

Diversity as we define it means difference. Diversity enriches our organizations. We all learn from those whose life experiences, beliefs, and perspectives are different from our own.

It promotes personal growth, it strengthens employees to be good citizens in an increasingly complex society and it fosters mutual respect and teamwork.

This year the Wisconsin SHRM Council felt so much more is being done by organizations as a team than simply by one individual. This award recognizes an organization who has been a role model in their local community as a strong advocate for diversity. Their diversity initiatives set a good example of what other organizations would like to accomplish.

The 2008 Wisconsin SHRM Workplace Diversity Advocate Award was presented to Helwig Carbon Products. Helwig Carbon Products does not view diversity as an issue they need to tackle. Diversity comes naturally to them, it is imbedded into their organizational culture; it is part of their every day activities and processes. The commitment they have to diversity is ongoing. 66% of Helwig's employee population is composed of minority groups, they have 16 first languages including American Sign Language among their employees and speak a total of 22 languages and dialects throughout the organization. They embrace the cultures of all of their employees by recognizing the differences each person brings to their organization. Cultural Diversity classes are held onsite at Helwig Carbon as well as English as 2nd language. Translators are readily available to employees and their written documents are currently offered in 4 languages. Some of the community initiatives that Helwig Carbon Products is involved in are:

- The Next Door Foundation which is an organization that provides child-centered, family-focused programs that enhance school readiness, promote leadership skills and prepare a pathway for success. Helwig has served as an active community partner of this organization for over 20 years.
- Partner with Hmong and Spanish Chamber of Commerce
- Project Equality of Wisconsin – has served as a partner since 1996 to promote diversity and fairness in the workplace.

Helwig Carbon Products is truly a leader in diversity. And, they do all of this with only 250 employees.

Helwig Carbon has chosen The Next Door Foundation to receive the \$500.00 donation on behalf of the WI State Council in honor of them receiving this award.