

CONNECTIONS



Leadership Buffalo's Semi-Annual Magazine

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Leadership Buffalo
in the
NEW NORMAL

What's Your
Diversity + Inclusion
Plan?

Sponsored by Northwest Bank

The strength of our community is its greatest asset.



When people work together, anything is possible. It's why we support organizations that bring people within our community closer. They reinforce the bonds we share and help us celebrate the traditions we hold dear. It's just one part of our investment in our neighbors and the community.

KeyBank thanks Leadership Buffalo for making a difference.



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Please note; all photos in this issue of participants without face coverings were taken before March 2020. Leadership Buffalo is following safe social distancing practices for our program participants.

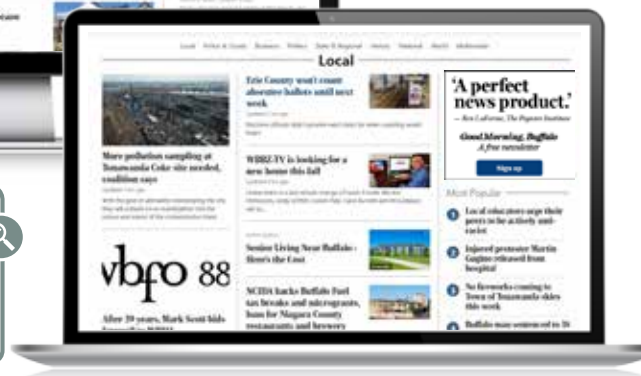
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THE BUFFALO NEWS

Message from the Chair

This year surely has been an unexpected one, and while the future is still a little unpredictable, there's no doubt we can rely on the strength of our community.

At Leadership Buffalo, we have seen firsthand how our troops rally together to make things happen! Our classes challenged each other to donate to Leadership Buffalo and at least one other non-profit; members have gotten creative with their connections – virtual happy hours, socially distant meet-ups, etc.; and all of our alumni have continued to share, like, and comment on any and all positive social media posts for the WNY community.

You'll notice the new name of our magazine – "Connections." This was done in tandem with our recently updated tagline, "Connecting People. Inspiring Change." During these unique times we're in, we have seen that tagline play out time and time again with our alumni and community partners.

We saw great success with our Virtual Values event the week of August 10. We honored five well-deserving individuals; Terry Bourgeois, Empire State Ride; Dorothy Siaw-Asamoah, (LB '16), University at Buffalo School of Management; Rita Hubbard-Robinson (LB '09), NeuWater & Associates; Amy Betros, St. Luke's Mission of Mercy; and Dr. Howard Hitzel, BestSelf Behavioral Health, Inc. Our Virtual Event brought in more than \$18,000 to be put towards scholarships and we are still receiving donations. Thank you to everyone who participated and donated!

And while other Leadership Buffalo events had to be postponed or altered this year, we know that the strength of our alumni is tremendous, and we look forward to bringing more quality programming to everyone in 2021 (and hopefully sooner)!

To the current classes, alumni, board, sponsors, volunteers, community partners, and that small-but-mighty staff – my thanks and thanks again for your continued support of Leadership Buffalo. The organization is thriving in large part due to the involvement of each and every one of you. I have no doubt that together we are making Buffalo better. Cheers!



Tricia Barrett (LB '15)
Crowley Webb & Associates
Leadership Buffalo Board Chair

Let's Be Better

CEO, Althea Luehrsen, reflects on the unrest of our nation and community, but has not given up hope.



As I write this, our community and our country are experiencing the most difficult times I've ever experienced in my 60 plus years of life. Between Covid-19, racial inequalities, and the political divide, it's disheartening.

However, because we are Buffalo, the city of good neighbors, I have hope. I know that may sound naive and Pollyannaish, but the alternative is to give up and Buffalonian's don't give up.

In all aspects we must be better: better listeners, better neighbors, better people. Better by wearing a mask and not gathering at large events; better by standing side by side with our black brothers and sisters to demand change; better people that listen to other opinions and try to understand. Better in so many ways.

This is what diversity is about. We are different yes, but we are also very similar. Most of us want pretty much the same things; a nice home, family, friends, money

A group of Class Experience volunteer at Harvest House

to pay our bills, a job that is fulfilling, food on the table, religious freedoms. But how boring of a world we would experience if we all were the same; thought the same, dressed the same, talked the same, worshipped the same? We need all people. And all people deserve to be heard, counted, and provided with opportunity regardless of color of skin, ethnicity, religious choice, sexual preference, gender decision, physical abilities, or limitations.

