



Diversity & Inclusion Board

DIVERSITY MATTERS

Celebrating Diversity In The Jefferson Parish Workforce

December 2020

A Publication of the Employee Diversity & Inclusion Board of Jefferson Parish

From the Desk of Honorable Cynthia Lee Sheng, Parish President

As this year comes to a close and we welcome 2021 with a clean slate and fresh ideas, it is of the up-most importance that we continue to recognize and celebrate Diversity and Inclusion within the workplace.

The Jefferson Parish Employee Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Board educates, celebrates and highlights the performance, accomplishments and excellence in the unique abilities of our diverse Jefferson Parish workforce and creates a welcoming, inclusive environment to better serve our community.

Leadership and diversity goes hand in hand and I'd like to thank the Jefferson Parish Employee Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Board for continuing to promote diversity awareness and inclusion in our Jefferson Parish workplace. It is so very important to give employees within the Jefferson Parish workplace a voice by creating an inclusive culture. Every initiative and action undertaken to address and improve diversity and inclusion is a step toward uplifting and enriching our work environment and benefits our Jefferson Parish workforce and the citizens that we serve.

I am very proud and thankful for all the employees of Jefferson Parish. We made it through a tough year, but came out stronger than ever. I look forward to what 2021 has in store and the next level ideas we will continue to accomplish as a team. Wishing you and your loved ones a safe and wonderful holiday.



Cynthia Lee Sheng

Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Mask Up
JEFFERSON

Jefferson Parish Workforce Diversity & Inclusion



Celebrate Diversity and Inclusion During the Holidays

Here we are again—heading full steam into the holidays! So much has changed in the last year though, and we're looking at a whole new landscape when it comes to diversity and inclusion awareness. As holiday decorations go up and celebrations begin, it's a good time to consider how you can make the workplace (even if your team is still working from home) more welcoming and inclusive.



In the **wise words** of author and former Herman Miller CEO, Max De Pree, "We need to give each other the space to grow, to be ourselves, to exercise our diversity. We need to give each other space so that we may both give and receive such beautiful things as ideas, openness, dignity, joy, healing, and inclusion." The holidays are about respecting everyone's religious or non-religious customs and beliefs. And it's not just about tolerance—it's about acceptance, peace, and understanding.

Holidays in the Workplace

This year we may not be decorating cubicles, stockpiling holiday goodies in the break room, or hosting conference room parties, but we can still collectively acknowledge and celebrate the season with our teams.

In quick summation, appreciation gifts, innovative party planning, and the gift of time are a must. Here are a few ideas:

Gifting

We have become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams.

Jimmy Carter

Think useful, think appreciation and think more global. For example, this **affordable, long-lasting mug**, with a light-hearted winter theme, will capture your gratitude and cover all your holiday bases. Everyone will be warmed by its charm and your thoughtfulness.

ALYSSA KARHAN, 2017

Diversity & Inclusion

Promoting A Healthy Workforce

Everyone Can Make Winter Holiday Celebrations Safer



Avoid crowded, poorly ventilated indoor spaces

As much as possible, avoid crowds and indoors spaces that do not offer fresh air from the outdoors. If indoors, bring in fresh air by opening windows and doors, if possible.



Wash your hands

Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing and before eating.

Make sure to dry your hands completely using a clean towel or by air drying. If soap and water are not readily available, use a [hand sanitizer](#) that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Avoid touching your mask, eyes, nose, and mouth.

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncird/index.html>



Even if COVID-19 Is a Party Pooper Employers Find Ways to Celebrate

Because holding a workplace holiday party doesn't seem practical during a pandemic, managers are finding other ways to help their workers celebrate this year—including virtual gift exchanges, cooking classes and wine tastings.

"I would argue that it's never been more important to celebrate our accomplishments after what we've endured this year," said Taylor Paone, senior manager of employee experience and culture at DailyPay, a New York City-based company that provides software allowing employees and contractors early access to earned wages. "But of course, we are faced with the daunting challenges of how to celebrate while keeping employees safe. While nothing can entirely replace an in-person experience, these initiatives give employees the chance to bond and have a little fun."

High-End Holiday Gifts

Some managers have found ways to show their appreciation to workers who are still largely operating remotely.

At Chicago-based promotional products company iPromo, there's been a surge in corporate holiday gift orders, including pricey products like branded \$300 Apple AirPods and \$100 self-cleaning water bottles. "Often, a high-end gift is actually less expensive, since a holiday party includes the cost of food, room rental, travel and entertainment," said CEO Leo Friedman. "While the social aspect will be missed, employees will appreciate the gesture, especially during such a tough year. Employees may appreciate a high-value gift that they will use often ... [over] a once-a-year party." Other possibilities include virtual happy hours; dinner parties complete with all the ingredients to make a meal; and home entertainment packages that include games, movies and cookie-decorating kits.

Virtual Parties

"Workers appreciate virtual socials, even if they attend only for 10 minutes," he said. "It doesn't take a long interaction to further a connection between two people. A quick hallway conversation or bumping into someone in the elevator—those are classic examples of connecting in an office. Since virtual socials can happen more often, and since anyone can participate no matter where they are, it just makes everything easier, faster and less expensive." Perhaps one of the most appreciated holiday gifts during the pandemic is the gift of time, Paone said. "Whether it's time with friends and family or time alone, there is nothing more precious than time," Paone said. "We actually have been giving our corporate staff 'Fall Friday' afternoons off, recognizing that Zoom fatigue and the solitude of working remotely is an ongoing challenge and we must encourage staff to step back from the computer and spend time doing activities that re-energize and recharge them."



WE NEED YOU

Diversity Board

Aleen Bernard - General Services
Tommy Austin - Fleet Management
Tonya Bates, Workforce Connection
Ray Mowla - Sewerage & Drainage
Deon Green - Research & Budget
Lisa Harrington - Jeff CAP
- Human Resources
Donnie Lewis - Community Development
Irene Lunkin - J.P. Library
Joanna Miller - Animal Shelter
Betina Noveh - Lafreniere Park
Pay Palafox - Community Justice
Hector Pineda - Parish President Office
Christie Richardson - Citizens Affairs
Lashaunda Thomas - Juvenile Services
Dr. Vanessa Zimmerman - CAA

As we promote diversity in the workplace and Jefferson Parish, we invite your ideas! Please contact:

ABernard@jeffparish.net