



Greenville Chamber Honors Diversity Leaders

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(GREENVILLE, SC) Upstate leaders were honored Tuesday, May 6, 2014 at the Tenth Annual Upstate Diversity Leadership Awards Dinner, held at TD Convention Center. The event was presented by TD Bank and hosted by the Greenville Chamber and the Riley Institute at Furman, in partnership with the Anderson, Greer and Spartanburg Chambers of Commerce. The Upstate Diversity Leadership Awards recognizes organizations and individuals for outstanding achievement in promoting diversity and inclusion in the Upstate community.

“The Greenville Chamber is proud to partner with the Riley Institute at Furman and local chambers to honor those in the Upstate who are making great strides to cultivate an inclusive community,” said Nika White, Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion for the Greenville Chamber. “This event joins together organizations and individuals who have a common desire to promote and celebrate diversity, and we hope it will continue to inspire others in the community to foster diversity efforts in their capacity.”

Award recipients were acknowledged in the following categories: K-12 School, High School Student, College Student, Nonprofit Organization, Business, International and Individual.

K-12 School: William “Bill” T. Wylie Valued Lives Award for School Excellence in Diversity: Berea Middle School

Berea Middle implements a wide variety of activities and programs which seek to promote the inclusion and involvement of students of all abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, races and ethnicities, including:

- The Weekend Backpack Food Program provides students with easily prepared food to eat during the weekend when they do not have access to school meals.
- The Bike Club is a mentorship program where students learn various life skills that will benefit them in the future as well as build self-confidence through a sense of accomplishment and camaraderie with students of different backgrounds.
- The Project Assist Club pairs members with students from the special education class to serve as mentors while working to educate other students in the school about ways to support and include the special education group.
- The My Sisters and Me Club promotes communication, friendship and understanding among female students from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- Capturing Kids' Hearts training, required for staff, educates on the challenges students face on a daily basis and how best to communicate with them.

Principal Robin Mill and Kelly Gregory, Special Education Department Chairperson and 6th Grade Recourse Teacher accepted the award on behalf of Berea Middle School.

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Outstanding High School Student Award: Brittany Gilliland

A senior at Brashier Middle College Charter High School, Brittany is a budding poet and civic leader concerned with social justice. Her poems deal with issues of inequality and human rights. She just co-wrote a play that champions anti-bullying called "Get Up, Stand Up" with the hope of not only creating awareness around the issue of bullying but to leave audiences with a sense of connection and empathy to make changes in the community. In April, the play was presented at the annual student leadership Middle College National Consortium conference in Baltimore.

An advocate for gay and lesbian rights, Brittany recently participated in Peace Voices, a spoken word program that uses poetry as a vehicle to tell unique, personal stories and celebrate Greenville's diverse community. Her other extracurricular activities include Youth Leadership Greenville, Samaritan's Purse, the Greenville Humane Society and Girl Scouts. She is a Dean's List student and has won the Silver Key for the Scholastic Writing Award, the Emrys Haiku Award and has been chosen to receive the Dean's Scholarship from Queens University.

Outstanding College Student Award: Darien Smith

A Clemson University student completing his second year of college, but with enough credits to be a junior, Darien Smith has consistently used his experiences and love of diversity to help others. As a Resident Assistant, he created a monthly dinner discussion series that gave his residents an open space to have critical conversations about social justice issues. The success of this series was noticed by campus administrators who added it to the list of programs for Clemson's 2014 MLK Celebration Week.

Darien created the program, "Grading America: America's Race Relations Report Card" and successfully organized a panel of high level University administration and student leaders to participate in the program. He is also a founding member of the Clemson University Peer Involvement Consultants, a group of diverse students working together to help their peers become involved in the community and network with others.

Darien serves as a volunteer coach for a youth basketball team and is an active member of the Clemson University Campus Climate Task Force. He is a Psychology major, has a 3.75 GPA and intends to become a higher education administrator.

Outstanding Nonprofit Organization Award: The Year of Altruism

The Year of Altruism began as a humanitarian response to the horrors of the Holocaust, intended to honor those brave individuals who risked so much to protect Jews during the Nazi regime. The founders of the Year of Altruism felt that this was no longer a "Jewish" story, but a testament to humanity to act altruistically - selflessly giving of one's person without expectation of reward, often at his or her own peril

Year of Altruism brings together people from diverse backgrounds to build new paths to appreciation, understanding and oneness through programs, projects and events.

Examples of diversity-motivated activities include an Interfaith/Interracial Dr. King "Dream" commemoration service, inter-generational concerts with Arlo Guthrie and local entertainers, conversations on homelessness and plans to address issues of housing, hunger, transportation, jobs and literacy. Year of Altruism also has initiated the first symposium on "Medical Altruism," involving GHS, the USC Medical School, the Children's Hospital, ethicists and community members to deal with issues of diversity, access and quality of medical care.