As Barbra Streisand was quoted as saying in 1994 “My idea of a perfect world is one in which we appreciate each other’s differences; one in which we are all equal but definitely not the same”. The message still resonates today.

At Leadership Buffalo, we pride ourselves in opening people’s minds and breaking down biases and stereotypes.

Getting people to know what they didn’t know. The work we do is now more important than ever. We have been diligently working on our programming virtually while adding town halls and trainings to help people get better. To learn. To understand. To listen.

I am reading White Fragility right now and was surprised given the work I do, that I still have so much to learn. We are born to this world with no prejudice, with no hatred, with no discrimination; rather it is taught to us and often it starts at home. We have many years of undoing these teachings and we will continue to bring the facts to our members so that we can affect positive change.

We hope you’ve been appreciating what we’re offering but we are always open to suggestions. Please

message me at althea@leadershipbuffalo.org with any and all suggestions.

Together we can become a more cohesive, kinder, understanding community by connecting people and inspiring change.

We hope you enjoy the magazine and the new name! And I cannot end without giving a shout out to the LB 2020 Classes which we have renamed THE LONGEST CLASS EVER who have truly proved that they are one resilient group of amazing people!

Stay safe, stay positive and stay kind!



A group of Class Experience visits the Edward Saunders Community Center



Northwest Bank

Every company, organization, and business has been affected by Covid-19. This is new territory for all of us; Northwest shares their experiences and what they are doing to keep everyone safe.

How has COVID-19 affected Northwest operations?

At Northwest, we've been focused on the safety of our employees, customers and communities, while working to maintain an excellent experience for our customers.

Throughout the past several months, we have been closely monitoring state and local restrictions, reports from the CDC and WHO, as well as feedback from our employees and customers to help inform our operating decisions.

Mid-April, we limited access to our branch lobbies to

by-appointment-only. During this time, we kept our drive throughs open and encouraged customers to use alternative channels, like online and mobile banking, telephone banking and our extensive free ATM network to check balances, pay bills, transfer funds, deposit cash and checks and make withdrawals.

We also implemented a work-from-home strategy for all Northwest employees who were able.

As of June 29, we reopened our retail network to walk-in foot traffic. Throughout July, we will bring our corporate employees back into the office in phases.

Moving forward, we will continue to monitor the situation and governmental guidelines,

and adjust our operating model accordingly.

What policies and procedures were put in place for employees in response to COVID?

At Northwest, the safety of our employees, customers and communities is our number one priority. In light of that, we adopted safeguards that aligned with the recommendations of the CDC and state governments, including requiring masks and social distancing, limiting capacity across all our offices and installing teller shields. In addition, we introduced or refined policies related to cleaning and disinfecting spaces, paid time off, personal appearance and travel.

How has the culture shifted at Northwest? Both with customers and employees?

In terms of customers, we've noticed an increase in adoption of our alternate channels like online and mobile banking, telephone banking and the use of our ATM network.

Internally, our teams have been incredibly resilient to all the changes—and we are proud of everyone for their support. In addition to the adjustments remote work brings—including an increase in reliance of communications technology like video conferencing—our customer-facing teams

have missed seeing their customers face-to-face and are excited to be serving them in-person inside their lobbies. They are all fully-prepared to provide advice and guidance to everyone affected by our current situation—whether they're in a financial crisis, lost a job or simply want to be better prepared for the future.

How have the events of the recent racial tensions in our country affected Northwest operations?

We continue to monitor what's happening across the country and remain focused on creating an environment where all of our employees and customers feel welcome and safe.

Does Northwest have a diversity/inclusion policy or message that was either already in place or development due to recent events? If so, please share that with us.

At Northwest, we are committed to working toward a more inclusive future to include equitable treatment for all. Like many companies across the nation we are having tough conversations to ensure our team feels heard.

How does Northwest connect with the Buffalo and WNY Community?

Our community proposition is focused on meeting people

where they are. We believe that community refers to all the markets where our customers live, work and play. Whether that means delivering our financial education curriculum (Northwest Engage) or supporting local non-profits through volunteerism and investment. We are very proud of what we have accomplished since expanding our presence in the WNY market. This investment includes our newest full service office on Jefferson Avenue. In the coming months we will add an education center in the Jefferson corridor, that will serve various financial education coaching and workshops. With the effects that COVID is having on financial stability, we feel that the timing of the Center couldn't be more important.

