRESIDENT OF COLUMBUS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Under the pressure of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the inequities that already were facing Black-owned businesses have been magnified. The Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce is proud to work alongside the NAACP Columbus/Bartholomew Branch and the leaders of the new Targeted Investment in Minority Entrepreneurs (TIME) program to address some of the negative impacts of the global pandemic experienced by people of color in our community. TIME seeks to foster greater business success through funding, mentoring, and training.

The Cummins Advocating for Racial Equality (CARES) Program provided a catalyst for the effort in the form of a $150,000 grant. The grant opportunity inspired volunteers Lori Thompson and Tom Harmon to engage Johnnie Edwards, president of the local NAACP chapter, and consultant Tobi Herron of Inspire Motives, to study the impact of the pandemic on Black-owned businesses in our county.

The team identified 30 Black-owned businesses in our community. As TIME representatives began to meet with these owners, what they learned surprised them. In 2020, the federal government rolled out one of the most expansive small business stimulus programs in U.S. history. However, the vast majority of local Black business owners in our community did not apply for these low-interest and forgivable loans and, among the few who did, even fewer received them.

The application process for the Payroll Protection Program was relatively simple and the loans were forgivable. For businesses that complied with the guidelines, this was a gift of two and a half months' worth of payroll and some fixed expenses. Nationally, 62 percent of Black-owned businesses were deemed eligible for the funding. However, here in Bartholomew County only 11 percent of Black-owned businesses applied for the money.

The TIME team searched for the root causes for the lack of participation.

"Black business owners lacked the knowledge and the relationships that could help their businesses take advantage of the stimulus programs," according to Edwards. "Many didn't know about the program; others assumed they wouldn't qualify."

Through the TIME project, each participating business was teamed with a pair of experienced business mentors through the SCORE program, a nonprofit volunteer resource partner of the Small Business Administration, which operates out of the Chamber office. These volunteers listened to the owners and helped them create stair steps to reach their goals. SCORE volunteers helped owners pinpoint how to utilize the various funding options for maximum impact, with a long-term goal of making their businesses more sustainable and more bankable.

As the project progressed, additional funders stepped forward. First Financial Bank, the African American Fund of Bartholomew County at Heritage Fund, and Taylor Brothers Construction Company provided more

Learn more

To learn more about how you can help the Targeted Investment in Minority Entrepreneurs (TIME) program, go to www.thetimeprogram.com.

THE TIME PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

ENGAGING IN BUSINESSES

55%
of local Black-owned businesses participating

32
grants, forgivable loans and microloans from the program

18
businesses engaging with SCORE mentors

MAKING AN IMPACT

100% agree
the program is helping to remove barriers to growing or improving business profitability.

93% agree
TIME created new networks of support for them and their businesses.

86% are likely
to contact their SCORE mentor the next time they have a business question.

INVESTING IN OPPORTUNITY

41
jobs in program businesses

$170,000
in new capital invested locally

160
people connected to program businesses



Barber Ray Gipson pauses as he works on James Fountain in Gipson's Washington Street shop, Coach's Cutz in 2012.
Photo by The Republic

funding. In the end, 16 businesses were awarded funds totaling $170,000 in the form of grants and loans to help them execute their plans. As a result of the TIME program, 100 percent of the participants report that they now have a stronger network of support and that the program is removing barriers to profitability.

When Ray Gipson, owner of Coach's Cutz, talks about his involvement with the program, he describes the confidence it gave him.

"I used to go to the bank and turn right. That's where I made my deposit," he said. "But, now, I know that I can turn left. I can meet with bankers about where I want to go with my business and feel comfortable knowing that they are willing to help me grow faster, by helping me access the resources my business needs."

At the Chamber, we recognize that when businesses like Coach's Cutz thrive, our community grows. To help create stronger connections to Black-owned businesses, the Chamber offered a 50 percent membership dues discount to TIME participants. The TIME program provided the additional 50 percent for the first year's dues. Since December 2021, the Chamber has hosted three ribbon cuttings for new or expanding Black-owned businesses.

With the first phase of the program complete, the TIME project team seeks to expand. Thanks to grants from Old National Bank Foundation and other funders, TIME is working with Su Casa to launch a small pilot program with Latino-owned businesses, using the same blueprint. The SCORE mentors are preparing to work alongside interpreters to overcome any language and cultural barriers. NAACP, Inspire Motives and the original volunteers remain engaged. The Chamber, through its foundation, continues to serve as the fiscal agent. Lastly, a program manager has been hired.

Programs like TIME strengthen the fabric of our community. A diverse array of businesses makes Columbus a richer, more livable, and more welcoming place. With just a little bit of assistance, past and future TIME participants can continue to make contributions to our community, paying taxes, creating jobs and generating wealth.

At the Chamber, we can bear witness to the fact that innovative business ideas and the drive to commercialize those ideas can come from anyone, anywhere. Let us all work together to ensure that all people with an entrepreneurial spirit find a receptive and fertile environment in which to grow their businesses right here in Bartholomew County.

