

# ADVANCE WOMEN LEADERS

**WOMEN LEAD CHANGE**  
ANNUAL REPORT

**2023**





### What a year! What a mission.

More than 80 corporate partners and 5,600 attendees made 2023 a remarkable year! Women Lead Change (WLC) doubled down on its critical work in 2023, empowering women leaders and building back the pipeline of talent. While recent statistics boast gains in C-suite positions and gender parity at entry levels, a glaring gap remains: the stark decline of women in management and director roles. This stark reality echoes the very reason WLC was born in 2007, and underscores the pressing need for renewed efforts to ensure women's rightful place in leadership.

A few highlights:

- We had the opportunity to honor an incredible changemaker in Iowa, Coach Lisa Bluder, at our Inaugural Changemakers Fundraiser evening, in front of a sold out room. This celebration exemplifies WLC's commitment to recognizing and uplifting women who pave the way for future generations.
- We smashed attendance records at both our Des Moines and Quad Cities conferences, demonstrating the ever-growing hunger for leadership development among aspiring and established women leaders.
- WLC's innovation shone through with the launch of the One Team Summit and the All-Access Virtual Speaker Series, offering fresh avenues for team building and knowledge sharing beyond traditional formats.
- And EPIC surpassed more than 700 individual allies and 115 companies in 2023. Our partnership with the University of Illinois-Chicago is now headed into its third phase of research.

Our efforts to continue to support girls who will grow into future women leaders led to the continuation of the Girls with Goals event. Our Women Connect cohorts continued their collaborating, networking, and best practice sharing in Cedar Valley, Corridor, Des Moines and Quad Cities.

We remain laser-focused in 2024: WLC will continue to focus on the advancement, development and promotion of women, their organizations and to impact the regional economy. We are committed to providing content and programming through our events that are educational, relevant and inspire all to take charge, and lead change.

Onward!

Tiffany O'Donnell, CEO Women Lead Change

**WLC** is for everyone who wants to grow as leaders in their companies, communities, and careers.

**WLC** is for those that want to meet, learn from, network with, and be mentored by leaders who understand women's unique challenges, gifts, and perspectives.

**WLC** is for all who want to succeed, surpass, and have fun in the process.

**WLC** is for employers who want to invest in their current talent and develop their future leaders.

YOUR SUCCESS  
IS OUR MISSION

## WLC'S MISSION

Women Lead Change is dedicated to the development, advancement, and promotion of women, their organizations and to impacting the economy and future workforce.

5612 + ATTENDEES AT  
EVENTS AND  
PROGRAMS

Inaugural  
**CHANGEMAKERS  
FUNDRAISER**



Quad Cities hosted a  
**sold-out crowd** of over  
**600 ATTENDEES**

Featured a  
**LEADERSHIP SPEAKER  
SHOWCASE**  
in the Cedar Rapids and Cedar  
Valley regions

Hosted  
**ANNUAL CONFERENCES**  
in Cedar Rapids, Des Moines,  
and Quad Cities.



**12 EPISODES**  
of Season Four of the  
Own It Podcast.

Launched the  
**SPEAK TANK PROGRAM**  
in Cedar Rapids & Des Moines  
where local speakers applied for  
an opportunity to launch their  
speaking career with Women  
Lead Change



Hosted a summit in Coralville,  
Iowa with over  
**200 LEADERS**  
focused on team building



**20** current and emerging  
leaders participated in the  
Elevate Program.



EPIC Ally Challenge grew to  
**709 MEMBERS**  
committed to advocating for  
women in the workplace



Hosted second  
**GIRLS WITH GOALS**  
Fundraiser featuring the  
Christine Grant documentary

	<p>MAY 11 Dr. Steve Robbins <i>What If</i></p>	<p>MAY 18 Soren Kaplan <i>Experiential Intelligence</i></p>	<p>MAY 25 Sally Helgesen <i>Rising Together</i></p>	<p>\$199/person First 100 registered receive free copies of <i>Rising Together</i> &amp; <i>Experiential Intelligence</i></p>
	<p>Launched the <b>ALL-ACCESS SPEAKER VIRTUAL SERIES</b></p>			



## CONFERENCES

### CEDAR RAPIDS CONFERENCE

April 4-5, 2023

- Presenting Sponsor: Collins Aerospace
- **794 total attendees**

### DES MOINES CONFERENCE

Oct. 18-19, 2023

- Presenting Sponsor: EMC
- **1156 total attendees**

### QUAD CITIES CONFERENCE

November 14, 2023 (Bettendorf)

- Presenting Sponsor: Bank of America
- **640 total attendees**

### OVER 50 SPEAK TANK APPLICANTS

- A combined 12 finalist appearing at the Des Moines and Cedar Rapids Conferences
- **2 Speak Tank Winners**

### IOWA WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS LUNCHEON

Oct. 18, 2023 (Des Moines)

