

## DEI Community Project

In January 2021, a number of Glen Ellyn organizations and individuals embarked on a series of conversations related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within the Glen Ellyn community through the assistance of a facilitator, Rasheeda Graham Washington (RGW). These conversations included 180 stakeholders and 25 hours of discussions and have begun our journey towards identifying and addressing DEI needs in the community. Attached is a DEI Initiative-Overview of Findings and the Village of Glen Ellyn After Action Discovery Report prepared by RGW.

### Background

In January 2021, Glen Ellyn Public Library and the Village of Glen Ellyn initiated the Glen Ellyn DEI Project to help the community devise a collective strategy to enhance DEI in the Village of Glen Ellyn in ways that are integrative, holistic, sustainable, and enduring.

Interested community members can learn more about the January sessions by watching a seven-minute [Video Summary](#) that highlights themes in some of the participants' own words. In addition, interested residents can review the [Executive Summary of the Discovery Report](#) that summarizes the common themes, strengths, challenges, and action items from the conversations as well as the full After Action Discovery Report.

### Next Steps

The next phase of the Glen Ellyn DEI Project will be to re-establish the Village of Glen Ellyn Community Relations Commission to continue the discussion of diversity, equity, and inclusion in Glen Ellyn. The Community Relations Commission will include community members and representatives from the Village of Glen Ellyn, Glen Ellyn Public Library, College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn Park District, Glen Ellyn School District 41, Glenbard Township High School District 87, and Community Consolidated District 89, and will consider various action items outlined in the full [Discovery Report](#) and continue the DEI journey. This group would recommend and advise the Village of Glen Ellyn Board of Trustees on other DEI initiatives.

More specifically, the Municipal Code established a Community Relations Commission in 1975. The Commission structure includes nine members (serving three year terms) and one Village Board liaison (serving a one year term). Although the Commission was initially established for the purpose of addressing affordable housing issues in the community, its purpose was amended and broadened in 1976 to include:

1. Review problems or concerns - either initiated by members of the Community Relations Commission, presented to it by individuals, organizations and groups, or as requested by the Board of Trustees - relating to human relations and the wellbeing of Village residents.
2. Promote equality among all persons so that each will have an opportunity to live in the Village and/or secure employment of a fair and equal basis.
3. Foster effective community relations among all residents.
4. Perform such other functions and responsibilities as the Board of Trustees may request of it.

In addition to re-establishing the Community Relations Commission, the Village intends to execute additional initiatives that were identified during internal discussions as well as DEI conversations over the last few months. Below is a list of these initiatives and next steps towards implementation:

1. Reestablish the Community Relations Commission and include our intergovernmental partners in that process. **(Consider an ordinance and identify members to serve on this Commission)**
2. Create an Affordable Housing Task Force. **(See attached Memo and proposed Resolution)**
3. Implicit Bias Training for all employees building off training we conducting last February with the Supervisor group. **(Schedule all-employee training for later this year)**
4. Consider a Minority and Women Owned Business program within our purchasing policy. **(The Finance Commission has begun a project of reviewing existing Village financial policies, including the purchasing policy. One suggestion from the first review of the purchasing policy was to investigate adding a section of the policy to address using minority, disadvantaged and/or woman-owned businesses. Staff will be gathering suggestions regarding these practices in other municipalities and organizations and will bring suggestions back to the Finance Commission for its review.)**
5. Encourage regional support from minority owner businesses through different partnerships. **(Owner-2-CEO: Innovation DuPage (ID) 2nd Construction Industry Owner-2-CEO program, in partnership with HACIA and US Bank, successfully launched on March 13th. The cohort is composed of 8 companies representing Latinx, Black, LGBTQ+ and women-owned businesses. Averaging more than 15 employees and over \$4 million in revenue, each new cohort continues to build on the success of the last.)**
6. Officially recognize MLK Day as a formal local holiday. **(This will be an official holiday beginning in 2022.)**

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends proceeding ahead with these initiatives, and allow the Community Relations Commission to drive future conversations and recommendations once that group is established.

We want to thank the facilitator, our intergovernmental partners (particularly the Library), and most importantly the participants. We look forward to further conversations in the near term.

### Attachments:

- DEI Initiative - Overview of Findings
- Village of Glen Ellyn After Action Discovery Report Final
- Affordable Housing Work Group Memo
- Affordable Housing Work Group Draft Resolution
- Video Summary



**GLEN ELLYN DEI PROJECT**  
DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

## **DEI Initiative Overview of Findings**

In January 2021, a number of organizations and individuals from Glen Ellyn launched a DEI Initiative to help begin a conversation in the Village about ways in which we are and hope to be a welcoming community. Participants from a variety of groups engaged in a series of conversations focusing on diversity, equality, equity, and inclusion. Representatives came from several groups, including B.R. Ryall YMCA, College of DuPage, DuPage United, Glen Ellyn Allies for Racial Justice, Glen Ellyn Children's Resource Center, Glen Ellyn Public Library, Glen Ellyn Park District, Glen Ellyn Police Department, Glen Ellyn Youth and Family Counseling Services, Glenbard Early Childhood Collaborative, One Community, and School Districts 41, 87, and 89. Fifteen panels, discussions, and affinity group conversations were led by RGW Consulting, LLC's Rasheeda Graham Washington and her team. More than 180 members of the community participated in these events over the course of 25 hours. Presented here is an executive summary of RGW's *Discovery Report*.

The DEI Initiative began with the following premise:

The Village of Glen Ellyn (VGE) believes that working together and listening as a community causes the collective to flourish when it sees itself reflected in what it values, how it functions, and how it uses the community as a window for discovery. The Village strives to demonstrate its commitment to DEI through listening to the community and developing synergistic strategy across agencies that is rooted in the feedback of its collective stakeholdership.

