

In the News ... & Announcements

2007 ... Vol. 3 No. 1

**Helping You Prepare for America's
Changing Demographics**



The lead article is [how to conduct multi-culturally friendly meetings](#). We are introducing [The Diversity Education and Employment Exchange for ALL](#). Announcements and opportunities are included for your information. Reply to Susan Schubert, editor: SusanSays@diversity-matters.net. We received numerous letters to the editor from our last newsletter feature on Gestures in Different Cultures: Being "Hand-y" and "Playing Footsie" which will be added to this topic under "publications" on our web site. Keep sending your letters.

Multi-culturally-Friendly Meetings

The following **tips** were extracted from the responses to the survey. The comprehensive report, with periodic updates will be posted on our web site beginning April 2007: www.diversity-matters.net under "publications."



(1) TIME: (survey question) How should time be scheduled? For example, avoid prayer time, holidays or fast days?

- Minimize conflicts with major holidays and fast days. Check an interfaith calendar.
- Consider prayer times and schedule accommodations including break times as well as a place for people to pray.

(2) COMMUNICATIONS: What are different communications "styles" that may be evident, such as silence denoting respect, avoidance of conflict, indirect eye contact, etc?

- Know the audience's demographics in advance. For example, find out if you will need language translators or assistance for those with auditory limitations.
- Be sincere and kind in your approach. Be attentive, exchange ideas and smile.
- When addressing difficult issues, show respect to all present. Group guidelines may be helpful when the subject matter is likely to elicit conflicted responses. For example,

Our primary purpose is to learn and have interfaith dialogue that furthers our mission: to build a multi-faith community which fosters harmony, appreciation, and respect among different faiths. We do not make political statements outside of the above described mission, nor judge, criticize or attack a religion, a person, or a country.

- Be aware of body language and tone of voice. For example, handshakes are not accepted in all cultures and in different Asian cultures the slight bow is the cultural norm. Go to the following: <http://www.diversity-matters.net/publications-gestures.pdf>
- Enhance everyone's listening ability by allowing time for silence.
- Use "soft" eye contact rather than staring.
- Program flyers should be at least bi-lingual (English and another language that is likely to represent the participants.)

(3) PARTICIPATION: What can/ should the meeting moderator (leader) do to encourage all to participate and avoid disrespecting participants?

- The moderator (as well as group members) needs to be sensitive to cultural differences and guide discussion with that sensitivity. For example, if there are many cultures represented in the group, consider spending a few minutes discussing various norms regarding time, participation, silence, disagreements and seeking clarity. For example, ask if there are any group/ community practices or customs that need to be respected.
- Encourage an atmosphere in which each person can participate. A skilled moderator/ facilitator may stimulate discussion by inviting participation and searching for *common ground* ideas.
- Agree to let participants finish their statements and avoid interrupting each other. The moderator may set time limits and respectfully enforce them. For example, say the following: "We want to allow everyone to speak so kindly limit your remarks to five minutes for this particular subject."
- Create opportunities for everyone to participate particularly for those who may not be comfortable speaking in a large group. For example, arrange separated discussion groups for just men and just women, particularly for those cultures that maintain gender separation. Other natural groupings may relate to topics or positions.
- Handling religious, cultural and political differences requires delicacy. The facilitator may say something like this, "I guess on some issues we should agree to disagree, for example, on the issue of ethnic profiling." A controversial topic like this does not need to be avoided even though it could produce a passionate reaction. It is not a matter of disrespect if someone speaks his/her mind in a considerate manner.
- Lead by example. Avoid pointing out differences that might embarrass individuals, such as unique clothing or hairstyles. Avoid making public announcements about individual needs such as seating arrangements or food preferences.

(5) REFRESHMENTS: If food is provided, what should be used or avoided?

- Your best friend is the caterer or event planner at the restaurant or meeting center. Be sure **they** know your food needs. Make sure they are aware of hidden ingredients such as pork products in gelatin and alcohol in some flavorings such as vanilla.
- The meeting planner should ask about restrictions of attendees on the reservation forms which should include allergies and dietary health concerns.
- People like choices. For example, lots of fruits and vegetables are universally appealing and healthful. A vegan option is appreciated by some people.
- During certain holidays and seasons, consider some options as follows: fish should be available during the Lenten season and on Fridays; matzos during Passover.
- Include the menu on the promotional materials. Don't surprise the caterer or the attendees when people arrive.
- Use signs on the food that include words as well as graphics, for example, a pig picture could distinguish pork ingredients.
- Drink options should include fruit juices as well as tea, water and coffee. If you serve alcohol, keep it clearly separated from other drinks and foods.
- Consider separate tables for meat and dairy products.

(6) SEATING: What physical arrangements should be considered, for example, an option for men and women to be seated separately?