TIME program partners

Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce
Cummins Inc.
Custer Nugent Foundation
First Financial Bank
First Financial Foundation
German American Bank
Heritage Fund
Indiana Procurement Technical Assistance Program
Indiana Small Business Development Corporation
Inspire Motives, LLC.
Columbus/Bartholomew County Area Chapter of the NAACP
Old National Bank
Ruddick Foundation
SCORE
Taylor Brothers Construction
United Way of Bartholomew County Bridge program
Velocities



Photo submitted by Cummins Inc.

A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE



STORY BY CAROLYN BUTLER LEE

VICE PRESIDENT OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION, CUMMINS INC.

At Cummins, we consider diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) a competitive advantage. Our history and current performance show us that having a workforce reflective of the communities we serve, where employees feel a sense of belonging and are embraced for who they are and what they aspire to achieve, fuels innovation, powers our success and empowers societies. Simply put, we win with the power of diversity. It strengthens our culture, our ability to solve complex global problems for our customers and our communities thrive. DEI is how we run our business and deliver results, and this is true in our headquarters community, Columbus, IN and everywhere we operate around the world.

Our journey started with a willingness; a sense of readiness that is threaded in the Cummins fabric. Our long history and values inspire not just our compassion but also our actions. Longtime Cummins Chairman and President J. Irwin Miller once said, "When we indulge ourselves in irrational prejudices, we damage ourselves most of all and ultimately assure ourselves of failure in competition with those more open and less biased."

Miller's early understanding of the value in diversity, equity and inclusion lives on at Cummins. Today, our Chairman and CEO Tom Linebarger has set the tone for us to be courageous. Through Linebarger and my partnership, along with the commitment of our Cummins Board of Directors and the Cummins Leadership Team, we are courageously taking DEI further at Cummins.

Today, we work to create accountability for ensuring an accessible, equitable and inclusive environment where everyone thrives and contributes to achieving our business results. We are driven by our aims for a workforce that is representative at every level of the communities in which we operate around the world, and where our employees are welcomed and readily embraced for their differences.

Since serving as the leader of Diversity and Inclusion, my team and I have implemented a refreshed, strengthened Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy. Our strategy is bold and includes a range of new initiatives designed to hold all of us accountable and make room for everyone to succeed. Our plan is actionable and measurable. We have several focus areas that span from how we approach civic engagement to our employee lifecycle, which covers how we attract, recruit, develop and retain employees. Leadership accountability is at the helm of our DEI strategy and embedded in our talent management processes. We continuously invest time and resources to foster a leadership culture and behaviors that are foundational for an inclusive environment.

I'm honored to lead purpose-filled work, and to do it here at Cummins. Diversity, equity and inclusion are not just trendy words for us to use, it's how we run our business. We recognize that we are at our best when we serve within a society where everyone is included. We demonstrate this commitment through initiatives like CARE (Cummins Advocating for Racial Equity), which aims to dismantle institutional racism in the United States while creating systemic equity, and our aspirational goals toward a workforce that reflects the communities we work in at every level. We also model our dedication through Cummins Powers Women, a global initiative geared to accelerate the advancement of women and girls around the world.

And when I consider the future, I am hopeful thinking about the next generation of 21st century leaders. Today's youth understand the value of DEI and expect organizations to have a culture of belonging where everyone can succeed. I expect DEI will be a matter of standard operating practices embedded in every aspect of the way they lead and live. So, I am inspired and confident employees and future leaders will leverage the power of difference to inspire innovation in the world and workplace for centuries to come … just as we do today.

> **Diversity, equity and inclusion** are not just trendy words for us to use, it's how we run our business. We recognize that we are at our best when we serve within a society where everyone is included.
>
> *— Carolyn Butler Lee, Cummins Inc.*



BUILDING FINANCIAL BRIDGES



STORY BY BRAD DAVIS
CHIEF CREDIT OFFICER OF CENTRA CREDIT UNION

As a longtime resident of Columbus, I have a passion for the health, growth and vitality of our community, and for equal opportunities for every one of our residents. As a member of the Heritage Fund Board and its Racial Equity Committee, I have deepened my awareness of the challenges that we face, the hope that we must provide, and the actions we must boldly take to improve the diversity, equity and inclusion within our community, for the greater good, both today and into the future.

As a community we have stated our desire to be a welcoming one to all our residents and visitors. This can only happen by improving diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) within our community. Local banks and credit unions play a key role in making this happen. One of the ways of achieving a higher level of DEI progress is by ensuring that everyone has fair and comfortable access to financial services such as loans, deposits and financial guidance. The financial health of our individual residents is important to the financial health of our community.

This equality has not always been the case in our country. Throughout history, access to loans to buy a house, pay for higher education or start a business has not been equally available to all. And if they were available, the loans might have come with higher interest rates or limited to only certain individuals or neighborhoods. Today, banks and credit unions must follow rules and regulations to ensure equal and fair access to loans and other financial services. For instance, qualification for a loan cannot be based on factors such as race, color, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or income from public assistance. While banks and credit unions are closely monitored to make sure they follow these regulations, gaps in this access can and do still exist, a point of opportunity for our industry.

