



## We're not all the same!

# Celebrating all disabilities with pride, honor, dignity

July is Disability Pride Month in America, and July 26 is National Disability Independence Day, commemorating the signing of the American Disabilities Act (ADA) into law in 1990.

In honor of this month and its celebration of disabilities, we are featuring a list of 'dos and don'ts' when it comes to language and action around disabilities.

Please keep in mind people with disabilities are not all the same; one person with disabilities may prefer different language than another. Remember to always respect people's preferences by using the language they prefer.

The most important part of interacting with someone who has a disability is seeing that person for who they are, not for the disability that person has.

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# Disability Dos and Don'ts: A Guide to Inclusive Interactions and Etiquette

DO NOT	DO
<p><b>DO NOT</b> use nouns to describe groups of those with disabilities: “the disabled, the blind, the deaf”</p>	<p><b>DO</b> use <b>person-first adjectives</b> to describe those with disabilities: “person with a disability”, “person who is visually impaired” and “person who is hard of hearing/hearing impaired”</p> <p><i>Note: Many people with disabilities are also fine being referred to as a “disabled person,” but that is on a case-by-case basis.</i></p>
<p><b>DO NOT</b> use <b>patronizing</b> or <b>condescending</b> descriptives, e.g., “inspiring, brave, courageous, overcoming”</p>	<p><b>DO</b> praise a person’s <b>accomplishments</b> without value judgment or interpretation</p>
<p><b>DO NOT</b> use <b>euphemisms</b> like “special, special needs,” “differently abled” or “physically challenged”, as these can be seen as condescending</p>	<p><b>DO</b> use “has a physical, intellectual disability”</p>
<p><b>DO NOT</b> provide excess assistance <b>without asking</b>. Helping without asking can imply someone with a disability is incapable. (Common courtesy is still acceptable).</p>	<p><b>DO ask</b> “is there anything I can help you with?” or “do you want me to get the door?” Many people with disabilities are capable of caring for themselves without any assistance</p>
<p><b>DO NOT pet</b>, talk to, try to play with <b>someone’s service dog</b> without asking. And <b>DO NOT get offended</b> if the owner says no.</p>	<p><b>DO</b> let service dogs <b>do their job</b>. How would you like someone petting you while you were trying to work?</p>
<p><b>DO NOT</b> refer to someone as “wheelchair-bound” or “confined to a wheelchair”; using a wheelchair does not mean you are a victim of it.</p>	<p><b>DO</b> use “wheelchair-user” or “uses a wheelchair”</p>
<p><b>DO NOT assume</b> everyone is <b>able-bodied</b></p>	<p><b>DO</b> always make <b>accessibility accommodations</b>, such as subtitles, large enough font, allergy avoidance, and physically accessible and service animal-friendly spaces. Check-in with event attendees beforehand if they will need any accommodations</p>
<p><b>DO NOT</b> assume everyone <b>suffers</b> from their disability, e.g., “suffers from cerebral palsy” or “is a victim of glaucoma”</p>	<p><b>DO</b> simply acknowledge a person <b>“has” their condition</b>, e.g., “has cerebral palsy” or “has glaucoma”</p>
<p><b>DO NOT avoid people with disabilities</b> because you are afraid of saying the wrong thing</p>	<p><b>DO</b> ask questions, engage, and treat people with disabilities <b>the way you would want to be treated</b>. And make sure to be <b>open and respectful</b> to each person’s individual preferences on how they like to discuss their disability</p>

# LEADER SHIP SPOT LIGHT

It is important to highlight leaders at CHG who are doing an outstanding job of incorporating DEI into what they do every day for our people and our business. Let us meet one of those leaders today.

Our DEI Analyst, Nicole Lennon, sat down with Mark Wedman, our Vice President of Operations, to talk about his motivations and perspective on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the workplace.

Check out the interview below:

## **So number one, why do you believe DEI is important? And what are your motivations for prioritizing DEI in the workplace?**

"I think the key principle in a great manufacturing organization is the people, and so DEI for me is important because it requires us to leverage the talents of all the people within that organization to become great. Ensuring that we're inclusive allows us to leverage that.

The motivation for prioritizing it is, I believe it's a competitive advantage for us, those skills that people bring from diverse backgrounds. To motivate our people to ensure that we have a great place to work for everybody. Equality and inclusion are key cornerstones in the development of a great organization. The diversity of an organization a lot of times comes from where it's situated, physically. We need to make sure we're a representative of the community we're in."