The DEI Initiative focused on the following objectives:

- Participants have given an account of the equity journey the village and its entities has taken to date, both from an ideal and an actual perspective
- Participants will be instrumental in the shaping and forming of the objective impressions that will develop over the course of intersectional listening sessions and the reporting recommendations
- Participants are informed by what they hear and share over the course of the discovery process as it unfolds intersectionally
- Participants are empowered toward implementation of the recommendations that emerge from the discovery process as a result of their participation in the development of the resulting findings

Some common themes became apparent during the various sessions and among various participants. These include:

- Concerns regarding equal accessibility to boards and commissions, food security, healthcare, housing, schools, services (e.g., library, parks), volunteer opportunities, etc., that would allow for all residents, regardless of background or group, to engage in village decision-making, events, policy-making, etc.
- Concerns that the village's residents, businesses, and leaders are failing to change with the times and to recognize shifts in politics and demographics
- Concerns that representation in the village is homogenous, monolithic, and patriarchal, thereby excluding people of color as well as people of different ethnicities and other backgrounds
- Concerns that NIMBYism will prevent the village from moving forward on key DEI issues such as affordable housing and food security

In light of these goals and concerns, and taking into account feedback from all participants, RGW Consulting prepared the *Discovery Report*, an after-action summary that identified some strengths shared by various village entities, summarized here:

- Willingness among Village entities and individuals to acknowledge and address various inequities (e.g., cultural, individual, operational, systemic) throughout the Village
- Awareness of blind spots regarding DEI practices and of the need to integrate diverse populations on boards and commissions, among administrative staffs, in school districts and community organizations, etc., in light of the fact that most consist of middle- to upperclass Whites
- Intention among leadership teams and governing bodies to become better community partners by recognizing shortcomings and biases and by working to develop partnerships that are committed to DEI

The *Discovery Report* also identified some challenges (as summarized below), including:

- Hierarchical power dynamics lead some within the village to marginalize others as unequal based on culture, education level, gender, race, socioeconomics, etc., and this is manifested in the fact that the preponderance of boards, commissions, and other organizations are led primarily by White males
- Pushback from some community members perpetuates the notion that DEI is anti-White and anti-American and argues that taxpayers who are predominately White and middleclass, as is the community as a whole, should have more say in various matters than residents from other groups in the village
- Whiteness and tokenism are deeply ingrained in Glen Ellyn, leading to a fear of making mistakes when it comes to DEI and making it difficult to encourage diverse community representatives to step forward for leadership positions and thereby creating challenging obstacles on the DEI journey

In addition to these strengths and challenges, several action items can be derived from the *Discovery Report*. These include:

- Continuing DEI efforts in order to create a sense of belonging among all residents and to increase community engagement overall
- Creating an equity advisory team with diverse representatives from the village's various governing bodies and community organizations to share input on processes and protocols
- Defining a shared language among governing bodies, administrations and staffs, and community organizations in order to create a set of common terms referring to DEI
- Encouraging representation of marginalized groups in order to create definitions, policies, programs, and approaches to DEI efforts and initiatives without assuming what those groups need and want
- Ensuring that communications from the village's taxing bodies reach into all corners of the village and are written for all residents regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, or socioeconomic status
- Establishing methods and deadlines for auditing and analyzing DEI efforts and effects
- Identifying ideals, intentions, and impacts related to DEI efforts and goals for individuals, discrete organizations, and all taxing bodies and community groups
- Incorporating DEI goals and objectives into the Village's Comprehensive Plan, organizations' strategic plans, policies, and procedures
- Reviewing, revising, and rewriting processes, protocols, and procedures in order to incorporate DEI in all aspects of life in our community

### **DEI by the Numbers**

- \$15,000 = total cost of the village's DEI Initiative  
(\$10,000 funded by VGE; \$5,000 funded by GEPL)
  - 25+ hours of programming
  - 180 participants
  - 15 sessions/panels/conversations
    - Affinity group participants:
      - Seniors: 5
      - POC: 8
      - Black: 6
      - Black/POC: 5
      - Youth under 17: 2
      - Disability: 7
      - LGBTQIA: 8
      - Women: 12
  - 6 sessions uploaded to YouTube
    - 200+ views
    - 2 translated into Spanish



RGW

# DISCOVERY REPORT

BY RGW CONSULTING, L.L.C.  
PROPOSED TO:

Village of  
Glen Ellyn

708.646.8312

[WWW.RGWASHINGTON.COM](http://WWW.RGWASHINGTON.COM)

*"Reimagining & Generating Wonder"*



# RGW CONSULTING, LLC.

*Who We Are*

**RGW**

RGW Consulting, LLC is a boutique consulting practice that curates opportunities for its clients to Reimagine and Generate Wonder that leads to diversity, equity, and inclusion for all.

Our vision is a world where differences are embraced and celebrated. Our mission is to create a community of individuals who possess a growing consciousness of the cultural space they occupy and are agile in their ability to navigate a variety of cultural spaces, toward a more viable and sustainable framework for doing business equitably.

*Reesheda Graham Washington*



CEO, PRINCIPAL  
CONSULTANT

*"If you are always trying to be **Normal**  
you will never know how **Amazing** you  
can be!"*

*~Maya Angelou*

## CONTACT RGW

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LOCATION: 163 S. OAK PARK AVE.

OAK PARK, IL 60302

EIN NO.: 83-4284702



**TED**



# Reesheda Graham Washington

## Chief Executive Officer

### MOST RECENT WORK EXPERIENCE

#### **RGW Consulting, LLC, Chief Executive Officer**

Oak Park, IL January 2019-Present. [www.rgwwashington.com](http://www.rgwwashington.com)

RGW consulting supports individuals, communities, and organizations recognize the actual and realize the ideal through speaking, coaching, training, consulting, and facilitating. Our clients are remarkably diverse: large and small, private and public, faith-based and secular, for-profit and nonprofit. We curate curiosity & wonder to foster sustainable transformation that emphasizes equitable practices for all.

#### **LIVE 2.0, LLC, Chief Experience Officer**

Oak Park, IL 2016-Present. [www.livexclamation.com](http://www.livexclamation.com)

Design and develop a start-up artisanal, destination, transformational experience café that infuses asset-based community development, economic development and equity (ABCDE<sup>2</sup>) practices and serves as a model for sustainable community development for other organizations. Innovated the concept, ethos, mission, and vision of a diverse, inclusive, transformational space that curates opportunities to live in tension, live intentionally, and facilitate practices in being in difficult dialogue with one's self and others.

