

WDM Contact:

Kara Matheson

kara@wdmchamber.org

(515) 421-4161

[Learn More About the WDM Chamber](#)**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****August 15, 2021****RECIPIENTS OF WDM CHAMBER DEI EXCELLENCE AWARDS ANNOUNCED**

WEST DES MOINES, IA (MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 2022) – The West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce (WDM Chamber) is holding its second annual [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Workplace Excellence Awards](#) (DEI Awards) on September 1 from 4:30 – 7:30 PM at the Community Choice Convention Center. It will be a night full of learning, growing and celebrating the work being done to make Central Iowa more inclusive. Award recipients of 10 categories will be honored, have the chance to share their story to inspire others, and give hundreds of leaders in attendance a challenge to consider.

The individuals and organizations being recognized include:

- DEI Student Leader of the Year: **Mayada Alwan, Valley High School student**
- DEI Emerging Leader of the Year: **Anthony Lyne**
- DEI Leader of the Year: **Audrey Kennis**
- DEI Ally of the Year: **Edith Crawford**
- Large Business (250 and above): **UnityPoint Health**
- Nonprofit: **Evelyn K. Davis Center**
- Government: **Renee Hardman**
- Education: **AI Womble**
- Medium Business (50 – 249 employees): **Turner Construction**
- Best Inclusion Initiative: **UnityPoint Health**

“The judges had a tough job with all of the incredible applications the WDM Chamber received, but that just speaks to the vast work being done across our region,” said Kara Matheson, VP of Workforce Development & Culture for the WDM Chamber. “Everyone is going to walk away from this event so inspired and with ideas for how they can take that next step on their own DEI journey.”

These award recipients were selected from a pool of 36 applicants by a panel of judges who come from all walks of life. That panel of judges included:

- Stacey Kimberlin, CultureALL
- Bobbi Segura, Women Lead Change
- Eric Shepard, Sammons Financial Group
- Karen Rieck, FBL Financial
- Kim Hanken, Korean Cultural Connection of Iowa
- Sean Kennedy, IMT Insurance
- Anne Cooper, Sammons Financial Group
- Sanjita Pradhan, Cook Ross

Additionally, Mayada Alwan, the Student Leader of the Year, will receive a \$1,550 scholarship for her education and Evelyn K. Davis Center, the nonprofit winner, gets to select a minority leader to go through the West Des Moines Leadership Academy on a full-ride tuition scholarship for fall of 2023. These scholarships are possible thanks to the Minority Leader Scholarship Sponsor, American Equity Life Insurance Company.

The WDM Chamber's DEI Committee also selected two nonprofits to be the donation recipients of a portion of sponsorship proceeds. These include CultureALL and the Latina Leadership Initiative. Learn more about their work and other nonprofits at the Partner tables during the networking portion of the event from 4:30 – 5:30 PM. Attendees will also enjoy music by Guitarras ATM and delicious multicultural appetizers.

Tables and individual tickets are available [here](#). Registration closes on August 23.

A special thank you to Exclusive Video Partner [Known Labs](#), PR Partner [Hanser & Associates](#), and [Triplett Office Solutions](#) for generously donating all the awards.

An additional thank you to sponsors:

Minority Leader Scholarship Sponsor: [American Equity](#)

Award Partner – Gold Sponsors: [NCMIC](#), [Cocoa Creative Agency](#)

Advocate Sponsor: [Care Initiatives](#)

Champion Sponsors: [American Enterprise](#), [IMT Insurance](#), [Merchants Bonding Company](#), [Sammons Financial Group](#), [Simpson College](#), [Turner Construction](#), [City of West Des Moines](#)

###

About the WDM Chamber of Commerce

The mission of the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce is to champion all things West Des Moines by strengthening our area companies, providing personalized resources and attracting a top workforce to position WDM as the best suburban city in America. With 700+ members, we provide something for everyone. Learn more about the chamber and how to get involved at wdmchamber.org.