- The safest seating arrangements allow participants to select their locations. Some religions physically separate men and women.
- If you are using roundtable discussions and/ or asking people to re-locate themselves, give them choices.
- Handicapped accessibility is a must (including ramps, wide unblocked aisles and special seating needs.)
- Don't break up couples, friends or families who arrive together. That could make them uncomfortable.
- Leave enough space between seats so that people aren't touching each other.

(7) EDUCATION: What meeting-related skills would you like to improve, for example, facilitating meetings, communicating with people from different backgrounds, avoiding offensive or stereotyped language, etc?

- More programming on multi-cultural awareness for meeting planners including how to communicate with people from different backgrounds.
- Develop facilitation skills regarding how to phrase questions and seek clarity.
- How to develop meetings guidelines.

(8) Other suggestions:

- Use signs with words from different language groups, such as welcome, thank you and good bye including American Sign Language. Also use easily understood graphics for directions.
- The moderator should be ready to step in and stop inappropriate behaviors. Have an agenda. The facilitator ought to keep participants on topic. To enhance teamwork, do some things together such as travel or attend special events of mutual interest such as a museum exhibit. Then, hold the meeting in that location.
- Include examples and graphics from different cultures as part of the meeting content and in visual aids.

☒ NOTICE

If you wish to participate in the meetings research, send an e-mail to SusanSays@Diversity-Matters.net with the following subject line: *Send meeting survey*.

**Diversity Matters conducts presentations on
Multicultural-Friendly Meetings and Training**

INTRODUCING The DIVERSITY EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION EXCHANGE for ALL A Community-based Collaboration

*“Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.”
....Nelson Mandela*

The Diversity Education & Employment Exchange for ALL is a simple and sustainable solution to the emerging and continuously changing needs of our diverse American and local populations. The Exchange is a concept as well as a venue for everyone to share ideas, resources and opportunities to build a thriving community where people from every background can be welcomed economically, socially and personally.

BENEFITS FOR ALL

A community-based collaboration will yield many benefits, as follows:

- **For the community:** continuous, affordable and convenient diversity training opportunities with qualified presenters.
- **For lead agencies (in process):** compatibility with mission, service to the community, economies of scale, enhanced reputation in the community and opportunities for being “in the news.”

- **For employers & employees:** links between those seeking diverse employees and candidates seeking opportunities.

UNIQUE FACTORS

This initiative is unique from current diversity training enterprises for several reasons:

- (1) This **target audience** includes human services and government agencies, schools, cultural entities (museums, music, performing arts,) current and emerging businesses as well as interested individuals.
- (2) We **define diversity** in the broadest possible terms to include ethnicity, religion, age, gender as well as disabilities.
- (3) We can achieve **economies of scale** by capitalizing on current resources, combining marketing/ outreach strategies and building on relationships within the community.
- (4) We will include **employment linkages** between groups and organizations serving/ representing diverse populations as well as employers seeking to hire and retain diverse/ multicultural associates.

How do you want to be involved?
DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE BY REQUEST
call Susan Schubert @ 614-864-5111

- o -- Attend training?
- o -- Sponsor an event?
- o -- Advertise your job openings?
- o -- Participate in planning (next meeting is April 30th)?
- o -- Become a presenter?
- o -- Start a *Diversity Exchange* in your community?
- o -- Other

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Following are **representative** diversity-related events and opportunities of interest. If you have an announcement for future newsletters, kindly write to SusanSays@DiversityMatters.net. We reserve the right to select events based on relevance and available space.

PROGRAM - for minority business entrepreneurs and those seeking minority suppliers, March 27, 2007, Columbus Chamber, Diversity Bridge

<http://www.columbus.org/members/networking-bridge.aspx>, Center for Workforce Development at Columbus State Community College. Diversity Bridge seeks to create an inclusive community; a community that nurtures and sustains minority business ownership. The Columbus Chamber, in partnership with Columbus State Community College and the City of Columbus will launch Diversity Bridge to diminish the gap between where we are today as a business community

and where we want to go. [Click here to view invitation.](#) [Click here to register.](#) Contact Michael Gordon, senior vice president, Business Development Services, Columbus Chamber, 614.225.6935 or michael.gordon@columbus.org

CONFERENCE for public health professionals – April 5-6: Meeting the Needs of Special Populations through Community Organizations. Lessons learned from major catastrophes suggest that some of the notable failures in response were in part due to failures in addressing the needs of special populations. Office of Workforce Development, College of Public Health, The Ohio State University. For registration inquiries: Shirley Funt, 614.292-1637, owdregistration@cph.osu.edu

CONFERENCE for associations - April 6: OSAE (Ohio Society of Association Executives): Diversity's Future Imperative: The confluence with the Bottom Line Annual Diversity Workshop & Luncheon. The Blackwell in Columbus. **REGISTER TODAY!** <http://www.osae.org/>
Panel Discussing: Achieving Association Goals through Diversity; Keynote Speaker: Charleta B. Tavares, Member, Columbus City Council & Executive Director, Multiethnic Advocates for Cultural Competence (MACC). Preparing for the Future – Diversity Trends presented by students from The Ohio State University Fisher College of Business.

