

## Local non-profit closes its doors after 18 years of promoting diversity and inclusion

Written by

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The MultiCultural Development Center (MCDC), founded by its Executive Director Dr. Ghafar Lakanwal, will close in December, after 18 years of service to local organizations and communities. MCDC's Board of Directors made the decision to close the non-profit at the end of the year due to the economic downturn.

From 1991 to 2009, MCDC educated thousands of people by promoting cultural understanding and inclusiveness to enhance workplace performance and community relationships. The organization was best known for its educational events, led by presenters such as Dr. Roosevelt Thomas, Tim Wise, Angela Bassett, Jane Elliott and Lee Mun Wah, as well as its trademarked Chronology of World Cultural Events poster calendar.

MCDC received support from some of the biggest corporations and organizations in the Twin Cities, including Allianz Life, Ameriprise Financial, Best Buy, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Bremer Financial Services, Cub Foods, Dunwoody College of Technology, General Mills, United Way, HealthPartners, Hennepin County Medical Center, Land O'Lakes, Medica, Medtronic, MAC, MN DOT, MN Judicial Branch, MN Private Colleges, MN State Colleges and Universities, Ramsey County, RBC Wealth Management, Regions Hospital, Emerson Process Management, Thomson Reuters, University of St. Thomas, Wells Fargo and Wilder Foundation

"Many, many people have been part of MCDC's journey and we hope to remember and celebrate our long history of Sharing Diversity™," stated Lakanwal.

"I believe the true strength of MCDC was in its Board and its many volunteers," stated Laurie Trousil, former MCDC Manager. "They were the driving force behind MCDC activities and their countless hours of dedication were the reason for MCDC's success."

"Although MCDC activities will conclude by the end of the year. I know that diversity and inclusion is a long-term process and our work is not done," said Lakanwal.

With the close of MCDC, Lakanwal has been encouraged by friends, supporters and board

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members to begin a new chapter in his personal journey by opening his own training and consulting firm. Called Sharing Diversity: Bridging Cultures LLC, Lakanwal's new, for-profit firm will seek to increase the intercultural effectiveness of employees, executives, managers, teams and organizations.

The organization will also work with these companies to develop their skills to work and operate comfortably, effectively and productively across various cultural systems. Plans for the new firm will be launched in January 2010 on [SharingDiversity.com](http://SharingDiversity.com). Dr. Lakanwal will focus more on building schools in his native country Afghanistan through an organization he founded after September 11, 2001 called "Partnership for Education of Children in Afghanistan".