#### **Communities First Association, Executive Director**

Oak Park, IL 2013-2019

Led and strategically developed a board, staff, and national community of practitioners as part of a faith-based, intermediary organization that specializes in the multiplication of asset-based community development, economic development, and equity (ABCDE<sup>2</sup>). Increased board diversity by 34% within the first 12 months of tenure and 73% within the first 24 months. Increased affiliate diversity by 800% within the first 24 months of tenure. Developed and redesigned equitable vetting and certification processes. Rebranded the organization enhancing communication of mission, vision, and values of the organization. Reclaimed relationships with two major foundations formerly acquainted with the organization. Developed a sustainability model shifting the organization from foundation reliance to a fee for service framework, simultaneously avoiding mission drift. Launched a professional development initiative comprised of 11 core competencies, including an online learning community, allowing for an equitable, collaborative network with standards of excellence in asset-based community development

### REFERENCES

Richard Kong, Executive Director, Skokie Public Library, [rkong@skokieliibrary.info](mailto:rkong@skokieliibrary.info)\*  
Julie Milavec, Executive Director, Downers Grove Public Library, [milavec@dglibrary.org](mailto:milavec@dglibrary.org)\*  
Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent, Elementary School District 97, [ckelley@op97.org](mailto:ckelley@op97.org)\*  
LeVar Ammons, Ed.D, Director of Equity, High School District 200, [Lammons@oprfs.org](mailto:Lammons@oprfs.org)  
Neil Anderson, Director of Finance, Access Living, [nanderson@accessliving.org](mailto:nanderson@accessliving.org)\*  
Wilonda Cannon, Director of Development, Breakthrough Urban, [wcannon@breakthrough.org](mailto:wcannon@breakthrough.org)\*  
Cassandra Moore, Administrative Leadership, Daystar Academy, [c.moore@daystaracademy.org](mailto:c.moore@daystaracademy.org)\*  
David Seleb, Executive Director, Oak Park Public Library, [d.seleb@oppl.org](mailto:d.seleb@oppl.org)\*

\*Denotes all past/current clients who can speak to our experience

### PERSONAL PROFILE

I am an entrepreneurial consultant with over 10 years experience in providing mission inspired, intersectional leadership that invites equity for all using an efficacious, asset-based approach.

### SKILLS

- Facilitator of community & connectivity
- Expertise in curriculum development & experience/space design
- Well versed in cultural agility, equity & justice principles & practices
- Knowledgeable regarding strategic planning & data analysis
- Entrepreneurial, innovative, generative, and iterative in thinking & leadership style
- Centers practices of collaboration, mindfulness & discernment in decision making
- As a Black Woman, I embody DEI practices by way of lived experiences

### INTEREST AND HOBBIES

- Social Enterprise, Economic Development, & Equity
- Liberal Arts & Sciences
- Interior Design
- Cooking Regionally Inspired Recipes

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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*Reimagining & Generating Wonder*

#### WHO IS RGW CONSULTING, LLC

RGW is a company skilled at guiding individuals and groups on an inquisition of curiosity and wonder about their goals and passions, particularly as it pertains to decolonization and deconstruction of systems that marginalize historically underserved and/or underrepresented people groups. We assist clients in determining what needs to be dismantled, as well as what needs revision and restoration to ensure justice oriented growth and development.

#### WHAT WE DO

RGW consulting supports individuals, communities, and organizations recognize the actual and realize the ideal through speaking, coaching, training, consulting, and facilitating. Our clients are remarkably diverse: large and small, private and public, faith-based and secular, for-profit and nonprofit. We curate curiosity & wonder to foster sustainable transformation that emphasizes equitable practices for all.

## Reesheda Graham Washington

### Chief Executive Officer

#### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

##### **The Evangelical Covenant Church, Director of Mission Mobilization Chicago, IL 2011-2013**

Managed and Led a team mobilized to obliterate extreme poverty in the Equateur Province of Congo through the denomination's partnership with World Vision to sponsor 10,000 children in one year and ultimately 20,000 children in Congo. Recruited 400+ churches' involvement in Covenant Kids Congo. Acted as point person and liaison between the ECC & World Vision. Monitored and communicate on the ground developments in Congo. Comprehensively created, coordinated, and implemented tiered strategic plans related to recruitment, marketing, communications, resourcing, and treatment-streaming

##### **American Quality Schools, Regional Manager of Curriculum & Instruction Chicago, IL 2008-2011**

Managed and Supported 9 Elementary and Secondary Charter Schools in traditionally underserved urban communities as it pertained to building & budget management, school leadership, culture & climate, parent & community satisfaction, curriculum & instruction, and professional development. Created, planned, and evaluated the implementation of curriculum. Facilitated partnerships and communications with representatives from school stakeholders. Created a NEW school with a strong culture and climate that supports data-driven decision making and lifelong learning.

#### EDUCATION HISTORY

##### **National Louis University Chicago, IL 2006-2007**

Master of Educational Leadership, Supervision & Administration

##### **Chicago State University Chicago, IL 1996-1999**

Master of Arts, English Literature

##### **Northern Illinois University DeKalb, IL 1992-1996**

Bachelor of Arts, English Literature

#### CERTIFICATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

State of Illinois Administrative Certificate Type 75, April 2007

State of Illinois Teaching Certificate Type 09, August 1998

Bi-Vocational Minister's License, The Evangelical Covenant Church, June 2012-Present

Certified Life Coach, Christian Coaching Institute, April 2015

Co-Author, Soul Force: Seven Pivots Toward Courage, Community, and Change Published June 5, 2018, Herald Press.

# THE SCOPE OF WORK

## THE COMPANY

RGW Consulting supports individuals, communities, and organizations recognize the actual and realize the ideal through speaking, coaching, training, consulting, and facilitating. Our clients are remarkably diverse: large and small, private and public, for-profit and nonprofit. We curate curiosity & wonder to foster sustainable transformation.