## WORKSHOPS & OTHER EVENTS

### CREATING A SHIFT IN HIGH PERFORMANCE WITH DR. LAUREN HODGES

Feb. 15, 2023

- **863 virtual attendees**

### HAVE GOOD RIPPLE EFFECT WITH LISA EVEN

Sept 19, 20 and 21, 2023

- **392 total attendees**

### INAUGURAL CHANGEMAKERS FUNDRAISER HONORING COACH LISA BLUDER

September 27, 2023

- **206 attendees**

### ARMED VS. DARING LEADERSHIP WITH LISA BROUWER

April 19 and May 16, 2023

- **301 attendees**

### REDEFINING DIVERSITY IN A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKPLACE WITH CAROLINA CARO

Aug 14, 2023

- **508 virtual attendees**





### LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

- Three, regional conferences: Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Quad Cities
- Nationally-known keynote speakers and breakout sessions led by local talent
- Speakers included: Morra Aarons-Mele, Tarika Barrett, Khaliah O. Guillory, Jen Hatmaker, Carey Lohrenz, Ginni Rometty, McKenna Sweazey, Tiffany Atkinson, Dr. Wendy Borlabi, Tiffany Dufu, Dr. Steve Robbins, Sara Ross, Captain Sandy Yawn, Dr. Deshauna Barber, Kristi Hemmer, Kate Hightshoe-Lambert, Brandi Spurling, and Carlos Whittaker.
- **3,097 total attendees (in-person and virtual)**



### WOMEN CONNECT

- Regional membership groups that engage women through sharing best practices, peer-to-peer networking, and providing professional/personal development opportunities for their organizations.
- Women Connect Regions:
  - Cedar Valley Women Connect: **16 members**
  - Corridor Women Connect: **26 members**
  - Metro Women Connect: **43 members**
  - Quad Cities Women Connect: **23 members**
  - Sioux Empire Women Connect: **10 members**



### EPIC CORPORATE CHALLENGE

- EPIC partners commit to set voluntary measurable goals in at least one of the following areas:
  - Increase the percentage of women of color in current and emerging leadership positions, including boards of directors
  - Actively recruit and retain women at all levels of the organization, in order to increase the percentage of women in company's workforce, including women in non-traditional roles
  - Increase the percentage of women among the top 10% of the company's senior positions
  - Increase the number of women on the board of directors
  - Monitor pay by gender and address such gaps as are discovered
- Sponsors: Delta Dental of Iowa and Transamerica
- **115 member companies**



### EPICALLY CHALLENGE

- Individuals that commit to the EPIC Ally Challenge pledge to:
  - Help women move into greater leadership roles
  - Invite others to join the challenge
  - Identify opportunities
  - Eliminate gender bias
  - Make own actions serve as a model for others to follow
- Sponsors: Delta Dental of Iowa and Transamerica
- **709 individual members**



### ELEVATE

- Women's leadership development program for emerging leaders in the Cedar Rapids region.
- Meets for six months, with 5 half-day learning sessions, and a capstone project
- **20 participants**



### LEVEL UP MANUFACTURING

- Leadership development for pipeline leaders in manufacturing (open to women and men)
- 6-week program covering: Leadership Presence, Emotional Intelligence, Fierce Conversations, Inclusive Cultures, Growth Mindset
- **19 participants in Quad Cities**



### ADVOCATES & ALLIES SPEAKER SERIES

- Weekly, 60-minute virtual sessions with renowned authors Dr. Steve Robbins, Soren Kaplan, and Sally Helgesen.
- Attendees received access to the virtual sessions, along with books from the authors
- **35 attendees**



### IOWA WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT BRIDGE & AWARDS

- Recognizes contributions of historical Iowa women who made outstanding & lasting contributions or have advanced the well-being of others throughout the world.
- 20 award plaques are featured on the Iowa Women of Achievement Bridge in downtown Des Moines to date
- 2023 honorees: Heather Allen, Ethel "Marion" Helland, and Lulu Johnson



### GIRLS WITH GOALS FUND

- Supports Iowa non-profit organizations that:
  - Inspire girls to recognize their inner strength, Celebrate the characteristics that make each girl one of a kind, Spark the interest in girls to pursue studies and careers in male-dominated fields, Empower girls of all ages through mentorship
- Five (5) grants awarded in 2023 to:
  - Eastern Iowa Arts Academy
  - Families Helping Families of Iowa
  - Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa
  - NewBoCo
  - North Iowa Area Community College Foundation
- Girls with Goals Fundraiser hosted **79 attendees** to support women & girls in sport



### OWN IT! FROM WOMEN LEAD CHANGE PODCAST

- Our podcast features thought leaders, industry experts, CEOs, and senior leaders who recognize the imperative to advance women leaders at all levels with topics ranging from personal stories of perseverance to tactical development insights.
- Season 4 featured 12 episodes with **4,213 downloads** across the U.S., North America, South America, Asia, Africa, Australia and Europe.

## THANK YOU SPONSORS

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			University of Northern Iowa
			US Bank
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			Von Maur
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