While financial institutions are held to these fair standards, this does not mean that everyone who comes in our doors feels comfortable talking about their financial needs or their credit issues. But listening to understand and building financial bridges and ongoing relationships with every individual are opportunities that we should take seriously.

At Centra Credit Union we understand that we have a responsibility to be part of the DEI solution. Our financial health and that of our members and communities depend on us getting this right. We are actively working to bring about positive change and are committed to improving the financial well-being of those who depend on us for their banking services, as part of our organizational Vision of "Creating Value for our Members, our Team Members and the Communities that we serve." These efforts have included:

» Committing at the Board and Executive management level to greater DEI progress. Rick Silvers, Centra's CEO, sincerely summed up our DEI initiative by saying, "We proudly serve over 180,000 members and employ more than 400 team members, each of whom is different. Those unique differences are the very essence of diversity. Our ability to understand, celebrate and serve those differences, both personally and professionally, is an important part of connecting with our community. Intentionally working together to accelerate our DEI progress, recognizing that there is strength in our diversity, is an important step forward for all of us. And quite simply, it is the right thing to do."

» Engaging with an outside, respected DEI consultant to help us assess our current DEI state, as well as identifying opportunities and establishing progress goals.

» Creating an internal DEI Council to promote a welcoming and inclusive workplace that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve. This Council consists of Centra Team Members from various positions and backgrounds across our organization to ensure that we are taking as broad of a view as possible.

> "... I have deepened my awareness of the challenges that we face, the hope that we must provide, and the actions we must boldly take to improve the diversity, equity and inclusion within our community, for the greater good, both today and into the future."
>
> *— Brad Davis, Centra Credit Union*

» Creating online financial education tools available to anyone and that can be used no matter what stage of life you are in. These tools can be accessed via www.centra.org/financial-fitness/

» Leading in-person and virtual financial training sessions for various community groups in partnership with local non-profits and private businesses.

» Participating in the Bartholomew County Targeted Investment in Minority Entrepreneurs (TIME) Program. Started in 2021, this program has assisted minority entrepreneurs in building financial networks with experts to assist with business plans and the creation of wealth. You can read more about this program elsewhere in this publication.

Access is a key component of opportunity, and opportunity is required for progress. While we can't undo the past, we can — and must — impact the future, and this will take all of us within our community, including the banking and finance sector, to bring about positive change. While we are not where we want and need to be as a community with respect to DEI, we are actively engaged in the conversation and building momentum that we must maintain.

Get assistance

To seek assistance with your financial needs, including loans, deposit, investments, insurance and financial literacy tools, the following is a list (alphabetical) of local full-service banks and credit unions that are here for you:

» Bar-Cons Federal Credit Union, 812-372-8776, www.barcons.org
» Business & Industrial Federal Credit Union, 800-523-2240, www.busindcu.com/
» Centra Credit Union, 800-232-3642, www.centra.org
» Fifth Third Bank, 812-372-9645, www.53.com
» First Financial Bank, 812-376-1992, www.bankatfirst.com/personal.html
» German American Bank, 812-372-2265, www.germanamerican.com/personal
» Horizon Bank, 812-418-5220, www.horizonbank.com
» JCBank, 812-379-1991, www.jcbank.com
» Old National Bank, 812-341-3780, www.oldnational.com
» PNC Bank, 812-378-7364, www.pnc.com
» Union Savings Bank, 812-378-9906, www.usavingsbank.com

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY



STORY BY JASON HESTER

PRESIDENT OF GREATER COLUMBUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (EDC)

Business leaders will tell you that it has never been more important, and in some cases never more challenging, to recruit workers to fill open positions.

Likewise, as more and more people can work remotely from anywhere with a good internet connection, local government and civic leaders recognize the importance of stepping up efforts to retain and attract residents. If people move elsewhere, school enrollments decline, fewer workers remain to fill open positions, businesses may leave the market, and a shrinking population shifts the local tax burden to those of us who remain. All things to be avoided.

An important path forward to addressing these economic and community development goals is by adopting better diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) practices. Thankfully, our community has successfully focused on DEI in the past, and leading employers are doing so in the present.

Past examples include corporate leaders like the late J. Irwin Miller championing the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, and in 1962, city government supported diversity and inclusion when it formed one of the first local Human Rights Commission in Indiana. In the 1980s, Ethnic Expo was launched by City leaders as a way to help educate our residents on the importance of ethnic diversity to our city. Beginning in the 1990s through today, sister city relationships have been formed between Columbus and cities in Japan, Germany, China and India, which have strengthened the global awareness of our residents.

As one last example, in 2004, Heritage Fund — the Community Foundation of Bartholomew County, launched the Welcoming Community project to help our residents and organizations do a better job of welcoming people of all walks of life to our community. A natural fit, considering our reputation for "Hoosier Hospitality."