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**PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT:**

Reesheda Graham Washington  
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## THE CLIENT

The Village of Glen Ellyn believes that working together and listening as a community causes the collective to flourish when it sees itself reflected in what it values, how it functions, and how it uses the community as a window for discovery. The Village strives to demonstrate its commitment to DEI through listening to the community and developing synergistic strategy across agencies that is rooted in the feedback of its collective stakeholdership.

## CONTACT INFO

Glen Ellyn Public Library  
400 Duane Street  
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137  
Dawn Bussey, Executive Director  
dawnbussey@gepl.org

## PLAN GOALS

RGW will work with the Village of Glen Ellyn as well as community wide leadership and staff to complete a comprehensive discovery process that leads to the robust reporting of objective impressions, findings, and recommendations to enhance the equity work in partnership with its current stakeholders.

## PLAN DELIVERABLES

RGW would provide the following deliverables over the course of 3 months between January 5, 2021 and March 31, 2021.

- Implementation of a discovery protocol across 7 village agencies (village, library, park district, college, D87, D41, & D89) to reveal the community's expressed felt needs pertaining to issues surrounding public safety, hiring/appointments, governance, fiscal management, housing, recreation, and education
- 2 Moderated Panel Discussions that include: Elected Leadership and Community Organizations
- Development of a DEI report that captures the findings of a robust discovery protocol implementation, along with analysis & recommendations
- Annotations from Community Conversation/Work Session
- Process Observation, Feedback, and Report Articulation Meeting with designated representatives



# OUR METHODOLOGY

*Let's Get Curious!*

RGW

## *Discovery*

Born out of a desire to interrupt racism, bias, and injustice, RGW Consulting emerged from a determination to reimagine the way we approach diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## *Inquiry*

Participants often approach DEI, building on the last traumatic experience they've had, leading to reservation, disdain, and guardedness, before they even start the training. With a sheer wit, a bit of levity, and the significance of storytelling in mind, RGW prides itself on engaging its participants in the preliminary work of thinking about how we learn (metacognition), interrogating our posture (self-reflection), and equipping participants with practices (mindfulness) that lead to a more healthful engagement of humanity in DEI content.

## *Differentiation*

With a commitment to truth, vulnerability, and transparency, we help our clients hold the tension between the deep and difficult work ahead and the care required to face the challenges associated with DEI. With an emphasis on a customized and uniquely differentiated journey for each client, our discovery implementation and curation of curious space allows people to engage hard and heavy questions, cultivating opportunities for individual and organizational transformation. We discover your purpose and align scalable solutions to your passion points, infusing equitable practices along the way.

## KEY COMPONENTS

01

PRELIMINARY  
DISCOVERY  
CONSULT

02

PRELIMINARY  
PLANNING  
CALL(S)

03

LISTENING  
SESSION  
IMPLEMENTA-  
TION

04

FINAL REPORT  
& FOLLOW UP  
CONFERENCING

## OBJECTIVES

- Participants have given an account of the equity journey the village and its entities has taken to date, both from an ideal and an actual perspective
- Participants will be instrumental in the shaping and forming of the objective impressions that will develop over the course of intersectional listening sessions and the reporting recommendations
- Participants are informed by what they hear and share over the course of the discovery process as it unfolds intersectionally
- Participants are empowered toward implementation of the recommendations that emerge from the discovery process as a result of their participation in the development of the resulting findings

Note: These objectives were met by the Village of Glen Ellyn entities & community throughout the listening sessions conducted by RGW

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are the elements of the organization that have been addressed by way of the equity work that has taken place? What are the elements of the organization's development that need further attention as it pertains to DEI?
- What are the ways in which policies, protocols, and procedures must be amended to fortify the communities journey toward equity for all?
- What are the next natural best steps that the Village of Glen Ellyn community can take to enhance its practices of DEI for all?

RGW

# *Glen Ellyn Executive Summary*



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Let's Get Curious!!!*

## Discovery Overview

RGW Consulting (RGW) spent several weeks during January and February 2021 engaging with 180+ Glen Ellyn (GE) community stakeholders and leadership from 7 governing bodies to illuminate some of the root causes that impact the community's culture and climate, specifically as it pertains to practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. During this period, RGW executed on the planned deliverables and scope of work by:

- Moderating 2 panels, one including the Village of Glen Ellyn, College of DuPage, the GEPL, the Park District, SD 41, SD 87, SD 89 and the 2nd with community organizations that included representatives from Glenbard Early Childhood Collaborative, Glen Ellyn Children's Resource Center, Glen Ellyn Youth and Family Counseling Services, One Community, DuPage United, Glen Ellyn Allies for Racial Justice, and B.R. Ryall YMCA
- Facilitating 2 community listening sessions, and 8 affinity group listening sessions that included, Seniors Age 65+, POC (People of Color), Black People, Youth Age 17 and Under, Disabled People, LGBTQIA+ People, and Women
- Moderating one 4-hour community wide work session, interviewing/listening and engaging cross sections of stakeholders to help devise a collective strategy that enhances DEI in the community in ways that are integrative, holistic, sustainable and enduring

The discovery process, including all feedback received from the affinity groups, informed and illuminated the strengths, challenges, and the need for stakeholders to continue to engage in the interrogation of inequitable practices and how those practices show up systemically in the Glen Ellyn cultural environment. This document outlines those strengths and challenges that were revealed during the discovery process. Additionally, this document lays out a recommended course of action to address inequitable culture, behaviors, processes, and protocols within Glen Ellyn community at large.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Let's Get Curious!!!*

## **After Action Reporting: A Few Significant Distinctions**

Having spent more than 25 hours moderating/facilitating and interviewing over 180 different stakeholders including executive leadership, management, community members, and staff members across roles, responsibilities, departments, and affinities on issues of equity within Glen Ellyn, RGW offers the following strengths, challenges, recommendations, and questions to consider for future work. This after-action report also serves as the premise for the recommended next steps and future work that RGW recommends for the Glen Ellyn entities.

