

The June 19 Corporate Equity and Inclusion Conference set to make a difference

Diane I. Daniels, For New Pittsburgh Courier



PREPARING FOR THE BIG DAY—Tim Stevens, one of the many members of the CEIR Working Group in the final days of preparation of the 5th Annual Corporate Equity and Inclusion Roundtable Conference. (Photo by Diane I. Daniels)

Tim Stevens is a busy man.

With the fifth annual Corporate Equity and Inclusion Roundtable Conference less than a week away, his schedule is filling up. “I’ve been on this computer all morning,” he said hurriedly while confirming last-minute speakers and organizing the final version of the event program booklet. On June 19 at 8 a.m., his hard work, along with the CEIR committee members, will pay off as over 200 people will gather at the Duquesne University Power Center, 1105 Forbes Ave., to share a common interest in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in Pittsburgh’s workforce and supplier

opportunities. Updates on progress made from the previous years on achieving higher levels of inclusion of African Americans and people of color and diversity in employment, business ownership and business development in the region also will be revealed.

“I’m excited about this year’s conference,” said Stevens, CEIR Working Group Facilitator, and the Black Political Empowerment Project CEO. “The lineup is powerful and our keynote speaker, Dr. Kathy Humphrey, will focus on our theme, Exploring Formulas for Success.” Humphrey is the Senior Vice Chancellor for Engagement and Chief of Staff, Chancellor’s Office at the University of Pittsburgh.

Panel discussions will include; Supplier Diversity, facilitated by Doris Carson Williams, President and CEO, African American Chamber of Commerce of Western Pennsylvania; and Ban the Box Update, facilitated by Tracey McCants Lewis, Esq., Associate Clinical Professor and Interim Co-Director, Duquesne University School of Law Department of Clinical Legal Education.

Other highlights will include a showing of the CEIR video, *Creating Pebbles of Possibilities for Ladders to Opportunities*, a tribute to the late Dan Rooney, the originator of the “Rooney Rule,”

a special announcement by Jeff Nobers, Executive Director, Builders Guild of Western Pennsylvania relating to the Pittsburgh Public School System; and a video from the Airport Authority, *Ready for Takeoff*.

Initiated five years ago, the mission of CEIR is to develop and implement strategies to overcome the diversity and inclusion challenges within the corporate sector in Pittsburgh and Southwestern Pennsylvania, by facilitating collaboration with key partners from educational institutions, community organizations, workforce development agencies and professional organizations collectively working toward a common goal of branding the region with a strong and meaningful commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Its purpose is to achieve higher levels of inclusion of African Americans and people of color and diversity in employment, business ownership and in business development in the Pittsburgh and Southwestern Pennsylvania Region. The Roundtable's vision is to bring about measurable lasting change and breakthroughs in workforce diversity and inclusion and economic opportunities. Objectives fall under the categories of human resources, institutional policies, institutional values, government policies and government values.

When questioned if any achievements have been made by CEIR since its inception, Stevens confessed that it's a hard assessment to make. "It's a question for the working group to answer," he said, pointing out that the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work will soon provide interns to assist them in moving ahead to provide follow-up with companies and corporations to evaluate their progress.

Commending Robert DeMichiei, Chief Financial Officer of UPMC and Toni Silva, Director of Supplier Relations of UPMC for their commitment, Stevens said their creation of SHARE, a collaborative supplier diversity event designed to promote economic development opportunities for MWDBEs was created because of CEIR.

The lineup of scheduled participants for the June 19 event Stevens credits as an accomplishment. "The caliber of speakers indicates that we are beginning to have an impact on the conversation of diversity in this region."

The five-year partnership between CEIR and the Allegheny Conference on Community Development Stevens also views as significant.

CEIR is an initiative of B-PEP in collaboration with Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, area agencies, and organizations. Key funding is provided from the Urban Affairs Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh's Community Relations Council with additional financial support from the Pittsburgh Foundation, and in-kind support from Vibrant Pittsburgh and Duquesne University. To register for the free event, visit <http://bit.ly/CEIR2017>.

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