Stickers to highlight inclusive-minded businesses

In a new effort to promote Livonia as an inclusive business community, the Livonia Chamber of Commerce will begin distributing “(We) Welcome Everybody” stickers for local businesses to display on their office and store doors.

This is the latest initiative to promote inclusiveness and awareness by the Livonia Chamber, a nonpartisan, nonprofit trade organization that represents 960 members.

The stickers will be first distributed to those who attend the upcoming Western Wayne Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Experience on Thursday, Sept. 22, at Madonna University’s Welcome Center. The breakfast program runs from 8-10 a.m. and features a presentation from Dr. Lee Meadows, a renown expert on leadership, management, and inclusion. He will talk about the evolution of diversity and inclusion programs and how it builds belongingness.

This event costs $40 per person with registration available on the chamber’s website: www.livonia.org, or by calling 734.427.2122.

The stickers will also be made available to those who attend the chamber’s new series, the Inclusion Roundtable. This periodic, free program provides guided, casual discussions that gives attendees a chance to practice the interpersonal skills they learn in diversity and inclusion trainings. The next program is scheduled for 3 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 3.

“The focus of diversity and inclusion programs are really about sharpening our communication skills by encouraging listening and discouraging assumptions,” said Dan West, president of the Livonia Chamber of Commerce. “Everyone has a unique experience, and we truly build connections when we take the time to share and listen to each other’s story.”

Experts say organizations that encourage tenets of inclusion enhance creativity, belongingness, talent retention, and profitability because the group feels valued and encouraged to share ideas.

“This isn’t just cultural, ethnic or racial, it is also about generational and intellectual,” West added. “It builds trust among coworkers and strengthens the organization when it is regularly practiced, starting with the leadership.”

The new stickers are designed to help businesses show customers visiting their locations that they strive to practice inclusiveness and build a welcoming environment.