



NEWS RELEASE

THURSDAY FEB 7, 2019

Kelowna set to host IGNITE Okanagan: An employer focused symposium showcasing diversity and inclusion practices that work

KCR - Community Resources is excited to partner with the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce and the Central Okanagan Local Immigration Partnership (COLIP) in hosting a half day symposium on Wednesday, March 6th to help local employers better understand the benefits and opportunities for creating a more diverse work environment. Entitled *Ignite Okanagan*, the symposium features a keynote address by **Cicely Belle Blain**, an award-winning diversity, inclusion, and social justice speaker and consultant. Cicely is the CEO of Cicely Blain Consulting who has been listed as one of CBC's 150 Black Women Making Change in Canada and was recently named one of the 50 most influential people in Vancouver by Vancouver Magazine.

"We are thrilled to be able to work with KCR - Community Resources on this initiative," says Chamber President Carmen Sparg. "We are part of COLIP and quite often hear from our members about the labour challenges they are facing. Creating more diverse workplaces is one way to address the growing labour concern."

Following the Chamber luncheon, a series of workshops will be offered focusing on the opportunities and necessity of creating diverse workplaces as recruiting, hiring and retaining immigrant talent is now, more than ever, critical to our region's economic growth and prosperity. The symposium will also feature facilitated roundtable discussions, success stories and a networking reception.

"We invite employers to seize the opportunity of diversifying their workforce, recognizing the strengths and talents of immigrants, and the depth this will bring to their organizations," says Laura Thurnheer, Board Chair of KCR - Community Resources. "This symposium will offer practical tools and resources that will enable employers to access a wider pool of talent for addressing skilled labour shortfalls and improving their overall corporate culture."

Interested organizations and employers can register for the symposium through the Chamber website www.kelownachamber.org/events. They can register for either the luncheon keynote address, the afternoon workshops, or both.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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BACKGROUND



Keynote Speaker: Cicely Blain

Cicely Belle Blain is an award-winning diversity, inclusion, and social justice speaker and consultant and the CEO of Cicely Blain Consulting. Cicely was listed as one of CBC's 150 Black Women Making Change in Canada and recently named one of the 50 most influential people in the city by Vancouver magazine.

Since graduating from UBC with a major in modern European studies and a minor in Russian, Blain has become a diversity-and-inclusion consultant, helping organizations create more respectful workplaces. This can involve everything from changing codes of conduct to re-examining hiring practices.

As a consultant, Blain's goal is to encourage people to be more compassionate with one another and be a bit more vulnerable, which isn't always easy for people in the workplace.

Using an extensive background in social justice education and anti-oppression training, she uses her expertise to guide organizations to success. She is passionate about creating workplaces that are free from discrimination and discomfort and strives to build communities that work in harmony, value individuality and embrace diversity.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.cicelyblainconsulting.com/>

<https://www.straight.com/life/1107591/black-lives-matter-vancouver-cofounder-cicely-blain-helps-organizations-promote>

