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Executive Director

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Inclusive Communities announces third cohort of LeadDIVERSITY Advocates

July 28, 2021 (Omaha, NE) – Inclusive Communities is proud to announce the 2021/22 class of LeadDIVERSITY advocates. LeadDIVERSITY, is a year-long program designed to build a network of leaders (referred to as Advocates) dedicated to creating opportunities and solutions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Midwest region. Advocates receive exceptional skills training to move their workplaces and communities forward. Business Development Manager Tena Hahn Rodriguez says, “It redefines leadership both for the folks who participate and the organizations and businesses they represent.”

Last year the COVID-19 pandemic pushed the second cohort into a fully online facilitation format. However, this third cohort will experience a return to in-person monthly sessions. The 31 Advocates selected, comprise an inclusive sample of the Omaha Metropolitan Area’s diverse community representing various identity and affinity groups. Of the participants, 81% identify as female while 19% identify as male. In addition, 54% identify as BIPOC. The cohort is a mix of various industries including corporate, nonprofit, public sector/government, education, healthcare, and the restaurant industry.

Hahn Rodriguez says, “LeadDIVERSITY is a way for professionals to be intentional about creating change. We’re excited to begin this inclusive leadership journey with our third cohort. We’ve seen how our past Advocates have gone on to successfully implement inclusive practices at their workplaces and advance equity in their communities. And we’re certain that this cohort is ready to do the same.”

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Introducing the LeadDIVERSITY Advocates of 2021/22:

Daryl Anderson, Creative Director, *Clark Creative Group*

Cody Brookhouser-Sisney, Attorney, *McGrath, North Mullin & Kratz PC LLO*

Cruz Cabrera, Director of Diversity and Access, *Omaha Children’s Museum*

Shari Collins, Training Specialist, *Farm Credit Services of America*

Ana Diaz-Orozco, Community Engagement Coordinator, *Office of Latino/Latin American Studies, University of Nebraska at Omaha*

Alexis Dickerson, Manager of African American and Latinx Education/Licensed Medical Health Practitioner, *Planned Parenthood/Omaha Integrative Care (respectively)*

Julie Dierberger, Paul Sather Distinguished Director, *Service Learning Academy, University of Nebraska at Omaha*



Lauren Foster, Director of Quality of Life, *Greater Fremont Development Council*
Ireydisa Gomez-Hall, Family Engagement Specialist, *Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative*
Wendy Hamilton, Chief Development Officer, *Girls Scouts Spirit of Nebraska*
Janique Hayes, Administrative Coordinator, *Creighton University*
Andrea Haynes, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and District Operations, *Westside Community Schools*
Raheem Jackson, Senior Continuous Improvement Specialist, *Omaha Public Power District*
Gina Langel, Director Continuous Improvement, *Metropolitan Utilities District*
Tess Larson, Program Associate, *The Sherwood Foundation*
Scott Lloyd, Co-Founder, COO, *Miso*
Vanessa Martinez-Hernandez, Business Services Coordinator, *Heartland Workforce Solutions*
Collette Nero, Principal, *Omaha Public Schools*
Caitlin Osborn, Deputy Director, *Amplify Arts*
Ericka Payton, Assistant Principal/Program Director, *Westside Community Schools – West Campus*
DerNecia Phillips, Principal Consultant/Founder, *Nelson Mandela Elementary - OPS*
Jamie Reyes, Transportation Director/Rail Safety Manager/Legal Counsel, *Nebraska Public Service Commission*
Connie Schaffer, Director – UNO Center for Faculty Excellence, *University of Nebraska at Omaha*
Deb Shaw, Diversity, Community and Recruitment Leader, *Partnership4Kids*
Tina Struck, Senior Associate, *Koley Jessen PC LLO*
Pernell Toney, Talent Acquisition Manager, *Farm Credit Services of America*
Chris Tooley, Director, Culture and Engagement, *Methodist Health System*
Leah Whitney Chavez, Executive Director, *World Speaks*
Crystall Williams, Staff Chaplain, *Nebraska Methodist Hospital*
Melissa Wurth, Executive Director, *Omaha Girls Rock*
Sam Zeineddine, Human Resources Director, *Midwest Maintenance Co., Inc.*