

May 4, 2018

Dear Columbia partners, supporters and friends,

I write you today with a sense of excitement, trepidation and enthusiasm regarding changes to how the Columbia area will support diversity and inclusion efforts. As you know, in March 2015 the Diversity Awareness Partnership answered the call for support, resources and leadership and began Diversity Awareness Partnership-Columbia with me as the Regional Manager. I am honored to have had the opportunity to fulfill the mission given by facilitating trainings, creating awareness, initiating collaborations and engaging community to see and address the differences in treatment of underrepresented groups. As a resident, community member and leader in the Columbia area, I am committed to doing the work to help our area become one where inclusion and respect is the norm.

In three years we have seen many changes in the needs of the community as we worked with local civic, social, faith, and business key stakeholders. We continued to focus on trainings, awareness and professional development while expanding our youth initiatives and opportunities to support new and rising professionals. As the Columbia branch has grown, it has become increasingly apparent that the unique and fluid needs of the Columbia community could better be served with an organizational structure allowing for more local input and focus on activities, connections and partnerships which are most beneficial to the close-knit community we serve. After much conversation, reflection, and support from the Diversity Awareness Partnership executive director and board, a local diversity non-profit has been created and I have accepted a leadership position with that organization to continue to serve my community.

Diversity Awareness Partnership, which supports leaders to become active and engaged change making advocates, will cease operation in Columbia but will remain a support resource to the newly created Inclusive Impact Institute where I will provide leadership and continue the mission to expand diversity, inclusion and equity in the Columbia community. I am eternally grateful for the foundation that Diversity Awareness Partnership has laid for the Columbia community. DAP was willing to be the catalyst for getting work off the ground for Columbia and will continue to be a strong partner in this work. Our plan is to continue to work collaboratively wherever the need and opportunity presents itself and we are united in the fight to create inclusive communities for all.

In the next few weeks, more information will be forthcoming from both organizations. Feel free to contact me at [nikki@inclusiveimpact.org](mailto:nikki@inclusiveimpact.org) or Melanie Powell-Robinson, Diversity Awareness Partnership Executive Director, at [mpr@dapinclusive.org](mailto:mpr@dapinclusive.org) if you have any additional questions.

The work continues.

Sincerely,



Nikki McGruder  
Director, Inclusive Impact Institute



Melanie Powell-Robinson  
Executive Director, Diversity Awareness Partnership