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Creating Equity and Inclusion Through Employee Development

For so many people, the end of a school year is a chance to think about goals they have achieved and plans they'd like to have for the next year. I remember always thinking about how I would like to improve and then secretly wishing I knew all the material, so I wouldn't have to return to school anymore. I know that it's impossible to know everything, but I do know that improving is something we can all do. We don't often think about employee development as a part of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work when in many respects, it really is. Making a safe space for authentic employee development in a way that speaks to the employee's idea of success really shows the value on diversity and the efforts in creating an inclusive environment.

Employers should also think about how to continue having the most talented individuals, and the most engaged groups, as well as utilizing each aspect of diversity that every individual brings with them in order to help achieve personal and organizational success. Most employers do a good job of having internal professional development plans, activities and courses for their employees, but it never hurts to utilize community support that can also be helpful to round out what the employer is doing internally. The greater Rochester area is ripe with programs geared toward developing employees from various backgrounds. There are programs geared toward specific ethnicities, generations, and other aspects of individual identity.

The United Way hosts [different leadership programs](#) geared at developing future board members for organizations within the community. These programs are extremely important because there are some organizations in our community tasked with making decisions for groups of people while at the same time, the organization and its board of directors lacks representation from individuals who may be affected by the very work that the organization is doing. Each of the various leadership programs at United Way help participants understand the role of a board, how their presence is important, and how to even seek out boards looking for new members.

Another program helping individuals understand the community and the impact they have as an individual and as part of an organization is [Leadership Rochester](#). This program utilizes the entire county of Monroe as its "classroom." The networking and learning participants engage in during this program are invaluable. Being able to understand how to transfer that information back to inform the work that

they are doing in their organizations and companies can be helped along by regular engagement and conversation with the direct supervisor.

A new addition to the repertoire of leadership development programs in the greater Rochester area is the CLIMB program through the Rochester Chamber of Commerce. This program is aimed at young leaders 40 years of age and under who are making an impact within their organization and want to learn more about the Rochester area. The program is designed to provide resources and opportunities to individuals that have been identified as rising leaders within their organizations. [CLIMB](#) is focused on successful strategies for personal business organizational growth and insight into the regional and global economy.

One of the biggest reasons employees leave (even if they like the culture, the people they work with, and the work they're doing) is because they feel like there was no investment in their development. Employers should seek to have internal mentorship and development programs for each employee, as well as linking employees to external development that can help to round out what the employer is offering. These are just a few of the programs that are offered in the greater Rochester area. There are many others that can be utilized in order to help develop employees to become rising stars within their organizations and future leaders and decision makers. Contact me at KCarter@ccsi.org to talk more about how you can create equity and inclusion through employee development.