It is important to note that while there was significant involvement from affinity group participants and community stakeholders in the shaping and forming of these impressions, all strengths, challenges, recommendations, and questions to consider for future work are expressed from the perspectives and impressions of RGW Consulting, LLC in an effort to maintain the anonymity of individual participants and/or specific organizations who candidly shared their perspectives during this process, but did so with the understanding that their expressions would be shared in ways that do not divulge their personal information nor shine a light of specificity on what they graciously shared as a part of the protocol.

Another important element to note is the distinction between when and how the Village of Glen Ellyn is named specifically, as opposed to when the report refers to the community at large. In this after action report, for the sake of clarity, when we say, "The Village," or "The Village of Glen Ellyn," we mean the specific offices of Village administration. We will use the term, "the community" to refer to actions, activities, or expressions that relate to the larger context of the community of Glen Ellyn, and not Village offices.



# *Let's Get Curious!*

## DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

1. If you were to explain the current state of diversity, equity, and inclusion across the community to a stranger, what would you say to them?
2. What seems to support the presence of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the community right now? What helps the agencies in Glen Ellyn practice and participate in diversity equity and inclusion today?
3. What are some of the elements that serve as road blocks to diversity, equity, and inclusion? What are some of the challenges that get in the way of these town agencies being as diverse, equitable, and inclusive as they could be?
4. What is the very next best step that the Glen Ellyn community could actually take toward becoming more diverse, equitable, and inclusive?
5. Is there anything else that you would like to share that may not have been covered by the questions I have asked?

# STRENGTHS

Some of the key strengths upon which to build a community culture that is free of injustice include:

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT.** These seven Glen Ellyn community entities recognize and acknowledge, across stakeholders, (though to varying degrees) that there are individual, cultural, operational, and systemic inequities within the Glen Ellyn community. This is a strength in that the community acknowledges that there is an issue and that its stakeholders (though to varying degrees) are complicit in both the manifestation of the issue and the solutions to remedy the issues of inequity within Glen Ellyn.

**WILLINGNESS.** Stakeholder interviews revealed a team of leaders and other community stakeholders who have a passion and desire to have the Glen Ellyn community freed of inequities. This energy will serve the implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion practices well. There seemed to be an overwhelming desire across all entities on topics of DEI, though RGW holds curiosity as to the extent to which the police department's full participation was evident.

**AWARENESS.** Across all leadership teams, which are predominantly white, there is awareness of blind spots regarding its own DEI practices and acknowledgment that there needs to be an integration of even more diversity on their team(s) in order to further illuminate what lies beyond what they can see on their own. The Glen Ellyn governing bodies are aware that they have more work to do to become more equitable and inclusive. They are also aware that they need non-dominant culture voices speaking into the process to guide them toward the next best steps on their DEI journey.

**POSTURE.** Glen Ellyn's governing bodies have been working intently to become better community partners by listening to and operationalizing what they hear as the expressed felt needs of the GE community. This way of being serves working on the DEI journey well.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS.** The Glen Ellyn governing bodies have worked diligently to develop partnerships with external community organizations who are committed to DEI as mission central. There is also evidence that these partnerships operate as a result of "outreach" efforts that illustrate Glen Ellyn's commitment to reach historically, intentionally, and traditionally marginalized people groups (HITMPGs).



# STRENGTHS

Some of the key strengths upon which to build a Village of Glen Ellyn culture that is free of injustice include:

(cont.)

LEARNING/GROWTH. Rather comprehensively, the Glen Ellyn leadership teams, from the boardroom to the front lines is composed of people who know that they possess shortcomings, blind spots, and even biases, and they are willing to subject themselves to learning and coaching to enhance their awareness and illuminate their blind spots.



# CHALLENGES

Some of the key challenges upon which to build a Village of Glen Ellyn culture that is free of injustice include:

**MARGINALIZATION.** Racism has historically pervaded the systems and policies that inform Glen Ellyn governing bodies at large. While some effort has been made to rectify some of those issues (i.e., the development of equity teams, and the implementation of implicit bias training at the GEPD), Glen Ellyn does have systems, policies, and protocols that allow for inequitable treatment of people representing historically, intentionally, and traditionally marginalized people groups (HITMPGs). This is most evident in the reality that each organization's most senior leaders are all white, and there are not systems/conditions in place that would compel people of more diverse backgrounds to seek employment in Glen Ellyn amongst its senior ranks within the governing bodies. This issue came up several times throughout the listening process.

**SHARED LANGUAGE.** The 7 governing bodies do not share a common language as it pertains to terminology that impacts racism. Who defines community? For example, what do we mean when we say "inclusion?" What do we mean when we say "diversity"? How do we define "equity vs equality"? If very few of the people who hold the power to construct definitions are people who represent HITMPGs, meaning will continue to be made and operationalized in a way that omits their needs and presence in the decision-making processes. Additionally, developing a common language across stakeholders is essential to having common understandings as we work toward pervasively diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture. GE stands to improve upon its capacity to share a common language and understanding around issues pertaining to DEI. Additionally, there is "coded language" that everyone understands as a means by which to signal exclusivity and marginalization. Allowing for the codification and signaling that the use of language in this way entails, perpetuates power dynamics that allows certain people to be prioritized above others.

# CHALLENGES

Some of the key challenges upon which to build a Village of Glen Ellyn culture that is free of injustice include:

(cont.)

**THE "TAXPAYERS DOLLARS" TIGHTROPE.** Residents of Glen Ellyn that represent dominant culture people groups frequently cite themselves as taxpayers who should inform the direction of the community, as just cause for disengaging issues of DEI. The sentiment is that because they pay taxes, they should have resources and experiences that are aligned to their own value system. The challenge in this sentiment is that there are also taxpayers who represent HITMPGs, as well as HITMPG allies who pay taxes and far less frequently see their interests represented in the integral acculturation of the Glen Ellyn experience. The challenge that the community faces is how to hold all of the competing interests of its taxpaying residents, honoring the village as a community that welcomes everyone, while also upholding the interests of people who have had their interests most primarily neglected historically. Finally, there is also the challenge of acculturating white-centering residents to the embrace of HITMPGs and their interests in order to ensure health-full acculturation for ALL, as well as in order to mitigate additional harm to HITMPG representatives from dominant culture tax-paying residents.