## **How do you incorporate DEI into operations?**

"You want to think about growing a High Performing Organization, an HPO. After World War II, there was a lot of work done to increase the efficiency of operations and manufacturing facilities in the U.S., and the bedrock principle for an HPO is to value the skills and abilities of all individuals; and to me, you're not 'incorporating' DEI into your operations.

"Equality and inclusion are key cornerstones in the development of a great organization.

The diversity of an organization a lot of times comes from where it's situated, physically.

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Mark Wedman,  
Vice President of Operations, CHG



What you're doing is developing a great organization through those principles of inclusivity and quality and value and strength. It's internal to the organization versus the other way around.

One of the principles behind it as well is empowerment. When you're able to provide knowledge and skills to people, and empowerment to those people to demonstrate those skills and knowledge, that is when you start to create better organizations. The equality part is extremely important in empowering your teams to be business owners, versus just coming to work and having jobs."



**Next one, how has your perspective on DEI changed throughout your career, if it has?**

“So I’ll give you a bit of my history. I grew up in Saskatchewan and Saskatoon, not a very diverse community, very similar, not very ethnically diverse at the time when I grew up. I moved from there to a small town in Ontario, Canada, where it was very, very similar. The factory was probably 95% Caucasian, and most of the people in the area, too.

And then I moved to Brazil. So I was one of the majority group when I was in Canada, and I moved to Brazil, and was the only North American working in the factory who didn’t speak Portuguese. I became the minority very quickly. So I gained the perspective of what a minority feels like because I didn’t fit in.

I wasn’t included in the jokes, in the slang. I didn’t know what was happening a lot of the times when people were laughing. That experience for me led me to understand what it’s like to be an outsider. People were cordial, they were nice, and don’t get me wrong, it was a great experience. But they talked in slang Portuguese; I knew some proper Portuguese but I didn’t know the slang at all. So I didn’t know what it meant.



[The experience] helped me to understand, it’s not always easy. Before [in Canada] it was easy, I knew I had people the same age, with the same gender, same background. But not having that diverse upbringing or culture or lifestyle makes it very difficult for somebody, especially if you’re the only one there. So, that’s when I started to gain an appreciation for it. The most important part is for us to be understood both ways: you explain what’s happening and relate it back to somebody else’s culture.

**That’s so interesting. I had no idea that you had been in Brazil and literally experienced being the minority.**

Yeah, yeah, you wouldn’t think right?

**It changes your perspective a lot, and you’re not necessarily discriminated against, but it’s that lack of inclusion that has a really big effect on people.**

Yeah, yeah, and I was not discriminated against. I don’t feel like I was discriminated against. But, I didn’t go to the weekly soccer games, I wasn’t invited to that kind of stuff. When people saw me, they had to speak English, so I wouldn’t always go to the social events. It’s difficult.

**Yeah. It’s cool to know that about you. So, next one, what does it mean to you to be the executive sponsor of the Canada ERG? And you can speak on any of the main goals and future plans that are important to you.**

So it’s important to me to continue to grow a positive workplace. So that’s probably one of my primary objectives in my role, is to grow positive environments where the company can thrive. Because I think that goes back to our competitive edge as a business. My job is to make sure that the business is healthy, [that] our manufacturing sites are efficient, safe, and producing quality food.

*Continued from Page 4*

We do that by having people committed to the jobs that they're doing, [which happens when] they commit themselves to the organization and feel a part of the organization, part of the solution. And I see this as an initiative we would do no matter if we called it DEI or not; The inclusivity, the quality, the promotion from within of our top talent, it's natural in creating a great organization. And this [inclusion] is not outside of our current role, it should be ingrained into our roles and into the work objectives of our entire organization; that ability to teach people, bring people's skills up, leverage them, grow them as a part of our natural progression of developing great manufacturing sites.

[As for] our future [Canada ERG] plans, the main goal of our ERG, to start with, is to educate. What people don't know, they perpetuate. Those stereotypes, those misnomers [happen], and [people] don't realize what talent, what abilities people have, because they're all individual and unique, and it's not based on your ethnicity or race or gender. It's based on your individual abilities, and each person is unique in those abilities. And that's what we need to leverage. That education is going to be critical for us because we need to get people to learn and understand [and] realize what other people are going through so that they can be tolerant and improve their communication with others.

**So, you kind of answered this question a little in your previous explanation, but what advice would you have for others, whether that be employees or fellow leaders, particularly ones who might be hesitant to incorporate DEI in what they do?**

I've been thinking about this one, for the fellow leaders, and I think [I would say]: You've just got to start. It doesn't matter how small, how big. You just got to start with what makes sense and not everybody understands everything about every new program, [or] what's considered offensive or what's considered proper.