What does the future look like for Northwest?

Moving forward, we will continue to evolve our people, processes and technology to ensure that we continue to provide an exceptional experience for our customers. We were pleased to be named to Forbes' 2020 list of the World's Best Banks and are committed to doing all we can to satisfy our employees, customers, communities and shareholders.

The Best Gift Ever

Jenna Bichler (pictured below, second from the right) of the Class Experience 2020 class met 'her people' in Leadership Buffalo and is ready to start making a difference.



It happened even before the opening retreat. It happened at the Welcome Reception on January 8th, 2020. I met MY PEOPLE. The Leadership Buffalo Class of 2020, LB Alumni and the LB Team. These are my people. I made instant friends, a group of four of us. Bonded by our excitement to meet each other, learn servant leadership and learn more about the great City of Buffalo. Our hearts were on our sleeves, excitement abounded and there we were...connected. We had no idea how connected we'd become over the next few months.

Each Leadership Buffalo class before us has created these bonds, we know because they speak to us. It's like a secret society in Buffalo and once you mention you're in the Leadership Buffalo Class of 2020 suddenly alumni pop up from everywhere to excitedly share their experience...and let you know they will always be there for you. These are my people. And every class before 2020 has created

A group of Class Experience visit the Erie 1 Boces on Education Day

lifelong friendships and bonds.

But us, the best class ever, "trip B 20, 20 is money," we got the best gift ever. We got coronavirus. Yes, read that again – I just called coronavirus the best gift ever. Yes, maybe months of lockdown and solitude have made me crazy...or maybe I'm right.

Here's why I'm right...

We had the joy of our opening retreat at Beaver Hollow, in person. We made friends, connections, and bonds...because, remember, we are with our people. We had our first two in person day sessions and they were incredible. We finished our Hunger and Poverty day emotionally exhausted but compelled to initiate change. We finished our Education day, also, emotionally exhausted but even more committed to our children and our community.

And then everything stopped.

The world, the USA, New York State and Buffalo changed ... in the blink of an eye. Just like that we were working remotely, homeschooling our children and missing our people (and searching desperately for toilet paper, hand sanitizer and normalcy).

But in the face of great challenge comes opportunity and LB pivoted. We went VIRTUAL. And it kept us together. We Zoomed into each other for Day Sessions, Town Halls and Happy Hours. And, I speak for many of us when I say, this sense of normalcy and connection to our people made the scariness of the world outside feel less intense. We still had our people. Maybe a little differently but we had each other.

And just as we felt like we were turning the corner from the trauma of the pandemic, we were struck with another senseless, infuriating trauma. The death of George Floyd. And, again, I saw the response from this group of leaders, my people. My people who fight against racism, my people

who call for action, my people who stand for humanity, my people who support the many good men and women who joined the Police force to be the change. We may not understand each other's experiences, but this group of leaders is a compassionate, caring group of HUMANS who are COMMITTED to fighting injustice.

So when we look back on the first half of the class of 2020's year, what we have are experiences that changed the world and that changed us. LB 2020 will forever be defined by the class that survived and thrived in the pandemic. We will be the class that stood up to FIGHT, ELIMINATE and DESTROY racial injustices. Our class will forever be defined and connected by our shared traumas. We got to see each other real and raw. Stressed out. In our yoga pants and sweatpants and sometimes with our least professional selves. But, it didn't matter. Because whether in person or on Zoom, we are with our people. Leadership Buffalo Class of 2020. Trip B 20, 20 is Money. The BEST class ever. Standing together. Being the change.

So maybe we didn't know when we signed up to be the Leadership Class of 2020 that we'd be the class charged with surviving a global pandemic and the class charged with being the leaders that eradicate profound racial injustices...but, I can't imagine any group of leaders being more capable of doing this.



A group of Rising Leaders visit the Seneca Babcock Community on Neighborhood Discovery Day

Enlightening and Unforgettable

Rashia Dowell (pictured above, far right) of the Rising Leaders 2020 Class sees her time in the class as an unique and timely opportunity.

“In these challenging and unprecedented times” ... Over the last three months I cannot count how many times I have heard this phrase, and no doubt, truer words have not been spoken.