**HIERARCHICAL POWER DYNAMICS.** Glen Ellyn struggles to treat all human beings who are a part of the village with the same level of dignity, humanity, and respect, regardless of title, role, residency or position within the community. Race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomics, and level of education are all elements of explicit and implicit bias that negatively inform the extent to which Glen Ellyn stakeholders treat each other with respect, value, and dignity. While there has been training implemented by certain organizations to mitigate these behaviors, there continues to be a need for deepening all Glen Ellyn employees' understanding of their own implicit biases and how they inform the ways in which power is managed, distributed, and shared. Additionally, there is a direct correlation between the amount of power one holds in the organization and the extent to which they participate in whiteness, as well as hold power and privilege. As new vacancies at the executive level become available, Glen Ellyn must position itself to receive more HITMPG representatives at the executive level.

# CHALLENGES

Some of the key challenges upon which to build a Village of Glen Ellyn culture that is free of injustice include:

(cont.)

**THE GAP BETWEEN THE IDEAL VS. THE ACTUAL.** Different entities/organizations within Glen Ellyn have notable passion and enthusiasm for a community free of “-isms.” Most stakeholders articulate a deep desire to have a more equitable expression as residents, ideally. However, upon further probing, some stakeholders, particularly from the GE community, as well as from the different internal teams, struggled to affirm their intent on the kinds of actual commitments and sacrifices they would have to embody in order to achieve a truly equitable community. In order for a greater depth of DEI culture to emerge, GE community stakeholders will need to make a greater sacrifice and commitment to relinquishing privilege, power, control, and resources toward DEI.

**PARTNERSHIP EXPANSION.** The external partnerships that the community has developed will strengthen their emphasis on DEI work. However, there seems to be a perception that there is room for more robust partnership development with people and organizations throughout the Glen Ellyn and west suburban areas, particularly those that are explicitly fighting for equity around issues of race, and particularly with organizations who represent more young people. This may be more difficult to consider during this COVID-19 pandemic, but this may be something to consider a bit more, post- pandemic. It became evident during protocol implementation that many of the governing bodies are working in a siloed fashion, doing DEI work, but not in conjunction with the other bodies synergistically.

**GENERAL PUSHBACK.** There are people who hold DEI work as synonymous with the Black Lives Matter movement, though DEI certainly holds more depth and expanse than BLM and is not synonymous with the BLM movement. There are also people who tie DEI work to the narrative that has recently emerged nationally about DEI efforts being “anti-American.” Such narratives create fear in some people about the implications of implementing DEI efforts within the community. As such, the community should anticipate some pushback from residents who are not on board with DEI initiatives as the community furthers and deepens the work. The boycotting of businesses that supported BLM came up numerous times during our listening sessions.

# CHALLENGES

Some of the key challenges upon which to build a Village of Glen Ellyn culture that is free of injustice include:

(cont.)

**REPRESENTATION BEFORE ACCULTURATION.** Glen Ellyn community stakeholders ubiquitously expressed a need for Glen Ellyn entities to have more diversity amongst its staff throughout all levels. Stakeholders talked about ways to incorporate language into job postings and descriptions (i.e., non- binary pronoun usage) to signal to HITMPGs that Glen Ellyn welcomes them, as well as looking at more nontraditional recruiting options and resources for these roles. However, the challenge is that because the community has not first integrated an equity framework into all that it is and does, the community runs the risk of signaling to attract candidates from HITMPGs, only to have them experience a white-centered cultural experience that causes harm, isolation, and fatigue. The Glen Ellyn community of agencies must first address the challenges of a white-centered culture prior to onboarding people who represent HITMPGs to ensure a healthful transition for all.

**TOKENISM.** As a consequence of having only a select and chosen few voices within the Glen Ellyn community representing the issues of each affinity (Black, LGBTQIA+, etc.), particular individuals become accustomed to the entities seeking them, most predominantly to speak upon cultural elements central to the said individual's identity. What results is a monolithic version of the expression and responses associated with the representation of that cultural element. Additionally, the individual who has been tokenized experiences the burden of having to be "the voice" of said issue, resulting in burnout, fatigue, and employee turnover. Finally, representatives sometimes buckle under the pressure of having to be the sole voice on all issues pertaining to their cultural identity, resulting in reciprocal resentment between the individual and the organization and/or community. This was a common theme during affinity listening sessions with the community.

# CHALLENGES

Some of the key challenges upon which to build a Village of Glen Ellyn culture that is free of injustice include:

(cont.)

**INTENT VS. IMPACT.** Many community members are often well intended in how they think about DEI. However, intentionality does not often guard against the negative impact of the carrying out of implicit and explicit bias as it has shown up at various levels, from executive leadership and beyond, throughout the different entities in Glen Ellyn. Geographical isolation also served as an impediment impacting belonging and was addressed multiple times during the listening sessions.

**FEAR OF MISTAKES.** A nominal representation of the Glen Ellyn community spoke of fear of making mistakes, upsetting people, and/or "getting it wrong," as an impetus for overthinking and debilitation as it pertains to DEI initiatives. They want to do the work, but they are afraid of the repercussions that accompany doing the work. The repercussions they feared varied based on how much perceived and/or actual power they held based on their race, socioeconomic status, title/role. The fear of doing the work, resulting in overthinking or debilitation, must be mitigated to widen the way forward.

**WHITENESS.** Whiteness is a social construct that significantly informs how everyone should be/act/show up in this country. Designed and informed most specifically by white males, whiteness is also often extremely patriarchal. Whiteness informs how we manage time, hold space, distribute resources, and share power (or not). The pervasive state of whiteness superimposes itself as "the way to be or operate," rather than "a way to be or operate." It is held in place by behaviors that maintain the status quo. Most people operate within, carry out, prioritize, and preserve whiteness subconsciously, as they have been so immersed in it their entire lives that it happens without a thought. The "professional culture" and "transactionalism" of whiteness serve as impediments to true authenticity, vulnerability, and relationality. The construct of time leaves little, if any, room for exploration of the norms of non-white centered cultures, such as story telling. Consequently, HITMPG representatives are often oppressed, micromanaged, and micro-aggressed as a direct result of nonconformity to whiteness. The extent to which whiteness has been allowed to prevail throughout GE is directly correlated to the extent to which Glen Ellyn has been and will be effective in its integration of DEI.