None of us understand everything about every culture. So the answer to that is to start. You can ask for different resources that we have within the company. Start small by understanding people, and start to include inclusivity as part of your operating plan every day. [Essentially], incorporating DEI is looking to leverage strengths. Because you're always part of a team, you're going to have a whole bunch of different individuals, that can produce magic together, [so] you need to leverage people's strengths and provide them the opportunity to participate.

**This is an on-the-spot question, but do you have a personal way to make sure that you're being equitable in what you're doing? You've talked about giving people opportunities, how do you make sure you're giving everyone the opportunity right for them?**

So I have this little motivation shtick, it's called "swimmers or water walkers." I've shared it with a lot of people, but it's something I use myself. It talks about whether you're going to be a swimmer, [a good employee], in your career or a water walker, [an exceptional employee], in your career. Part of my own motivation [is to] ensure that we're equitable within the entire site, promotion from within first, so inside of the site, we're looking for those promotions or people that have demonstrated outside of the norm or superior results within their own area. I continually ask our plant managers and HR, if they're looking to hire from outside, who are our candidates inside that we've looked at? Also [being] self-aware, and [seeing things] without a filter. I'm looking to source the best person possible for the job. I have to practice myself, it's not 100% foolproof.

**Yeah, it's not, but it's every day we get better and we learn more. Thanks for speaking with me today Mark, is there anything else you wanted to add at all, a message you want to leave?**

Well, I think the DEI program for the company is a strength for us, and it's going to be viewed as a strength in the future. When we look in retrospect in five years, [and] look back at the work we've done, it's going to be viewed as a strength for us to grow the business.

**Thank You Mark Wedman for being an advocate, ally, and champion for diversity.**



# RAISING PRIDE ACROSS C.H. GUENTHER & SON



**CHG celebrated PRIDE throughout the month of June at each of our locations, including Corporate. Browse through these photos and enjoy raising pride across CHG. Do you recognize any of these smiling faces?**



Our Banbury, Dollard-Des Ormeaux, Duncanville, Lenexa, and Tribeca Oven locations showed their pride in June.







Our locations held fun celebrations for Pride Month, with treats, swag, and education for our associates.





# CHG DEI Director voted in as a Board of Director for the San Antonio LGBT Chamber of Commerce



San Antonio's LGBT Chamber of Commerce welcomed C.H. Guenther & Son's, Kanetra 'Kiki' Hights to their Board of Directors this year.

We look forward to Kiki representing CHG in the San Antonio community, while furthering the DEI principles and strategies we currently hold.

Below: Tribeca Oven celebrates Pride Month





# FRESH FACE & SEASONED PRO

## Employee Experiences at CHG

PRESENTED BY:  C.H. GUENTHER  
EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP

### Featuring:

#### VICKI ORTIZ

HR Manager  
MMC - Denton

**1.5 years at CHG**

#### AUNDR FOWLER

Process Improvement  
Manager

PFF - Duncanville

**34 years at CHG**

How did you start your career in manufacturing?

Vicki

I planned to enter the medical field after college, but actually started in QA at a beverage manufacturer. I transitioned to HR in 2011.

Aundra

Aundra started as a Sanitation Tech when Pioneer was Wheatland Farms. He was promoted to Mixer, then Line Lead, and 9 years later, Team Lead. He has served as Production manager and lead the Sanitation Department. Since 2017, his role has been Process Improvement Manager.

What's the first thing you tell people about where you work?

Vicki

I love the people I work with!

Would you do it all over again?

Aundra

Yes! Pioneer was the 2nd job I ever had, and it's been a blessing working here. My grandson tells me that he will never work like me but I tell him there is always something to learn.



How would you describe your first year? Challenges? Victories?

Vicki

The biggest challenge was turnover. This was a learning opportunity for me, and James Williams and I worked together to reduce turnover by 20%.

What challenges are we facing at the plant level? Thoughts on how to address it?

Aundra

We need to support our Team Leaders. Many are promoted because of technical ability but they need support and training just like a new hire would. Particularly in managing people and safety with equipment.



If you had a blank check, what change would you make in your workplace?

Vicki

I would like to give back to our employees who work so hard. It's all about the people. Paid cruises for everyone!

Words of encouragement to our leadership team?

Aundra

Be open to thinking outside of the box for solutions vs. what's always been done. Also, with new projects or equipment, get input from associates who have firsthand knowledge from the production floor. Their experience is valuable.

How do you stay motivated?

Vicki

I lean on others I work with and find encouragement from them.

What advice would you give to new hires starting a career with Pioneer/CHG?