These efforts of the past six decades have been a calling card of the Greater Columbus EDC as it has recruited new businesses to our community and supported hiring plans of existing companies. One might ask, therefore, if our community's efforts on promoting diversity and inclusion have served our economy well. Yes, they have.

Today, six of our top ten largest employers are headquartered outside the U.S. Three of these companies are also among our top five taxpayers locally. In total, our international companies employ nearly 9,000 local residents.

These companies could have chosen to invest their millions (now billions) of dollars anywhere in the world. These companies chose Columbus and Bartholomew County, Indiana for many reasons, but near the top of the list, is that they and their people felt welcomed here.

Our population has also grown at double the pace of Indiana the past decade, and this growth has been driven primarily by an influx of international residents (averaging more than 500 per year for the prior five years). During the same period, with the exception of several months during the pandemic, we've had record high employment levels and near record-low unemployment.

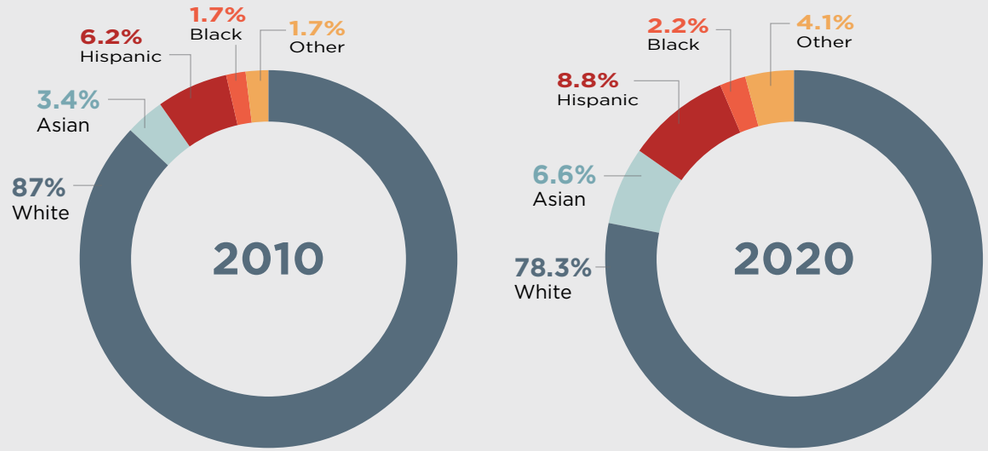
Why promote DEI practices as an economic development concern? Because people (and businesses) choose to live and work where they feel welcome.

Forward-thinking employers, therefore, see the benefit of promoting diversity and inclusion and recognize that there is more to be done. Specifically, promoting equity goes beyond "equality efforts" by seeking to take steps to remove barriers and to increase access to those who have previously been marginalized or left behind.

For example, our largest employer, Cummins, boasts more than 150 employee resource groups (ERGs) worldwide. These voluntary, employee-led groups are organized by different facets of diversity like gender, age, disability, sexual orientation,

GROWING POPULATION

Bartholomew County's population has grown at double the pace of the state of Indiana the past decade with increases in international residents.



LOCAL FOREIGN EMPLOYERS

6 OUT OF 10 largest employers are foreign

3 OF THE 6 are among top 5 taxpayers

NEARLY 9000 people are employed by foreign based companies



Former Indiana Gov. Robert Orr and former Mayor Robert Stewart attend the groundbreaking of the Enkei Shinto product facility in Columbus in April 1986. Over the years, 35 international companies have operated in Bartholomew County.
Photo submitted by Greater Columbus Economic Development Corporation

multicultural and military status. These ERGs seek new ways to provide opportunities for leadership training, cross-cultural learning and professional development.

Toyota Material Handling, with some 1,600 persons employed locally, promotes its core value of "Respect for People." Putting it into practice, the company created a formal DEI policy that reiterates Toyota's commitment to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion. To enhance greater gender diversity in a male-dominated manufacturing environment, the company has also modified its recruitment efforts to create more opportunities for women to apply.

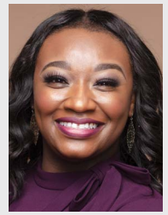
Small and mid-size employers in our community also recognize the business case for fostering DEI.

LHP Engineering Solutions, with approximately 200 employees locally, sees promoting diversity as a path to realizing greater innovation to complex technical challenges. The company employs persons from many nationalities and includes DEI training as part of its new hire orientations.

To these companies and many others, being an inclusive employer means embracing diverse cultures, races, languages, nationalities, genders, sexual orientations, disabilities and more. These diverse perspectives fuel innovation and help them better understand their customers.

At the community level, adopting better DEI practices will help ensure that new and current residents feel welcome and have access to economic opportunity. As our population grows in number and diversity, employers will have greater confidence in creating job opportunities here and our economy will continue to grow.