Leadership Buffalo was a unique opportunity for me to see Buffalo, learn about its high, its lows, all that it has to offer and ultimately to identify a way to contribute to its progression. Leading up to my enrollment I heard so many positives from past graduates and looked forward to forging my own memories, having my own experiences, and graduating the program changed—positioned to make Buffalo better.

Perfect Timing

This unique program became even more impactful as COVID-19 descended upon us all, creating a unifying fabric across our local and global communities—no matter what walk of life, we all now had something significant in common—living through a pandemic. Life on so many fronts became fundamentally different, so much so, that I doubt it will ever return to “the way it was”.

Work life, home life and everything in between feels different. Parents are now school teachers and gym teachers. They are also becoming masters of multi-tasking, as many are filling these new roles while working full time. Everything has gone virtual including happy hours, birthday parties, book clubs, networking events and even our Leadership Buffalo day sessions.

At this point we have completed four-day sessions, one in person and the other three were virtual. The Leadership Buffalo staff has done a phenomenal job pivoting and advancing the curriculum without losing or diminishing the impact of the experiences in the digital environment.

I am labeling my experience as unique not based solely on COVID-19, but more because of the timing of the lessons we completed to what was unfolding near real-time in the world around us.

Community at its finest

Historically, Buffalo is at its best, when we ban together for a common cause or against a common enemy—often it is when we are at our lowest that we most apt to reveal our humanity. COVID forced families and individuals, some for the first time, into situations where food shortage and hunger were real—talk about a unifier—and our community, as it typically does, banded together. Every

commercial, high school and not for profit was quickly organizing to serve the needs of so many. The timing was uncanny that we completed our hunger and poverty, and education day sessions amidst this backdrop truly allowing the class to not just learn about, but rather to have an authentic experience with regards to these two important topics. Disparities in education, if they were not before, became very clear as we spoke about the availability of resources, or lack thereof, in certain communities.

A few weeks later we completed a session on criminal and social justice, hearing from various perspectives and institutions on both plights and progress. That session was followed by conversations revolving around the devastating impacts COVID was having on arts, culture and tourism within our community. While we were still digesting these recent conversations, we were violently confronted with how much change is still needed within our criminal and social justice systems as the circumstances and images surrounding the murder of George Floyd unfolded in news and social media.

My Leadership Buffalo experience has been both enlightening and unforgettable. Growing up I heard, and now know to be true first hand, that the best way to learn and retain is to immediately apply what you learn. These two devastating events are opportunities for everyone to link intellectual discussion with real life experiences. My hope is that we all challenge the images we have associated with certain conditions. Whether it be human trafficking, poverty, hunger or justice, challenge what that looks like to you and act accordingly.

What is your organization's plan for **diversity + inclusion?**

With the continued racial unrest in our country, we challenged our alumni and partners to create a new or share their already-in-place efforts for diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

We are focusing on the solutions we can provide; the positive change we can all enact. We asked partners in the community; all businesses, nonprofits, educational institutions, and government agencies to share their plans, councils, messages, and/or initiatives.

Our regularly scheduled Town Halls, Connecting Conversations, continue to have those uncomfortable and necessary

discussions with critical leaders in our community.

We want to be the leaders to listen, converse, educate, and inspire.

“An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.”—
Martin Luther King, Jr.





The hate, racism, brutality, and violence has to stop and it begins with us.

We strive towards diversity and inclusion, but we know, especially in these moments, that we need to reflect and determine how we can do better. Every day, we witness the impact of trauma, abuse, violence, and silent suffering and what it does to the soul of an individual.

Discrimination, oppression, racism, violence, stereotyping, bigotry and prejudice have no place at Crisis Services, period.

Our crisis first responders serve roles as advocates, educators, navigators of institutional systems that stigmatize those impacted by interpersonal and community violence, mental illness, addiction and trauma. We have a history of working within criminal justice systems to stand for the rights of victims, to push for mental health responses that advocate for jail diversion over cyclical imprisonment that disproportionately impacts and endangers Black lives, and the critical role we play in educating law enforcement on de-escalation strategies to reduce the harm caused by physical force when responding to an individual experiencing a mental health crisis. We take our role in saving and protecting precious life seriously through just actions, fair treatment, and trauma-informed responses.

We hold dearly onto hope that our commitment to action, and not just words, will move our community forward with love and true freedom from suffering.