Aundra

Be willing to do what's needed to get the job done. Speak up when you are not getting the training you need. Ask your supervisor what you can do to get to the next level.



How did we catch your attention for the position? What sealed the deal?

Vicki

The first person I spoke to after being contacted by an external recruiter was Eric Shaffer, and he sold me on the genuineness, authenticity. Once I had my panel interview, I felt at home instantly.

How do we encourage the younger generations to be excited about manufacturing?

Aundra

First, take the time to care for our employees. Find out what their needs are, address it and follow up with them. Second, provide them with the training they need to be efficient so they may train others.

What do you do in your free time?

Vicki

Relax and enjoy time with loved ones.

What do you hope life looks like post CHG? Plans for retirement?

Aundra

I plan on retiring in 6 years, and helping my graduating grandson transition into his next chapter. My wife will be retiring soon as well from distribution. We plan to travel together. I love the Caribbean! Also Europe and Africa. After retirement, I will be available for training if needed, for a fee of course!



# Celebrating the contributions of the Haitian heritage, traditions & culture



On May 18, **Haitian Flag Day**, our team members at Tribeca Oven hosted a celebration for Haitian Heritage Month. For this celebration, Jovany Jean-Louis, a Team Leader, wrote a communication to send out to all of CHG, and the Tribeca Oven team hosted a traditional Haitian Meal for **ALL 3 SHIFTS!**

Events like this are crucial in showing representation for all of our associates, reminding them that we value their contributions and cultures. **Great job, Tribeca, with this phenomenal event!**



## Elevate your lunch breaks with these opportunities

Did you miss a Lunch & Learn? Lunch & Learn videos from last quarter are available online for all employees to watch. Click the links below to watch any sessions you may have missed!



- April Lunch & Learn: The Alliance Between ERGs and Sustainability  
Link: <https://vimeo.com/819658167?share=copy>
- May Lunch & Learn: My Story of Multiculturalism  
Link: <https://vimeo.com/848394322?share=copy>
- June Lunch & Learn #1: LGBTQ+ 101  
Link: <https://vimeo.com/835826661?share=copy>
- June Lunch & Learn #2: LGBTQ+ 202  
Link: <https://vimeo.com/841257508?share=copy>



# ERGs on the Move!



On April 18 and 19, leaders, co-leaders, and sponsors of our Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) attended the first-ever C. H. Guenther & Son ERG Summit. At the Summit, our ERG leadership teams dove deep into CHG's DEI strategy, learned best practices from guest speakers, and planned their goals and activities for the coming fiscal year.



**“Based on the age of our program, the summit was spot on! Can't wait to grow it to the next level!”**

**“Great engagement and dedication to the DEI efforts!”**





# Spring Successes:



## CANADA

- Multiculturalism Lunch & Learn
- First Canadian Round table

## NEXTGEN

- Older Americans Month communication

## PRISM

- International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, & Transphobia communication
- Pride month kick off
- Lunch & Learns: LGBTQ+ 101, LGBTQ+ 202

## VERG

- Memorial Day banners in San Antonio
- Memorial Day communication
- Army Birthday Communication

## WOMEN AT CHG

- Blood Drives in San Antonio



**"Excellent work!  
Thank you for  
the opportunity!"**

**"Thank you again  
for this event and  
bringing everyone  
together."**

**At CHG, our ERGs advocate for every employee to feel included and valued.**



**Don't miss your opportunity to join an ERG at CHG!**

This is a great way to have your voice heard! Contact us today ([dei@chg.com](mailto:dei@chg.com)) or fill out [this form](#) to start making a difference at CHG.

**You make a difference at CHG! Join an ERG today**

You can join an ERG of your choice at any time! Our membership is currently open-ended.

To learn more about our ERGs, read their mission statements by scanning this QR code.



**BECOME A CERTIFIED DIVERSITY CHAMPION**

**DIVERSITY CHAMPION TRAINING TRACK**

Available now in Alchemy!

Learn about DEI

Earn a Certification as a CHG Diversity Champion!

Champions will be recognized in 2024

Learn how to build an inclusive work environment

The graphic features the CHG logo in the top left. It includes callout boxes: a teal box with 'Learn about DEI' and three dots, a pink starburst with 'Champions will be recognized in 2024', and a brown star with 'Learn how to build an inclusive work environment'. A green button at the bottom says 'Available now in Alchemy!'. A megaphone icon is next to the text 'Earn a Certification as a CHG Diversity Champion!'.

**BECOME A CERTIFIED DIVERSITY CHAMPION AVAILABLE NOW AT CHG**





[www.chg.com](http://www.chg.com)