Challenging LEADERS THROUGH SELF-DISCOVERY



STORY BY TIESHA D. DOUGLAS
OWNER OF LEAD CULTURE CONSULTING

In today's environment, it is critical that we understand, respect, appreciate and ultimately celebrate the diversity in our personal and professional spaces. While we may be aware of who's in our community, we may not know how to navigate different identities effectively and inclusively. We all uniquely bring each part of what makes us who we are to our personal spaces, and depending on who we are, we may or may not feel comfortable bringing our whole selves to our professional spaces. Regardless of our unique make-up, it is important that effective anti-racism is practiced within our communities if we want to ultimately claim racial equity and allyship.

If you are working toward racial equity and allyship, you must ask yourself the following:

1. Why do I believe what I believe about people who are different from me (in terms of race, gender, class, etc.)?
2. Who taught me the things I now believe and did my "teacher" believe in racial equity and equality for all?
3. How do I treat people (strangers and non-strangers) who are different from me?

These can be hard questions to grapple with, but they get at the heart of why your intent may not align with your impact when striving to lead with compassion for someone, regardless of what they look like and who you "believe" them to be.

Having the courage to let go of the strong grasp we have on the things we were taught — without ever questioning it — is the start of becoming an effective anti-racist. Anti-racist work is not simply saying "I'm not racist." Instead, anti-racist work is all about your actions, and most importantly, your actions behind closed doors.

The Equitable Work of Heritage Fund

In the world of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), what you do is always more important than what you say. Over the past 11 months, Heritage Fund has committed to actionable steps toward racial equity within the organization and the communities in which the organization's leaders serve within Bartholomew County, IN.

Each month, the Racial Equity Committee reaches major milestones toward racial equity. These milestones include:

» Developing skills toward cultural competence

» Identifying & combatting bias

» Understanding what it means to be an ally

» Developing skills for proactive and reactive conflict management

» Developing an inclusive mindset toward equity

Heritage Fund is currently working towards developing an organizational strategy — leveraging a top-down approach and establishing a level of vulnerability which integrates diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. They are and have been making remarkable strides toward their leaders becoming racially equitable and the organization becoming a DEI leader in the community.

As their DEI coach, I am so proud of their work towards empowerment for the betterment of the Columbus and Bartholomew County communities and institutions, and I am eternally grateful for our partnership.

WHAT GIVES YOU *HOPE?*

In divisive times when tensions are high, we asked three community leaders of varying backgrounds, ages and experience to answer this question for us.



TOM HARMON

Harmon grew up in Jennings County and attended Indiana University where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree. He then attended the University of Louisville and graduated in 1978 with a MBA and moved to Columbus to take a position with Cummins. Harmon has been a longtime resident of Columbus with his wife, Mary. Their two daughters grew up in Columbus and graduated from Columbus East High School. Harmon has also served on several nonprofit organizations in the community and has witnessed firsthand how these organizations can positively impact a community.

Over time, Columbus has been known for being "Different by Design" in recognition of its architectural heritage; "Unexpected and Unforgettable" for its creative qualities far beyond that of a community of its size; and to organize to accomplish big things by doing it "The Columbus Way." For over forty years I have experienced firsthand how this community unites to bring about meaningful change. Whether it is community projects, creating family experiences or just "loving where you live," Columbus is a community that has been able to reach the pedals of change.

We have always prided ourselves on our ability to take on tough challenges. The community's efforts to embrace diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) provides another opportunity for us to rise to the challenge once again. The concept of DEI is the cornerstone of the vision of this community. How we meet this challenge will be an example for other communities seeking to make positive change.

Creating a DEI environment is not a destination, it is a journey. Like all journeys, it starts with a first step. I am a realist and I know that racism and systemic inequity will not be corrected overnight or even in my lifetime. However, we can all do our part and embark on our own journeys toward DEI. My hope is that this publication motivates a community, an organization or an individual to start their own journey.



HEATHER CARSON

Carson is a Washington State native who has spent the last 25 years committed to the well-being of young people. Carson's experience teaching high school, working with Teachers Without Borders, and advocating for public education in rural Mississippi strengthened her resolve to improve opportunities for all youth. She joined the Council for Youth Development in 2017 to assist the coalition in designing the community's first Youth Master Plan. She earned a master's degree from the University of Washington and a master's in public affairs specializing in nonprofit management from Indiana University Bloomington. Heather and her husband, Kurt, have called Columbus home for eight years and are devoted Boilermakers with both a daughter, Ellen, and son, Bennett, currently attending Purdue University.

Bartholomew County is thriving because of the diversity of our residents who live, work and raise their families across this community. To meet the needs of all residents we must continue to work together on the complex issues surrounding diversity, equity and inclusion.

Since 2005, the Council for Youth Development Bartholomew County has made a commitment to improving the lives of all young people and their families. Central to this work is the coalition's willingness to ask the hard questions. Do our young people feel a sense of belonging? Are we missing opportunities to reach all youth? Do we provide equitable access to resources and services youth need? Where can we do better as a community?

