

The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce has implemented three goals in our new strategic plan. Two of our goals are to attract and serve a diverse group of members from all industries representing businesses in Greater Bethesda and to grow awareness of the Chamber among both members and the public.

Living up to these principles, we invite you to celebrate Black History Month with us through our third annual member spotlight series. This special feature helps our communities learn more about some of its leaders and their impacts they make every day.

On the last day of February and our final day in our series, we would like you to get to know Carla Young, Director of Membership & Community Relations for The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce.

Carla earned her bachelor's degree in Marketing from one of Maryland's 4 HBCU colleges, The University of Maryland Eastern Shore, in 2003. Throughout her career she has received awards for her achievements in performance and leadership and makes time to volunteer on various committees that are centered around community engagement.

Carla transitioned into her role as Director of Membership & Community Relations from that of a member in August 2021. In addition to her primary responsibilities, she oversees various membership programs including Chamber Connect, Membership Development Committee, NextExecs (Young Professional Group), Women's Networking, and Cultural Roundtable Groups. Carla also serves as Chair on the Bethesda Transportation Solutions Advisory Committee. Carla maintains strong ties to her hometown of Baltimore, MD and donates her time to various charities including the annual Thanksgiving Give Back to help feed the downtown homeless community.

Since 1926, the Chamber has provided valuable support to business owners throughout the Washington Metropolitan Area. Today, our Chamber is dynamic, nimble, and connected to the diverse range of businesses and employees that work, live, and play in our region.

Our focus continues to support, inspire, and advocate for businesses in our community.

We asked Carla three questions surrounding leadership and goals. Read her responses below.

- 1. As you look back over your life, at what point did you begin to think of yourself as a leader?**

I credit my classmates back in grade school. Often when assigned to group projects for a class, I was usually nominated to be team leader, captain, or speaker of our group. I was not the most popular kid by far, but I never shied away from an opportunity to excel. Afterwards, I realized that my hand became among the few that were raised whenever volunteers were being sought out. It wasn't until I was 20 years old, received my first job promotion to Assistant Manager, and being the youngest person on staff that I then considered myself as a leader. Working in retail as my first job out of high school, my supervisor quickly noticed this passion and drive, and I became the youngest associate to be promoted.

- 2. Do you have a vision that guides your body of work? If so, has it changed over time or remain the same?**

My body of work and how I live my life are one in the same. The Bible quote, “Do Unto Others as You Would Have Them Do Unto You” is also known as the “Golden Rule”. This rule echoes in my mind and in my heart each day as I apply it to all my interactions with my professional and personal lives. My goals have always been to utilize the resources made available to me the best of my ability and then in return provide the best resources I can unto others.

3. Does the work you do now play a part in the legacy you wish to leave behind? If not, describe what tools you need to help you achieve your goals.

I believe so. My legacy may look a little different than many, but that is exactly the point. I strive to make mine a “living” legacy as I continue to inspire those in the; Black Communities, Catholic Communities, Military Family Communities, Siblings of those with Developmental Disabilities Communities, and Bullied Communities, and the Business Community. If helping others makes you feel good, then apply that passion, and dedication to all that you do. I also hope that when my nieces and nephews get a little hesitant to take that leap of faith with their everyday challenges; they will think of their Auntie to help them realize there is a whole big world outside of their own backyard.

Visit www.greaterbethesdachamber.org to connect with Carla on membership, committees, and community related opportunities.