The Year of Altruism works to build bridges and understanding between the LGBT and heterosexual communities through the Warehouse Theatre's production of "Angels in America." Plans for "Year of Altruism after Year of Altruism" are well in the works with a focus of additional ways it can add value to the total community. Co-founders Marc Wilson and Robert St. Claire accepted the award.

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Outstanding Business Award: BMW Manufacturing Co.

BMW Manufacturing Co. is a leader in the global automotive industry and works toward a goal of inclusiveness enabling it to attract and retain a talented workforce, develop a diversified supplier network and have a positive impact through extensive community involvement.

BMW holds an annual Supplier Diversity Matchmaker Conference that promotes networking between Minority Business Enterprises, Women's Business Enterprises and BMW Tier 1 Suppliers. Since its inaugural event in 2012, conference attendance has more than doubled. Over the last two years, BMW has increased its Tier 1 Minority Spend by over 230% and Tier 2 Spend by over 500%.

BMW also continues to invest in workforce development programs with community colleges and universities. The BMW Scholars Program partners with Greenville Technical College, Tri-County Technical College and Spartanburg Community College to identify students interested in manufacturing-related degrees. The program enables students to attend class full time at local two-year community colleges while working part-time at BMW. This allows them to further their education while gaining valuable experience in a high-tech manufacturing environment and also become potential candidates for full-time positions.

BMW is dedicated to the community and supports programs such as Call me MISTER, the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, the NAACP, 100 Black Men of the Upstate and the United Negro College Fund. They've developed partnerships with the SC Governor's Office of Small and Minority Business, the Southern Automotive Women's Forum, the Greater Women's Business Council and the Carolina's Minority Supplier Development Council.

Outstanding Contribution to International Diversity Award: Janet Krupka

By day, Janet Krupka is the Director of Recruiting at Michelin North America but she also wears another hat in support of the International Community.

In March of 2013, Janet and others spearheaded the effort to create Upstate International, an annual month-long program in which a series of events are held to promote awareness of the cultural diversity in the Upstate. She has remained a passionate supporter of this program to educate the public and celebrate the more than 100 cultures represented by people who live and work in this area.

She is also an active member of the board of the International Center of the Upstate. The mission of this organization is to provide a wide range of programs and services that support and promote the image of the Upstate as an important hub for international investment and trade.

Within Michelin, Janet has been instrumental in achieving more involvement from Employee Resource Groups in recruiting efforts to ensure that potential candidates understand that the company is full of diverse and engaged individuals. One of her colleagues describes her as a person who "believes in the power of diversity and lives it every day.

Calder D. Ehrmann Outstanding Individual Award: Kinneil Coltman

Kinneil Coltman is the Chief Diversity Officer for the Greenville Health System but has been serving the diverse needs of the hospital since 2007 in her previous role as Director of Diversity and Language Services.

She is currently responsible for overseeing one of the largest Language Services Departments in the southeast and the largest in South Carolina with more than 40 interpreters on staff. Kinneil has implemented an electronic interpreter request and tracking system and incorporated teleconferencing technology, which has increased productivity by 50%. These efforts have also resulted in hundreds of patients being able to communicate in their native language when dealing with medical issues.

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Under her leadership, the employees of GHS have access to a wide variety of workforce diversity initiatives, including the GHS Young Professionals Association, the GHS Physicians' Diversity Council and the GHS Nursing Diversity Council - all of which were conceptualized and implemented by Kinneil. Additionally, she led a system-wide effort to boost the satisfaction level of diverse employee groups which lead to significant improvement within these groups and helped position GHS in the 99th percentile of national ranking among peer hospitals.

Kinneil also co-designed and implemented the first hospital-based supplier diversity program in South Carolina and improved supplier diversity spending by 60% in two years leading to recognition by the American Hospital Association's Institute for Diversity in Health Management.

Kinneil is an active leader in the community as well, where she serves as co-chair for the Greenville Chamber's Diversity Council, Past President of the Board of Directors for the YWCA, Past Chairman of the Board for the International Center of the Upstate, and Board President-Elect of the South Carolina Hospital Association Society for Healthcare Diversity Professionals.

Much more could be said about Kinneil's tireless efforts in her profession and in her community. She received multiple nominations for this award and all of her nominators stressed her enthusiasm, commitment to and passion for diversity.

Honorable mentions were awarded to the Washington Center (K-12 School), Napoleon Langston of J.L. Mann High School (Outstanding High School Student), the Upcountry History Museum (Outstanding Nonprofit) and David Taylor of Momentum Bike Clubs (Outstanding Individual).

About the Greenville Chamber

The Greenville Chamber, now over 2400 investors strong, is the largest business organization in Upstate South Carolina. The Chamber's vision is to build one of the premier business communities in the world by driving economic growth and prosperity, serving as an advocate for business interests, training future leaders and facilitating the workforce of tomorrow. For more information about the Greenville Chamber, call 864-242-1050, or visit www.greenvillechamber.org.

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