The Horizon family is committed to listening, learning, leading and standing in solidarity with the black community. We believe this is an ongoing conversation that involves education, advocacy, and action in order to continually support our patients and community as a whole.

We have no tolerance for racism, discrimination or harassment.

This is a universal problem and we will work together toward a solution as this has a direct impact on our mission of recovery.

Horizon's Diversity & Inclusion Council (D&I) was established in 2014 to develop, implement, and promote its cultural philosophies in treatment, among staff, and within the community. D&I's mission is to empower our staff to be sensitive and receptive to patients', co-workers' and communities' cultural beliefs, attitudes and practices. D&I's strategic initiatives include training, policy, and workforce development, agency communications, patient resources, and community engagement using CLAS Standards and the "Cultural Humility" framework by Melanie Tervalon and Jann Murray-Garcia (1998) to inform decision-making. While a lot has been accomplished, there is so much more to be done!

Our Diversity & Inclusion Council is working diligently to bring forth additional resources, best practices, approaches, and training for everyone at Horizon and our community as a whole.

We will continue to update you on the steps we are taking both internally and externally.

Our work does not end here and we stay committed to you.



“We are educating ourselves and providing resources to others, as each and every one of us needs to take accountability and responsibility for self-education. Taking direct action is essential.”

Our vision statement is “Empowering everyone to be their Best Self,” and we cannot hope to achieve this without addressing the origins of these adverse impacts. To that end, we pledge the following:

BestSelf, as an organization, will take an anti-racist stance in all areas: policy and procedure, hiring, and training.

BestSelf will maintain an active Racial Equity and Inclusion Committee whose mission is to continually examine current practices, ensuring racial equity is the focus in all of our work and most of all, hold the organization accountable to the standards set.

BestSelf will use our resources to continue supporting businesses owned by Black individuals and all people of color.

BestSelf will continue to offer employees at BestSelf training and opportunities to learn more about racial equity as well as provide safe forums to discuss racial equity issues and concerns

BANK OF AMERICA



Our commitment to being a great place to work is rooted in empowering all backgrounds. We realize the power of our diversity and value all our differences — in thought, style, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, and experience. We are an inclusive company focused on responsible growth and have strong programs, organizations and partnerships that bring together, grow and develop Black/African American leaders internally and in our communities.

45%

More than 45% of our U.S.-based workforce is racially or ethnically diverse.

13%

Our workforce is more than 13% Black/African American, exceeding industry benchmarks.

57%

Our 2019 U.S. class of interns was 57% people of color, our most diverse class on record

More information can be found at bankofamerica.com/inclusion

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Our pledge is to Be Better.

Be more awake to and aware of our own views and actions. Show more compassion, empathy and concern for every person from every walk of life. Be stronger advocates for positive change. Never tolerate inequity, bias and injustice at any level. Lead with goodness, hope and love.

While committed to be part of the solution in everything we do, it's now imperative that every person in every organization Be Better. All of us at Catapult fully welcome and embrace that responsibility.

nationalgrid

National Grid stands with our customers, communities, and employees in their pursuit of justice and lasting change.

Driving inclusion and promoting equitable opportunities for all

Ensuring the workforce, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect

Eliminating discrimination

Ensuring selection for employment, promotion, training, development, benefit and reward, will be in compliance with federal, state, local and collective bargaining laws

We also demonstrate our commitment to Inclusion and Diversity by supporting various Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) which are run by dedicated employee volunteers



We are determined to live up to our mission of bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope.

We have seen the impact of redlining, discriminatory lending, and decades of housing discrimination. These practices have had a ripple effect on various parts of the lives of marginalized populations who frequently cannot attain the wealth creation of homeownership, and are forced to live in communities with limited opportunities for education, jobs, and healthy lives.

Everyone deserves to live in an equitable society. We will build this together.

We are committed to listening to our neighbors, learning about their experiences, and advocating on their behalf. We will seek diverse voices at every level of our organization.



We will engage our community to enhance diversity, inclusion, and respect for every person.

We will break down barriers, push boundaries, and work as advocates for change.

We will create an inclusive environment that will seek cooperative collaborations and community-based solutions.

We will commit to an intentional and ongoing dialogue about racial injustice among our staff, partners and stakeholders.

We stand with you because you are a part of us. If you do not receive justice, neither do we. We promise to continue working together with our partners to create a better and more inclusive Buffalo.