# CHALLENGES

Some of the key challenges upon which to build a Village of Glen Ellyn culture that is free of injustice include:

(cont.)

TO/FOR vs. WITH: The performative/programmatic nature of the operations of some agencies impedes the capacity of BIPOC individuals, both internal and external to the agencies to be empowered toward agency on their own behalf. Rather than deploying programs and services to and for people of color and other HITMPGs, de-centering whiteness requires the empowerment of BIPOC individuals and organizations to act alongside agencies, based on the expressed felt needs of HITMPGs.

# RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

There are a few focal points that RGW Consulting recommends as a result of the research, listening, and discovery protocol implementation. While these elements would be further informed by the development of a community wide equity team, a team charged with the creation of a community wide equity strategic plan (more details below), the following are key areas that RGW anticipates will require implementation for the continued growth and development of the community of Glen Ellyn, as it pertains to diversity, equity, and inclusion. These are the recommended next steps for the 7 participating governing bodies in Glen Ellyn:

- **DEVELOP THE EQUITY ADVISORY TEAM(S).** RGW recommends that the village entities develop a comprehensive equity team with representation across all seven governing bodies and is primarily comprised of people of color. This team should be co-curated across community stakeholders with support from a DEI consultant. This team serves to provide an equity lens and race analysis for the decision-making processes that would otherwise become negatively impacted by the current homogeneous nature of Glen Ellyn leadership. This team would support each organization in its equity development, paving the way to become a community ready to receive more staff of color without causing harm and creating a more welcoming environment for residents. This team could also assist the governing bodies in its equity auditing protocols, and support leaders as they work to be integrative rather than performative in their work (aesthetics, programs, communications, hospitality, etc.). Each governing body should incorporate an Equity Advisory Team with a member from each entity to form a comprehensive village wide team. Any non-staff participants should be compensated (honorarium) for this work.
- **DEI STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT.** The equity advisory team (recommended above) would then be responsible for the development of a community wide Equity Strategic Plan, committed to the development of a comprehensive yearlong equity and anti-racism strategic plan that would include activities, benchmarks, milestones, evaluative measures, and communications. This plan should address all four quadrants of anti-racism work (internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural), both from an internal and external perspective. An equity consultant would work with organizational leadership to appoint 1-2 people who represent historically, intentionally, and traditionally marginalized people groups to run point between the equity consultant, the equity advisory team, and the leaders of each governing body (some of whom might also be on the equity advisory team). Upon finalization, the team would engage monthly meetings to gauge implementation and activate an effective feedback and communications loop for the larger community. Any non-staff participants should also be compensated (honorarium) for this work.

# RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

(cont.)

- **Note:** To the potential question of why there needs to be a separate strategic plan, singly focused on equity: think of it as having training wheels. It helps the organization to focus on the learning and the practice by highlighting it as a very intentional element of community life. However, over time, as more stakeholders can effectively embody equitable practices, RGW recommends the integration of the equity goals into a larger community-wide strategic plan. This methodology keeps us from inadvertently misstepping in DEI priorities. We can talk more about this in the reporting debrief session to follow this report.
- **BOARD DEVELOPMENT.** RGW recommends that board members from each governing body should take the Cultural Agility Assessment and/or a power analysis. While full board participation is ideal, this could also be multiple participants from each governing body that would take these learnings back to each respective board. We would then review elected official composite data across cultural agility indicators. The next step would be to engage 3-5 consultant-designed learning experiences that focus on leadership development in anti-racist and equitable work at the elected official level to ensure readiness and capacity to support the development and implementation of an equity strategic plan the following year. This training includes how to implement an equity framework for equitable decision making and engaging a by-laws audit that utilizes an equity framework for ensuring that all governing policies and procedures are equitable for all.
- **VILLAGE WIDE HOLISTIC EQUITABLE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY.** RGW recommends that representatives from each governing body come together to work on a comprehensive way to communicate to the entire community about the equity work that is happening across all of the agencies in the community and how they are working together toward a cohesive equity strategy. It is recommended that this team go through equitable communications training and then work together toward the implementation of an equity communications strategy that they create together as a part of that training/facilitation.

# RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

(cont.)

- **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT.** All members of leadership across the Village governing bodies should also take the Cultural Agility Assessment. While full leadership participation is ideal, this could also be multiple participants from each governing body that would take these learnings back to each respective leadership team. The composite data across 10 cultural agility indicators should be reviewed with the leadership team, followed by planning and implementation of 3-5 consultant-designed learning experiences that focus on leadership development in anti-racist and equity work at the executive leadership level to ensure leadership readiness and capacity for the implementation of the equity strategic plan the following year. Leaders should then tie their own leadership development goals to the goals, objectives, and benchmarks named within the equity strategic plan. There would also need to be an integration of equitable decision making protocol(s) into the work of the leadership team(s)
- **OPERATIONS & POLICY AUDITING.** RGW recommends that representatives from each governing body go through policy auditing workshops that includes training on implicit biases and equity at the intersections of choice points and decision-making. Leaders can either send representatives to a governing body intersectional training and take these learnings back to their agency(ies) for consideration toward implementation, or pursue these sessions separately on behalf of each of their organizations. Complete operations and systems audit examining all processes, protocols, and procedures, building aesthetics, and partnerships for inequitable practices. Share findings with all relevant and pertinent team members for revisions and re-workings as necessary. This includes purchasing and vendor management, fiscal management and budgeting protocols, as well as human resources.