Over the past five years, the coalition and community partners have not only asked those hard questions but continue to listen to youth, study local data and are taking bold steps to address disparities based on race, ethnicity and personal identity. Key areas of focus include substance misuse, juvenile delinquency, and supporting mental health, civic engagement and educational success. Ongoing efforts with schools, the juvenile justice system, human services and local nonprofits have contributed to better strategies to meet the needs of more youth and the adults who care for them.

Progress continues because of the investment and initiatives led by the Heritage Fund — The Community Foundation of Bartholomew County, Community Education Coalition's Equity Works!, United Way of Bartholomew County's Imagine Columbus, as well as the important advocacy work of the Columbus Human Rights Commission, NAACP and Su Casa Columbus.

While the path ahead remains challenging, we should be encouraged by the progress being made and the commitment by many including our youth themselves to explore innovative solutions so that every Bartholomew County resident feels a sense of belonging and has the opportunity to thrive.



ALYSE TUCKER BOUNDS

Bounds grew up in Columbus where she cultivated a deep appreciation for the arts and architecture. Bounds and her husband, Morgan Tucker Bounds, have settled in Indianapolis where Bounds is one of five co-founding artists in a traveling pop-up gallery called "One Drop" that seeks to uplift Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) artists in Indianapolis and beyond. Bounds is passionate about social justice and seeks to create a more equitable world for everyone.

When you enter Columbus, Indiana through the towering red gates and see the glistening modernist architecture, you would not expect there to be so many prevalent, systemic issues underneath the surface. However, if you are a person of color, gender nonconforming, or otherwise deviating from what some call "traditional norms," you may know exactly what it is like to not feel safe in the place you call home. Columbus (just like the United States) has a history deeply rooted in racism that will take decades of hard work, collaboration and determination to dismantle. In 2022, we must take a hard look at the efforts of the past and analyze what it would take to make the city a better place to live in. We must actively seek restoration and rehabilitation for those suffering in a community that wants so desperately to be better, but doesn't always hit the mark. Columbus has robust organizations and groups of people dedicated to progress, and have been breaking the mold for decades. Only as these efforts continue to expand, innovate and establish roots will we ever see a city that everyone feels safe enough to call home. Initiatives in the school system, businesses, grassroots organizing and not-for-profit areas of our community are only as strong as their participation and accountability. We have an opportunity as a community to soar far above those who came before us, and my hope is that through initiatives like the ones included here, we can continue to foster more empathy and cause less and less harm to our neighbors. Columbus, Indiana is not yet a utopia of diversity, inclusion and belonging. However, with each step forward, we continue to create a place that everyone can call home.

CONTINUING THE JOURNEY



STORY BY TRACY SOUZA

PRESIDENT AND CEO OF HERITAGE FUND — THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY

Heritage Fund first entered the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) discussion in 2004 with the Welcoming Community project. The goal was to demonstrate, using data, that not all our citizens felt equally welcomed in our community. This reality created a barrier to economic growth and did not reflect the kind of community we thought we were or wanted to be.

Welcoming Community was not sophisticated in using terms like inclusion or equity. But it did give a voice to those people who didn't experience "Hoosier Hospitality." The survey was repeated in 2011 and 2019. All the studies demonstrated the community's desire to be welcoming, and Heritage Fund felt good that there was some progress made to help people feel more included.

Fast forward to 2020 and issues of racial inequity, systemic racism and understanding our common history. The Heritage Fund Board felt compelled to address the growing frustration so that our community did not become a Ferguson, Minneapolis or Louisville. A small group of board members began by learning, reading, reflecting and discussing issues of racial justice and equity. As we learned more, we realized the need for assistance in providing a curriculum, so we hired a "coach." Lead Culture Consulting was hired to provide training at each Heritage Fund board meeting for 24 months.

We invited the full board to attend a two-day workshop, "Interrupting Racism," led by Advocates for Children. Those workshops also included our community partners and reached nearly 300 people in 2021. The workshops introduced community members to each other and created bonds of friendship and understanding between diverse people based on shared learning that was not always comfortable. The workshops have been so well received that we are adding sessions in 2022 and you can register by contacting Kyle Hendricks at 812-376-7772 or khendricks@heritagefundbc.org.

The Heritage Fund Board and staff understand that we are not done learning, but we are committed to continuing the journey. Our community is increasingly diverse in race, religion, language, sexual orientation and identity, and culture. Those differences can be our strength and provide a competitive edge for Bartholomew County. First, we must learn how to manage, accept and include those differences to reshape where we live, work and play. Heritage Fund is committed to doing its part to make this community — this whole community — the very best place it can be, and we are delighted to have equally dedicated and focused community partners.

SOCIAL IDENTITY WHEEL

The Social Identity Wheel activity encourages you to identify and reflect on how you identify yourself socially and what you value. The activity prompts you to fill in various social identities (race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender, etc.) and categorize them based on your self-perception. Take a few minutes to look through and fill out the Social Identity Wheel and explore your own social identities.

