



Rebuilding Together NYC hosts diversity, equity and inclusion in RE symposium

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New York, NY Rebuilding Together NYC's She Builds Committee hosted Rebuild and Reimagine: Using Science, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategies to Transform Work, a symposium that explored how to foster diversity, equity and inclusion in the real estate industry. The She Builds 2021 program was held virtually on April 28.

Attendees gained expert insights and data-driven historical perspectives and began to develop an early framework from which individuals and companies can enact structural change at all levels of business operation. The keynote speaker was Valerie Purdie Greenaway, a Columbia University psychology professor who consults with global leaders to help them develop and foster diverse and inclusive work cultures. Symposium attendees joined DEI experts, consultants and thought leaders to:

- Explore what companies should consider when implementing DEI strategies.

- Learn how to promote DEI within and outside organizations, as well as how to measure and report change.

- Engage in conversations with experienced facilitators and industry peers and gain actionable next steps to implement.

Valerie Payne, executive director of Rebuilding Together NYC, said: "Rebuilding Together NYC launched the She Builds initiative in 2016 and since then the members have raised over half a million dollars and recruited almost 500 volunteers from real estate to provide needed updates to local community centers and non-profits in addition to supporting Rebuilding Together NYC's mission and programs. Considering the events of the past year, the committee members felt it crucial to take another approach to address systemic injustice and planned an educational symposium to initiate structural change across the real estate industry. We're grateful to the committee and the sponsors for their support of Rebuilding Together NYC and thrilled to collaborate with the real estate industry to rebuild a more equitable city."

Laurie Grasso, New York partner and co-chair of Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP's global real estate practice, serves as co-chair for She Builds with Laura Jackson, senior managing director of corporate finance at FTI Consulting, who founded the She Builds initiative and who also currently serves as vice president for Rebuilding Together NYC's board.

“A charity that is focused on educating participants on the benefits and best practices of promoting diversity in the real estate industry is a worthy one,” Grasso said. “Rebuilding Together NYC then takes it one step further by actually using the proceeds to train under-represented people to gain entry to the industry.”

Jackson said, “The funds raised by the symposium will support a group of unemployed New Yorkers through Rebuilding Together NYC’s Careers in Construction program and help them secure careers that provide opportunities for advancement, and to continue their education, as well as comprehensive benefits. We’re thrilled at the number of companies that have come forward to contribute to this impactful program.”

Funds raised support Rebuilding Together NYC’s Careers in Construction program, which re-skills unemployed women and people of color for union apprenticeships within the construction trades. The majority of graduates (25% of whom are women) go on to earn \$20+/hr, plus benefits including paid time off, family health insurance and retirement in their first year on the job.

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