# Projected Equity Strategic Plan Elements

RGW

While the primary activities of the equity strategic plan must be developed by the DEI Strategic Planning Team, here are a few equity strategic plan objectives that are strongly recommended to be considered for the DEI Strategic Plan:

1. Developing a sense of belonging between community members who represent historically, intentionally, and traditionally marginalized people groups across the village
2. A host of interactions to increase community acculturation and engagement in the implementation of the DEI strategic plan
3. A continuation of consistent and intentional analysis of systems and processes that could become an impetus for racist practices
4. Training and implementation on equity-based decision making protocols that make clear what decisions are acceptable to make, by whom, and how those decisions are to be made equitably
5. An inquiry to determine what increases equitable communal participation, and an implementation plan based on those recommendations
6. Continued work and development around anti-racist principles and practices for all agencies, both internally and externally
7. A series of social, celebratory activities that strengthen relationships proactively to support us in times of difficult and challenging anti-racism work
8. A professional development and evaluation framework across agencies that measures for equity development around DEI and anti-racist practices



## Further Curiosities



RGW

As RGW processed the information garnered from the discovery, there were a few questions that arose as ones to continue to grapple with, while no immediate answers may be currently evident. The following are a few of those questions to consider as this work continues:

1. Who are our partners in our work toward anti-racism? Who are ones that we should come alongside to learn from? Who are ones that we should be coming alongside to learn along with in ways that might raise the tide across the community and beyond?
2. How do you engage the various arms of each organization to fully engage in DEI work (ie. the police department felt less involved than other agencies throughout the process).
3. Who are the "highest fliers" amongst community agencies that might be best equipped to galvanize other agencies in the elements of DEI that they have already implemented well?
4. What are the ways in which it might make sense to formalize a coalition between the township, high school district, elementary school district, park district, village, others, to more intentionally synergize our efforts toward becoming an anti-racist community?
5. How will we ensure that the ways in which we inadvertently center whiteness as a social construct won't negatively impact the non-dominant cultural work of DEI? How can we be intentional about not fitting the square peg of DEI into the round hole of whiteness that is so pervasively and inherently a part of all that we already do?
6. Which community entities are missing from the table (faith-based representation, for example) that need to be invited as we continue to carry this work forward?
7. How should the findings of this report be shared more widely? In what form/forum?

## The RGW Commitment



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It is our belief that these findings should be shared in the fullest and most appropriate ways with the board of trustees, leadership team, staff, and other stakeholders. RGW is committed to supporting the sharing of these findings by:

- Holding a debrief session with the Leadership Team (representatives from each agency)
- Holding a debrief session with the boards of trustees members
- Holding a debrief session with community members who want to entertain questions about the report, as they participated in listening sessions
- Holding a debrief session with staff and other key stakeholders as identified by their respective leadership

*Let's Get Curious!!!*

Additionally, RGW Consulting, LLC, having established these recommendations, would welcome an opportunity to deliver upon these recommendations as a consultant to the implementation phase. RGW welcomes the opportunity to discuss this report, its recommendations, and future planning in greater detail.

Should you have interest, please email us at [info@rgwashington.com](mailto:info@rgwashington.com) to set up a day and time for us to connect to speak about this report/plan and the potential to move forward with these recommendations. Thank you for the opportunity to have come alongside the Village of Glen Ellyn and the broader Glen Ellyn community in this great work! It has truly been a joy to support you! We look forward to hearing from you soon. Be well.

# Appendices



# *Glen Ellyn Community Work Session Documents*



## Glen Ellyn Community Work Sessions

### RGW's Goal

- RGW will facilitate a 4 hour work session with about 60 people from Glen Ellyn as it Pertains to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. With multiple work segments, based on themes/topics that have emerged over listening sessions, small groups will have access to their own work space to capture notes in that space, as part of a community collaboration toward reimagining diversity, equity, and inclusion in Glen Ellyn.

### Stakeholder Objectives

- The community will begin to develop ideas and actions that lead to everyone working together to give voice to a way forward in DEI strategies for the Village of Glen Ellyn. As such the community will experience buy-in to the plan, as well as be able to share with other members of the community about this exciting way forward in a galvanizing manner.

### Today's Agenda

- RGW Facilitates: 9a-10a
  - Norms
  - An Overview of The 4 Quadrants of Equity
  - Equity vs. Equality
- Small Group 1: 4 Quadrants (30 min)
- Break: (10 min)
- Small Group 2: Health and Public Safety (30 min)
- Small Group 3: Community Connection and Involvement (30 min)
- Break: (10 min)
- Small Group 4: SWOT
- Large Group Discussion: 20 minutes
- Closure: 10 minutes

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## Equitable Systems Change: A Closer Look

4 Quadrants	Health & Public Safety	Community Connection & Involvement	SWOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual/Internal</li> <li>• Interpersonal</li> <li>• Institutional</li> <li>• Structural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Healthcare</li> <li>• Food Safety &amp; Security</li> <li>• Public Safety</li> <li>• Housing Security</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy about DEI</li> <li>• Access to Literacy in General</li> <li>• Village Governance</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Community Connection &amp; Involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths</li> <li>• Weaknesses</li> <li>• Opportunities</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>

RGW



## Operationalizing Racial Equity

IMPLICIT BIAS	EXPLICIT BIAS
Unaware of choice points	Builds in decision-making guides that evoke consideration of equity
Exclusive of stakeholders	Fosters active engagement and empowerment of stakeholders
Not attentive to race, gender, income and other inequities	Gives distinct, specific and sufficient attention to key disparities/inequities
Ignores barriers to access	Supports and implements strategies to remove barriers
Does not consider racial impacts	Systematically analyzes potential impacts on disadvantaged groups

## Questions to Consider

- What are some thoughts and ideas that you might have about how to make these areas more diverse, equitable, and inclusive?
- Who is our central audience and why?
- How do we engage them?
- How can we de-center dominant culture in how we approach these efforts?
- Who will this work primarily impact positively?
- Who might we harm if we are not paying attention?
- How will we measure impact?
- How will we share space and power with non-dominant culture representation to give voice to impact?





## **Group Works!!!**

- **Miki: Groups 1-4**
- **Reesheda: Groups 5-8**
- **Shared Workspace for Each Group**
- **Timed Sessions**
- **Break(s) in Between**
- **Roundups in Between Work Segments**
- **Final Roundup @ the End**
- **Use the Chat to talk to your Facilitator**
- **Group Changes are Inevitable...**



REIMAGINING & GENERATING WONDER



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