

DIVERSITY TODAY

IT'S MORE THAN JUST BLACK & WHITE

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SO MANY HOLIDAYS...SO LITTLE TIME!

Diversity is important in the workplace. It demonstrates our commitment to treat all employees fairly and respectfully while offering equal opportunities to all. In turn, we reap the benefits of increased morale, higher productivity, and a broader range of talent among our working peers. A 2020 study by McKinsey & Company revealed that companies with ethnic diversity are 36% more likely to outperform non-diverse companies.

An important part of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the workplace is understanding and respecting that everyone on your team is unique. While Christmas and Thanksgiving often dominate the media, not everyone celebrates these holidays.

This time of year is perfect for encouraging your coworkers to share special dishes, decorations and traditions. Inclusion in the workplace means making office holiday celebrations accessible to all by including food options that are vegetarian/vegan, halal and kosher. It can also mean making workplace festivities optional for employees who choose not to participate.

As you prepare to focus on upcoming festivities with your families, please be mindful of the fact that the holidays can be stressful times for some. Poor health, loss of a family member, loneliness, addiction, financial issues and other events can make the season less bright. The end of the year is a time to reflect on the accomplishments of the past 12 months, but also on the challenges that we've faced together.

Let's make this a compassionate and inclusive season as we close out this year and make plans for an even better 2024 and beyond!

DEI IS A JOURNEY...NOT A DESTINATION.

I often think back to spending time with my grandmother. On Saturday mornings, she would cook breakfast for all of the grandkids. I would watch as she'd fill the pans with bacon, eggs, and grits. In my mind, it seemed to take hours for the grits to finish cooking. She would stir... and stir ... and stir them, over and over. I recall asking her, "Grandma, why does it take so long for the grits to get done?" She continued to stir and replied, "Because I love you and the longer I stir them, the creamier they get." I never forgot those words. Today when I go to the store, I see the 5-minute grits and I think about how quickly we expect everything to materialize.



BY MONICA WILLIAMS, CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER

Not much has changed: We still want fast fixes rather than the slow and proven remedies.

When I am engaged in a conversation about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) most people agree that training is needed. Then they ask, "When can you come?" The implication is that the training is a one-time event and that all of the issues will be solved with a two-hour PowerPoint presentation. I would come and lead the training and they could check off a box... DONE!

Diversity and Inclusion are as infinite as the experience of being human, and none of us can pretend that we've mastered its complexity in a single session. The path to diversity and inclusion is a journey and not a destination.

Training is essential, but opening your mind and doing the work is quite another. It also raises new questions: What will you do with the training? Can you acknowledge that your own implicit bias shapes how you perceive others? Do you know that an inclusive environment in which each employee feels safe to be themselves, contributes positively to any organization? I'm pretty sure that most people don't think about all of this before making a request for DEI training.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is about all of us. It is about who we are, where we come from and the experiences that we have along the way. We all have our own deep convictions and hold opposing views on issues, but it is our personal journey that makes our Onondaga County workforce more inclusive, innovative, and forward-thinking. Ask yourself: Are you willing to take the journey? It's one that we can undertake together. We have not arrived yet, but we are well on our way!

DIVERSITY IS THE ONE TRUE THING WE ALL HAVE IN COMMON...

CELEBRATE IT EVERY DAY.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