Directions: In the outer ring, place your social identity for each category in the box below the word. Then look at the numbered list in the center of the circle. For each statement, look at the identities that you have in the outer ring and place the number in the box if the statements holds true for that identity. You can have the number in more than one box. For example, the statement Identities you think about most often, if that fits for race, age and sexual orientation, place the number 1 in all those boxes.

(ADAPTED FROM "VOICES OF DISCOVERY," INTERGROUP RELATIONS CENTER, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY)





CULTURAL COMPETENCE SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

This self-assessment tool is designed to explore individual cultural competence. Its purpose is to help you to consider your skills, knowledge, and awareness of yourself in your interactions with others. Its goal is to assist you to recognize what you can do to become more effective in working and living in a diverse environment.

This assessment is adapted from the Greater Vancouver Island Multicultural Society Cultural Competence Self-assessment Checklist. That checklist was created with funding from the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

Directions

Read each entry in the awareness, knowledge and skills sections. Place a check mark in the appropriate column which follows. At the end of each section, add the number of times you have checked that respective column.

Multiply the number of times you have checked: "Never" by 1, "Sometimes/Occasionally" by 2, "Fairly Often/Pretty well" by 3 and "Always/Very Well" by 4. The more points you have, the more culturally competent you are becoming.

Be honest; don't overthink it. This is simply a tool. This is not a test. The rating scale is there to help you identify areas of strength and areas that need further development in order to help you reach your goal of cultural competence.

Remember that cultural competence is a process, and that learning occurs on a continuum and over a life time.

While you complete this assessment, stay in touch with your emotions and remind yourself that learning is a journey.

AWARENESS ASSESSMENT

Awareness		Never/doesn't apply to me	Sometimes/ occasionally	Fairly often/ pretty well	Always/ very well
Value Diversity	I view human difference as positive and a cause for celebration.				
Know myself	I have a clear sense of my own ethnic, cultural and racial identity.				
Share my culture	I am aware that in order to learn more about others I need to understand and be prepared to share my own culture.				
Be aware of areas of discomfort	I am aware of my discomfort when I encounter differences in race, color, religion, sexual orientation, language and ethnicity.				
Check my assumptions	I am aware of the assumptions that I hold about people of cultures different from my own.				
Challenge my stereotypes	I am aware of my stereotypes as they arise and have developed personal strategies for reducing the harm they cause.				
Reflect on how my culture informs my judgement	I am aware of how my cultural perspective influences my judgement about what are 'appropriate,' 'normal' or 'superior' behaviors, values and communication styles.				
Accept ambiguity	I accept that in cross cultural situations there can be uncertainty and that uncertainty can make me anxious. It can also mean that I do not respond quickly and take the time needed to get more information.				
Be curious	I take any opportunity to put myself in places where I can learn about difference and create relationships.				
Aware of my privilege	If I am working with a "person in the minority," I understand that I will likely be perceived as a person with power and privilege, and that I may not be seen as "unbiased" or as an ally.				
Aware of social justice issues	I'm aware of the impact of the social context on the lives of culturally diverse population, and how power, privilege and social oppression influence their lives.				
		1 pt x	2 pt x	3 pt x	4 pt x

CONTINUE AWARENESS ASSESSMENT ON PAGE 49

SKILLS ASSESSMENT

Skills		Never/doesn't apply to me	Sometimes/ occasionally	Fairly often/ pretty well	Always/ very well
Adapt to different situations	I am developing ways to interact respectfully and effectively with individuals and groups.				
Challenge discriminatory and/or racist behavior	I can effectively intervene when I observe others behaving in racist and/or discriminatory manner.				
Communicate across cultures	I am able to adapt my communication style to effectively communicate with people who communicate in ways that are different from my own.				
Seek out situations to expand my skills	I seek out people who challenge me to maintain and increase the cross-cultural skills I have.				
Become engaged	I am actively involved in initiatives, small or big, that promote understanding among members of diverse groups.				
Act respectfully in cross-cultural situations	I can act in ways that demonstrate respect for the culture and beliefs of others.				
Practice cultural protocols	I am learning about and put into practice the specific cultural protocols and practices necessary for my work.				
Act as an ally	My colleagues who are disabled, members of the LBGBTQ+ community, immigrants or people of color consider me an ally and know that I will support them with culturally appropriate ways.				
Be flexible	I work hard to understand the perspectives of others and consult with my diverse colleagues about culturally respectful and appropriate courses of action.				
Be adaptive	I know and use a variety of relationship building skills to create connections with people who are different from me.				
Recognize my own cultural biases	I can recognize my own cultural biases in a given situation and I'm aware not to act out based on my biases.				
Be aware of within-group differences	I'm aware of within-group differences and I would not generalize a specific behavior presented by an individual to the entire cultural community.				
		1 pt x	2 pt x	3 pt x	4 pt x

KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT

Knowledge		Never/doesn't apply to me	Sometimes/ occasionally	Fairly often/ pretty well	Always/ very well
Gain from my mistakes	I will make mistakes and will learn from them.				
Assess the limits of my knowledge	I will recognize that my knowledge of certain cultural groups is limited and commit to creating opportunities to learn more.				
Ask questions	I will really listen to the answers before asking another question				
Acknowledge the importance of difference	I know that differences in color, culture, ethnicity, etc. are important parts of an individual's identity which they value and so do I. I will not hide behind the claim of "color blindness."				
Know the historical experiences of ALL Americans; and specifically those who have faced levels of discrimination.	I am knowledgeable about historical incidents in America's past that demonstrate racism and exclusion towards Americans of non-European heritage.				
Understand the influence culture can have	I recognize that cultures change over time and can vary from person to person, as does attachment to culture.				
Commit to life-long learning	I recognize that achieving cultural competence involves a commitment to learning over a life-time.				
Understand the impact of racism, sexism, homophobia ...	I recognize that stereotypical attitudes and discriminatory actions can dehumanize, even encourage violence against individuals because of their membership in groups which are different from myself.				
Know my own family history	I know my family's story of immigration and assimilation into America.				
Know my limitations	I continue to develop my capacity for assessing areas where there are gaps in my knowledge.				
Awareness of multiple social identities	I recognize that people have intersecting multiple identities drawn from race, sex, religion, ethnicity, etc and the importance of each of these identities vary from person to person.				
Inter-cultural and intracultural differences	I acknowledge both inter-cultural and intracultural differences.				
Point of reference to assess appropriate behavior	I'm aware that everyone has a "culture" and my own "culture" should not be regarded as a point of reference to assess which behavior is appropriate or inappropriate.				
		1 pt x	2 pt x	3 pt x	4 pt x

RESOURCES

Where Can I find a DEI Consultant?

LEAD Culture Consulting

Most leaders find their prospective DEI consultants through word of mouth. The method is likely most helpful as we typically get information from those we trust. Once we know who to reach out to, then we can understand if the organization's goals align with the services the consultant can provide.

Another benefit in the "word of mouth" method is that most consultants know other consultants. In the event a prospective consultant cannot provide a service, they can refer someone who can provide the services the organization or leaders need.

If you or the leaders of your organization are in a position where you don't know where to start, LinkedIn.com is a great resource for searching and researching a prospective consultant's background. You can find a DEI consultant on LinkedIn by typing "Diversity Consultant," "DEI Coach" or some iteration of these phrases in the search bar. You can also filter your search by location, type of services or if the prospective consultants have mutual connections — so that you can have an additional reference point.

LEAD Culture Consulting is committed to challenging leaders to become champions of diversity, equity and inclusion through self-discovery. Our work is grounded in cultural competence as it is the foundation toward becoming anti-racist and racially equitable.

1) Where is America diversifying the fastest? Small Midwestern towns.
https://www.wsj.com/articles/where-is-america-diversifying-the-fastest-small-midwestern-towns-11628860161

2) Community conversations
https://www.uwbarthco.org/sites/uwbarthco.org/files/2021-05/Community%20Conversations%20%284%29.pdf

3) 2020 Report on equity and inclusion
https://www.uwbarthco.org/sites/uwbarthco.org/files/2020-11/Equity%20Report_Final%20(1).pdf

4) Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors
Bishop, Rudine Sims. Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors – Scenic Regional. https://scenicregional.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Mirrors-Windows-and-Sliding-Glass-Doors.pdf.

5) Bringing restorative practices to your school
McClure, Laura. "Bringing Restorative Practices to Your School." Edutopia, George Lucas Educational Foundation, 10 Oct. 2016, https://www.edutopia.org/article/bringing-restorative-practices-to-your-school-laura-mcclure.

6) Windows and mirrors and sliding glass doors: ensuring students see themselves and others in literature.
Potter, Cathy. "Windows and Mirrors and Sliding Glass Doors: Ensuring Students See Themselves and Others in Literature." Institute for Humane Education, 30 Sept. 2020, https://humaneeducation.org/windows-and-mirrors-and-sliding-glass-doors-ensuring-students-see-themselves-and-others-in-literature

7) Cummins launches national initiative to improve racial equity
https://www.cummins.com/news/releases/2020/10/30/cummins-launches-national-initiative-improve-racial-equity

8) Cummins Inc. Announces Cummins Powers Women, A Landmark Initiative to Accelerate the Advancement of Women and Girls around the World
https://www.cummins.com/news/releases/2018/03/08/cummins-inc-announces-cummins-powers-women-landmark-initiative-accelerate

9) Labeled as hate group, organization brings nationalist message to Columbus
https://www.therepublic.com/2017/09/13/labeled_as_hate_group_group_brings_no_refugees_welcome_message_to_columbus/

10) Interrupting Racism trainings
Meeting schedule: June 23 to 24, Sept. 22 to 23 and Nov. 17 to 18

