

# Five Good Ideas



## Workshop 5

### Five Good Ideas about...Creating an Inclusive Organization

Kay Blair, Executive Director, Community MicroSkills Development Centre.

Wednesday, February 22, 2006 - 12:00 to 2:00 PM

Embracing the values of inclusiveness within an organization is a long term proposition; the process of altering attitudes and practices does not happen overnight. Creating an inclusive organization requires more than just hiring new faces. It requires opening minds and doors to new perspectives and worldviews. It is an on-going process of rethinking the work we do as well as the relationships we build with the wider community. This session will provide practical tips on how to embrace the principles of inclusion.



**Kay Blair, Executive Director, Community Microskills Development Centre.**

Kay Blair has been Executive Director of Community MicroSkills Development Centre since 1988. MicroSkills provides settlement, training, employment and self-employment services to immigrants

and members of racialized communities, with emphasis on the needs of low-income women and, more recently, at-risk young women.

Kay has demonstrated a leadership role in her work with newcomers. She has served two terms as President of Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), as well as various positions on the executive. As Past President of the National Visible Minority Council on Labour Force Development, and a current member of the Executive Committee, Kay continues to share her experience and expertise in community development, equity, access, and anti-racism issues. Over the last 25 years, Kay has been president of the first shelter for immigrant women, President of the Peel Police Race Relations Committee, and a member of numerous task forces and public forums that have looked at improving quality of life for women, immigrants, and members of racialized communities.

Kay has received a number of awards, including the Women of Colour Community Award, the Ontario Race Relations Award, Jamaica's 100 Women of the Century Special Recognition, Seventh Day Adventist Youth Society's Leadership Award, the Innovations Canada Entrepreneur of the Year Award (2003), the OCASI Leadership Award (2003) and the Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 Award - Trailblazer (2004).

### Five Good Ideas

1. Think of leadership as an action, not as a position (effective leadership)
2. Engage your organization in real talent development (succession planning)
3. Employ a self-directed team approach (empowerment)
4. Know your organization's DNA
5. Embrace diversity as an ethical imperative, not simply as an economic advantage

### Five Good Resources

1. *Ethics, the Heart of Leadership*, Joanne B. Ciulla, Quorum Books, 1998.
2. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*, Steven Covey, The New York, NY: Free Press, 2004.
3. *Leadership is an Art*, Max Depree, New York, NY: Doubleday, 2004.
4. *Leading Change: The Argument for Values-Based Leadership*, James O'Toole, New York, NY: Ballentine Books, 2004.
5. *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*. Revised, Margaret Wheatley, San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2001.