TRIP for everyone - April 10-14: The 2007 Civil Rights Historic Heritage Tour, Travel to Cincinnati ~ Atlanta ~ Tuskegee ~ Selma ~ Montgomery ~ Birmingham ~ Memphis. The City of Columbus Community Relations Commission Supports the 7th annual Civil Rights Historic Heritage Tour sponsored by the Raleigh, North Carolina MLK Committee and the Ohio Martin Luther King Commission. Retrace the steps of Dr. King and other civil rights heroes. Contact the Community Relations Commission, Karen Mitchell 614.445-1993 OR Ohio Equal Opportunity Division, Bobbie Bell 614.466-8380

LECTURE for everyone - April 12: The Role of the World's Religions in the International Arena. The Theological Consortium of Greater Columbus, Third Annual Lecture of the Program in World Religions & Inter-Religious Dialogue. Attendance is free. The speaker is Rev. Ishmael Noko, Ph.D., General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation. Pontifical College, Josephinum in Columbus. Contact Sandy Antes by April 5, 2007, 614.985.2497, santes@pcj.edu

LECTURE & LUNCHEON for everyone – April 25: God's Troublemakers: How Women of Faith are Changing the World at The Columbus Metropolitan club. The speaker is Katherine Henderson, Author and Vice-President, *Auburn Theological Seminary in NYC*. Register: <http://www.acteva.com/booking.cfm?bevalD=128554>

WORKSHOP for health care professionals and associations – May 8: OSU Health Literacy Initiative. The focus of this one-day workshop is to help you learn how to assure the relevance of your messages and materials for diverse populations. Topics include guidelines, tools, and basic skills necessary for you to develop low literacy materials that are culturally specific. The presenter Aracely Rosales is known nationally for her experience in cross-cultural health communications and her extensive efforts to bring accessible information and education to diverse communities. Contact Sandra Cornett, RN, Ph.D, OSU Health Literacy Initiative (614) 688-3327, sandy.cornett@osumc.edu

CONFERENCE with a focus on Black men: May 12, 7th Annual Black Man's Think Tank Conference @ Sinclair Community College in Dayton. The conference will include

strategies and programs that “educate, inform, inspire, and uplift Black men” to rise up and take more significant action in leading their families, religious institutions, educational institutions, business institutions, and communities. Presenters will address issues that help males become better citizens, “servant leaders,” “godly leaders,” and ethical leaders. Contact Marlon Aldridge at (937) 512-2333, <http://www.sinclair.edu/stservices/cnsl/pub/bmtt06.pdf>

OPPORTUNITY for everyone: HOST INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The Pacific Intercultural Exchange, a non-profit program, has several exchange students hoping to study and live in OHIO, KENTUCKY and INDIANA beginning this fall. They are seeking a host family for a Jewish student from Germany who seeks a home of any religion. These 15-18 year olds speak English and have their own spending money and health insurance. They seek loving host families to provide room, board and support. Many have expressed a desire to learn about the faith of their host family. They represent such countries as Thailand, Germany, Russia, South Korea, Brazil, Pakistan, Mexico, Ukraine and Iraq. For more information about hosting, call Patty Grasty toll free at 1-866-755-0921 or visit <http://pieusa.org/>

OPPORTUNITY for aspiring nurses: NURSING PROGRAM/FREE TUITION

If you know of anyone between 18-28 years old, interested in the Nursing field, University of the District of Columbia (UDC) is offering FREE tuition, FREE books, a \$250 monthly stipend, and guaranteed job placement as a nurse at Providence Hospital upon graduation (it's a 3 year program) with a starting salary of \$40,000. The program is recruiting new students now!! Please contact Ms. Beshon Smith (202) 266-5481 or email Bsmith@urbanalliancBsmit

About In the News & Announcements

Our objectives are to ...

- Present thought-provoking examples of cultural competence (or incompetence)
 - Include facts about changing demographics
 - Provide resources and opportunities for education and employment
 - Inspire enthusiasm, hope and action
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- Please **share** Diversity Matters in the News with associates and friends
 - **Use excerpts** in your internal newsletters with attribution to Diversity Matters
 - Send us your **examples of diversity issues at work or in the news**
 - To **unsubscribe**, reply to this e-mail with the word “Unsubscribe” in the subject line
 - If you received more than one posting, kindly e-mail us with “**Duplicate**” in the subject line and we will correct the error. Thank you.

**Newsletters & Announcements are distributed periodically by
Diversity Matters**

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