Save the date: Great Give Day is May 13! Support local nonprofits on Northeast Iowa’s biggest day of giving. Visit greatgiveday.org.

Giving Matters

Spring 2021

‘WALK THE TALK’

Local business leaders collaborate to foster inclusive workplaces

Pictured: John Deere Dubuque Works General Manager Mark Dickson, left, and retired Operations Manager Ernest Jackson take part in the Community Foundation’s Business Leader Equity Cohort.

Our mission: to strengthen communities and inspire giving.
‘WALK THE TALK’

Last year, Dubuque business leaders gathered to hear Northeast Iowa Community College President Dr. Liang Chee Wee and retired John Deere Dubuque Works Operations Manager Ernest Jackson offer a perspective that many in the group had never experienced: Being a minority in the workplace.

They shared experiences with code-switching, the way some workers of underrepresented populations consciously or unconsciously alter their speaking or other personal habits. Often, they do this because they have a challenging time feeling accepted and/or finding their way within an organization. Even worse, they may be dealing with an overtly hostile environment. The stress can lead to underperformance and exiting the company.

“Buy-in at the top

This type of learning takes place whenever the Business Leader Equity Cohort meets. Convened by the Community Foundation, the Cohort formed in 2018 with the understanding that for diversity and inclusion efforts to take hold in an organization, top leaders need to understand the issues facing minority workers and support efforts to address them.

The members have deepened their knowledge through guest speaker panels, readings and discussions.

“Creating a community of openness and inclusivity begins with creating employment opportunities that bring satisfaction and genuine interest to all.”

Marty Burbridge, retired president and CEO of Crescent Electric Supply Company

They have dug into issues like the value of mentoring and community engagement for retaining minority employees and how organizations should respond to issues of the day, including anti-racism demonstrations.

“Time to take action

Many gatherings include local guests, such as Pastor Stan Samson of Dubuque Paradise Church. He discussed the economic and health challenges his Marshallese community faces and how it could benefit from better engagement with employers and programs that prepare youth for local jobs.

Today, the Cohort is looking to translate learning into action — in other words, “walk the talk.” How do companies support efforts to train Dubuque’s diverse student population for in-demand jobs, promote career advancement for employees of color, or move unemployed and underemployed workers into a pipeline to career jobs?

To deepen its impact, the Cohort welcomes top leaders from businesses and organizations of all sizes and from all sectors to take part. New participants are invited to join the bi-monthly meetings and work with this group of peers to foster a welcoming and inclusive culture throughout the business community and the Dubuque region as a whole.

Contact Equity Coordinator Clara Lopez Ortiz for more information. clara@dbqfoundation.org 563.588.2700

‘WALK THE TALK’

To stay ahead of the times, our business community needs to work together to help move our diversity and inclusion initiatives faster.”

Mark Dickson, general manager of John Deere Dubuque Works

The other leaders expressed how eye-opening the discussion was. Here were two peers opening up about challenges that they as minorities have faced. If someone who is now a high-level leader could feel such discomfort, how might employees at other levels of an organization feel?
Children's brain health listening sessions draw dozens of rural residents

For rural communities, access to brain health services for youth can be limited. That's why the Community Foundation is leading conversations with parents, educators, caregivers and others to determine how to make these services more accessible for children who need them most.

This winter, the Community Foundation hosted three listening sessions that drew about 70 residents of rural areas. By hearing about their experiences, the Children's Brain Health Working Group can gather information that will help identify and fill gaps in services.

What’s a formative experience that you’ve carried with you?

In middle school, my teacher told us we were going to start a group project, and everyone said, “Ugh!” He picked up a pencil, snapped it in half and said, “This is you working on your own.” Then, he tried to break a handful of pencils and said, “This is you working together.” That taught me that if we approach challenges as individuals, we can get a few things done, but when we work together, we are stronger.

What has been your journey to the Community Foundation?

I grew up on a farm in Maquoketa around values of pitching in and giving back. That’s why I chose to stay in Eastern Iowa for college and my career and contribute to this community. I went to Loras College before moving onto KWWL, where I worked for 14 years.

Then, I got the opportunity to return to Loras to work in fundraising and support the community that gave so much to me. People and community have been at the center of my career, which is why I’m so excited for this new phase!

What makes Dubuque well-positioned to tackle community challenges?

People in Iowa, especially in the Dubuque region, are resilient, and their work ethic is strong. Those qualities go a long way toward solving problems.

What do you love about your work?

The opportunity to give back is the greatest reward. The best part of every job I’ve had is how it makes you stop and appreciate what you’ve gone through, learned and, as my grandfather would say, work to leave a place better than you found it.

How will you tend to Dubuque’s future? Discuss your gift to the Greater Dubuque Forever Fund by contacting Bobbi Earles at bobbi@dbqfoundation.org or 563-588-2700. For more information, go to dbqfoundation.org/forever.
CHARITABLE BOOMERANG AVAILABLE FOR A LIMITED TIME!

Last year’s CARES Act has been extended, meaning your $300 gift in 2021 could be tax-deductible

What if someone paid you back just for being generous? It would be a win-win. The charitable causes you support would be healthier thanks to your donation, and you’d get money back in your pocket.

That was the idea behind last year’s federal coronavirus relief legislation, the CARES Act, and the good news is that some provisions like the one that pays you back for giving have been extended into 2021.

Think of it as a charitable boomerang — you give something and get something in return. For the vast majority of people who don’t itemize their tax deductions, the CARES Act extension allows individuals to give up to $300 to charity and deduct that amount on their 2021 taxes. Couples filing jointly see that amount double to $600.

For those who do itemize their deductions, the CARES Act extension allows for charitable deductions of up to 100% of individuals’ adjusted gross income. Furthermore, corporations can deduct charitable gifts up to 25% of taxable income, making giving through corporate match programs even more beneficial this year.

If you aren’t sure what causes to support, the Community Foundation offers many options for you to help build a strong Dubuque region. Our staff is here to help you with whatever type of gift you choose to make. Contact us or give online soon, because the CARES Act might not be extended much longer.

Contact Amy Manternach, chief operating officer, at amy@dbqfoundation.org or 563-588-2700.

See the chart for examples of what this means for your federal income tax.

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What can $300 do for the community? Learn more at dbqfoundation.org/cares2021.