

Appleton woman works to enhance diversity, inclusion

Linda Dums, For USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin

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(Photo: Graham Washatka/For USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin)



Sabrina Robins of Appleton is a true believer in community.

And vital to a community is the sense of diversity and inclusion.

She supports such efforts through volunteering for organizations such as African Heritage Inc., United Way Fox Cities, YMCA of the Fox Cities and more.

“It highlights my commitment to the community and supporting their diversity goals,” Robins said. “As we are looking to make the Fox Cities more welcoming and inclusive, it is good to have minority leaders who can help in that vision.”

Although Robins is not originally from the Fox Cities, she quickly made it her home when she moved to the area 17 years ago for her job at Kimberly-Clark as the then head of the company's African American employee network. She currently works at Manpower Group, a global staffing and workforce solutions company headquartered in Milwaukee.

Appleton is “a lot like home,” she said. “I also like that I find it fairly progressive and it’s a generous community. I’ve had some very good experiences here. This is our home.”

Robins joined up with African Heritage after seeing the positive work it was doing in the Fox Cities.

“At the time, African Heritage had a partnership with Kimberly Clark,” she said. “I got to see what African Heritage was doing in the community and felt that as businesses we should play a role in that. African Heritage gave me the opportunity to support diversity efforts in the community via their organization.”

Robins currently serves on the board of directors and helps co-lead the organization’s annual Juneteenth Celebration, which draws more than 3,000 people to downtown Appleton.

“I like that they provide meaningful and sustainable and impactful programs to help the lives of African Americans, increase awareness about our culture and issues that we face and a chance to highlight the accomplishments and beauty of our culture and share it with northeast Wisconsin,” she said.

She believes in the mission.

“I also believe that it’s a major contributor to the community goals for the Fox Cities in helping to make our area more welcoming and inclusive,” she said. “I see African Heritage as a major stakeholder in supporting that commitment and goal we have in the region.”

Robins said the organization has a value in the community. Studies note that blacks are lagging in areas that can impact the social and economic areas of a community. An organization like African Heritage can help to turn the negative trend upward, Robins said.

“It’s mighty and needed now more than ever if we are going to turn the tide,” she said. “We need supporters to help in that work to help our youth, those that are working and our elderly. I feel a strong not only passion and desire to help, but an obligation to do so.”

Kathy Flores, a former diversity coordinator for the city of Appleton, said Robins leads with heart.

“She is very interested in helping, especially communities of color, thrive in the Fox Cities,” Flores said. “She is somebody that is very caring and compassionate about the work that she does.”

For volunteer information with African Heritage, visit www.africanheritageinc.org.

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Meet the volunteers

Each Friday on the Good Neighbors page we introduce you to a volunteer in the Fox Valley. If you want to nominate a volunteer, send details to pcfeatures@postcrescent.com.