



NEWS RELEASE

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Wellmark announces 2021 John D. Forsyth Inclusion Ambassador Award winner

Award honors an individual who embodies diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace

DES MOINES, IA (November X, 2021) — In recognition of an individual or group who leads efforts to advance diversity, equity and inclusion within the organization, [Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield](#) announces Ike Brown as the 2021 John D. Forsyth Inclusion Ambassador award recipient.

Ike, a data center and data recovery team leader, is an advocate for equity and inclusion within Wellmark, his church and the Des Moines community. The award, renamed in 2020 in celebration of former Wellmark CEO John D. Forsyth's career of inclusive leadership, was created in 2013. Presented annually, the award honors those who advocate and embody Wellmark's core values of integrity, caring and inclusion.

"It's an honor to recognize the efforts of our employees to advance inclusion not only within the walls of the company, but within the communities where we live and work," said Telisha Sellick, director of diversity, equity, inclusion and health equity at Wellmark. "Ike is a true champion for inclusion in everything he does. It doesn't stop when he leaves the doors of Wellmark."

Nominated by a peer, Ike was described as having a unique ability to deliver difficult conversations in a positive, constructive and inclusive manner. A leader within his church, Ike volunteers his time to conduct thoughtful discussions on racially sensitive issues at various venues in the community. In addition, Ike organizes informal outreach ministries, book clubs, cookouts and serves as a mentor, uniting people from various cultures and backgrounds.

Within Wellmark, Ike has served on the Inclusion Council, the Technology Culture Committee and served as Wellmark's Ambassador for Juneteenth, kicking off the Juneteenth Health Day. In 2020 Ike, along with a coworker, developed a virtual workshop for Wellmark employees providing education and real-world examples of systemic racism and the importance of inclusion at work and in the community. Ike has also served as a Catalyst Speaker for the [Technology Association of Iowa](#) and is a member of the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) subcommittee promoting inclusion within the tech industry.

"We've come a long way, but we have a long way to go," Ike said in regard to an inclusive society. "The work never stops. The bottom line is we can't spectate; we need to participate and be the change we desire to see."

In addition to the honor, Ike will receive a \$1,000 honorarium that he has designated to [Bridge Building Solutions, Inc.](#), an organization focused on racial healing. He is the tenth Wellmark employee to receive an Inclusion Ambassador Award.

Wellmark's commitment to inclusion has been recognized locally and nationally with more than 60 designations awarded since 2009. In addition, the Wellmark Inclusion Council promotes workforce engagement for an inclusive, trusting and healthy work environment and culture.

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Note to media: A high resolution photo of Ike Brown is available upon request.