



News release

January 18, 2021

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**Dr. King keynote speaker:
When you know better, you do better**

Response. Resiliency. Restoration.

The theme for Gateway Technical College's 27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration certainly resonates in today's society, communities and families, said keynote speaker Tammi Summers at Monday's event.

The event was held virtually this year with only a handful of people in-person at the event, including speakers and staff helping to produce the event's internet livestream.

Summers, Gateway vice president for the office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, spoke live at the event, talking about the college's efforts in these three areas as they related to the theme of the event.

She told the online audience that there are three things people can do to help promote harmony, change and equity: Identify your talents, find out where you can make a change and get started now – don't wait.

"Every day we wait and don't have these discussions, we are not creating the harmonious community we deserve," said Summers.

Summers also stressed the need for communities and families to engage in discussions of diversity and inclusion and how to create a positive change in

society. She said while these can be hard discussions to have with family and friends, they are needed.

Summers referred to a Maya Angelou quote as a reminder of how a community and society can heal: “When you know better, you do better.”

“We are certainly at a pivotal point in our college here at Gateway in our communities and in our country to do better,” said Summers. “As a family, we have to recognize that the road to success won’t necessarily be easy. However, taking steps to create a more diverse and equitable and inclusive community will lead to a stronger, more peaceful society for not only all of us, but for future generations.”

For more information, and comments by other state and federal officials on Gateway’s event: www.gtc.edu/mlk

Dr. King Humanitarians named

Gateway Technical College also honored its Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarians at the event, Gregory Bennett Jr. and Seeds of Hope. Humanitarians are recognized for their contributions to society, their school, business or profession, as well as their dedication to volunteerism and philanthropic work.

Gregory Bennett Jr.

Gregory Bennett Jr. is the founder and director of Peace in the Streets, an organization committed to helping Kenosha’s youth in a number of ways,

including empowering them and giving them a voice for today's social justice issues.

Bennett has helped city youth by steering them toward positive activities such as cooking, learning chess, playing ping-pong and learning computer skills to help them focus on positive activities and build their skills for work and education. He has a heart for encouraging youth to speak up, and also believes it's important he listens to their concerns. While Bennett will mentor and encourage youth of all races, many of his students are African-American.

Bennett's nominator said he "is a young black activist who is highly regarded amongst his peers. Younger members of the Kenosha community follow Greg's lead when he plans peaceful community marches, holds community outings and Get Out the Vote events. Greg is an up-and-coming leader in Kenosha and his message of change appeals to the younger generation."

Seeds of Hope

Founded by Jamie Stilling-Stepp, Seeds of Hope is a nonprofit organization based in Elkhorn, providing a positive and structured program to meet the needs of developmentally disabled youth and adults. The group uses horticulture and recreation to plant seeds of possibilities in everyone.

The group's nominator said that "Seeds of Hope is committed to ensuring the highest level of care to individuals with developmental and other disabilities. This organization provides participants with an encouraging, creative and supportive environment which facilitates not only an improved sense of confidence, but also a greater sense of independence. It is my firm belief that

Seeds of Hope is an organization which fully embodies the values and causes for which Dr. King worked so tirelessly, including equality, justice, freedom and peace.”

More on Tammi Summers

Summers was selected last year to lead the college’s newly formed Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. She earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in Special Education. Summers, Ph.D., earned her doctorate degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in Urban Education focusing on Adult and Continuing Education.

Gateway Technical College’s mission is to deliver industry-focused education that is flexible, accessible and affordable for our diverse community. The college collaborates with communities in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties to ensure economic growth and viability by providing education, training, leadership and technological resources to meet the changing needs of students, employers and communities.

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