

## TOUR CAYUGA & TRAVEL UNITY: BUILDING INCLUSIVE TOURISM



### INTRODUCTION

Tour Cayuga has long recognized that tourism is about more than attracting visitors; it's about community, belonging, and opportunity. Through our partnership with Travel Unity, we have strengthened our organizational culture, expanded workforce diversity, and supported inclusive economic growth throughout Cayuga County and the Finger Lakes region. We invite other destinations to embrace this journey, committing to belonging, equity, and stewardship as core values.

*"DEI is a mindset,  
not an initiative."*  
David Turley, ILNY

### TIMELINE 2019-2025 ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

2019 Attended  
Travel Unity  
Summit (Syracuse);  
Karen joined Travel  
Unity Board of  
Advisors

Hosted Travel Unity Northeast  
Summit in Auburn; Youth  
Summit; Claire completed  
CDTP training and developed  
DEI Plan

Hosted DEI Forum in  
Cayuga County; TUIC  
training; Youth Summit;  
Claire attended Gala

2019

2021

2022

2023

2024

2025

*"I want to sing  
the DEI song, but I  
want to sing it in a  
choir"*  
Hilina D. Ajakaiye  
Meet Boston

Presented  
at TU  
Summit  
(Lake  
Placid)

Karen attended SE Summit  
(Louisiana); hosted Youth  
Summit in Auburn; Ash Murray  
completed TDP training;  
Level 1 CBTU achieved

Hosted Youth  
Summit

## Summit Hosting

- **2022 Travel Unity Northeast Summit:** hosting 50+ regional and national tourism leaders.
- **2024 DEI Forum:** Industry discussions, TUIC training, and Youth Summit.
- **Key Takeaways:** Positioned Cayuga County as a thought leader in destination stewardship and inclusive tourism management.



## Certifications

- **Staff training:** Certified Diversity Tourism Professional (CDTP), Travel DEI Practitioner (TDP), and Travel Unity Individual Certificate (TUIC).
- **Internal DEI Plan** aligning strategy with inclusive practices.
- **Level 1 CBTU Certification**, public recognition of commitment.
- **Outcome:** Stronger internal capacity and partner credibility.



## Youth Engagement

- **Youth Summits** (2022–2025) inspiring future travel professionals.
- **Mentorship**, career exposure, and hands-on learning.
- **Partnerships** with local schools and youth organizations to expand access.
- **Impact:** Next-generation leaders embracing inclusion and community stewardship.



## TAKE A-WAYS

- DEI is **ongoing and intentional**, requiring organizational commitment beyond committees or initiatives.
- Youth involvement is essential; inclusion is as much about the **future workforce** as current operations.
- **Authenticity and respect** for community stories are crucial for building trust and sustainable tourism.
- Partnerships like Travel Unity provide frameworks, accountability, and access to **national best practices**.

"As humans we're 95% the same, but we focus on the 5% that makes us different"  
**Christopher Guidone**  
Tourism Diversity Matters

"Belonging, in order to give you the best of me."  
**Victor Younger**,  
Cornell