Ingram Micro's Executive team has been partnering with an organization called Mind Gym to educate and define our journey as a company as it relates to Diversity & Inclusion.

Mind Gym's proven 90 minute workouts to help you create a more inclusive culture.

Understand the latest behavioral science of inclusion, and what that means for their organization

Explore the four cornerstones of an inclusive culture: what they are, the tensions they present, and how they can use them

Focus on clear tangible actions they can take to move the dial on inclusion in their organization

Mind Gym transforms performance by changing the way people think.

59% of both the FTSE and S&P 100 have used Mind Gym to solve major challenges

“Our RL Diversity day really inspired me and encouraged me to do more to make a difference.”

Brittany Calhoun (RL '20)

Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network, Inc.



BPPN has been devoted to caring for women, their newborns and their families for over 30 years and we are aware of the gross inequities and disparities that pervade our society.

Black women die in pregnancy at three times the rate of their white counterparts, even when controlling for education and income.

They are 50% more likely to deliver prematurely.

Their babies are twice as likely to die compared to their peers

Research shows that racism is linked to birth outcome disparities and mental health problems, such as chronic stress and depression, for our families. Our culturally competent staff touch lives every day, lifting them up and providing needed support. They meet the clients where they are and encourage their next steps

We stand with our staff, particularly with those who are black and people of color, during these most difficult times.

As an agency, we commit to be actively anti-racist. We can't undo the decades of ongoing trauma caused in communities but we can and must demand change. We will break down barriers, push boundaries, and work as advocates for change. We respect the right to peaceful protest

Our mission is to ensure that our families are healthy-mother, father and children. This is the only way for us to move forward and ensure a healthy future for our community. The family is the nucleus of our society and we must continue to nurture its existence.



Buffalo Prep’s readi program is a series of workshops, trainings, and presentations to promote educational and racial equity throughout our community. Companies, schools, organizations, peer and networking groups can work with Buffalo Prep staff to customize a training/series of trainings to further their understanding of these issues and topics.

More details at buffaloprep.com/readi



19 IDEAS

Actions speak louder than words. We want our unequivocal support of the Black community, as well as each of the BIPOC communities and LGBTQ+ community, to be known. We recognize that to see real change in the world we can no longer be passive in this support; we must be active. And that action is long past due.

We are not just reading and learning from anti-racist advocacy, but we are also following and listening to Black stories from artists, writers, scholars, and professionals. We are having honest conversations with each other. We are examining our business and ourselves as individuals to identify ways that go well beyond simply being an ally, but rather to be active participants in creating real, tangible change for our society.

JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.

JPMorgan Chase is extending on our multi-billion dollar investments to address racial and economic inequality. We’re building on programs like **Advancing Black Pathways**, financing affordable housing in hard hit cities, supporting minority-owned small businesses, and pushing for broader criminal justice reform that helps people with criminal backgrounds access good jobs. We’re looking at ways to advance this work to further address racial and economic inequality, including most recently providing additional philanthropic support for several civil rights organizations and diverse-led local nonprofits.

What We’re Doing

- Hiring and mentoring Black students
- Advancing policies to help advance racial justice
- Making homeownership more accessible to the Black community
- Expanding access to capital for minority-owned businesses
- Investing in thriving, inclusive cities
- Bringing our branches to underserved communities
- Supporting civil rights organizations and diverse-led nonprofits
- Driving a diverse and inclusive culture for our employees and our business

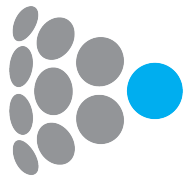
APPLICATIONS FOR 2021 ARE OPEN

WE ARE
**CONNECTING
PEOPLE.
INSPIRING
CHANGE.**

Our Leadership Buffalo programs immerse individuals into the community to increase their knowledge on critical issues and encourage action to make Buffalo better.



apply today at leadershipbuffa.org/apply



EVENTS

SEP

10th Virtual Recruitment Open House
15th 12@12 Virtual Session

OCT

13th 12@12 Virtual Session
16th 2021 Application deadline

NOV

5th Class Chair Meeting
10th 12@12 Virtual Session

DEC

9th 2020 Graduation (tentatively)

JAN

6th 2021 Welcome Reception
Welcome the new class!

FEB

25th State of LB
Annual Member Luncheon

View more detail and register online at www.leadershipbuffalo.org/calendar

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