

A Message to Our Community Addressing Recent Events

Dear members,

Recently, events occurred in our community that do not reflect GDI's values. I'd like to take some time to acknowledge what happened and to express my deepest apologies for the harm that was caused.

It was brought to my attention that two white Minneapolis chapter leaders were routinely excluding a black chapter leader from local chapter operations. The incident was brought to light, on August 19 - 21, 2018, when two black women voiced their experience on Twitter, highlighting that the two white women actively created an environment where people of color were left feeling unsafe and alienated.

As you know, our mission at Girl Develop It is to create welcoming, supportive opportunities for women and non-binary adults to learn software development skills. The behavior by these chapter leaders is in direct opposition to our mission. This event has highlighted the need for our organization to prioritize building a more diverse chapter leadership network that will support a more inclusive community overall.

As the leader of this organization, I should have addressed these events sooner with you — our community. Unfortunately, the harm caused by the initial incident in Minneapolis was compounded by our silence. We are learning from this experience that we need to respond immediately, and to be more transparent as an organization in order to demonstrate how seriously we take unacceptable behavior that negatively impacts the leaders — and any community members — in our organization.

At the time, GDI HQ didn't have the systems and support structures in place to remediate the harm that was caused. Without an incident response process, our ad hoc investigation into what happened in Minneapolis has taken longer than it should have. This prolonged process left our community lacking information and with many unanswered questions.

We are determined to learn and grow from this, ensuring that Girl Develop It's values are put into full effect in all interactions within our community. Not only are we examining our internal processes, but we have also engaged with outside consultants to support us in this work. We have published an [Inclusion Changelog](#) to share our progress.

Some highlights include:

- reviewing and improving of our Code of Conduct and the enforcement of it, and related HQ documents and processes;
- rebuilding our leadership recruitment processes with a focus on diversity and inclusion;
- the creation of an anonymous incident reporting process (more details below);

- engaging a multicultural community and organizational development consulting firm to support us in our short- and long-term inclusion goals, starting with a listening tour and restorative circle facilitation for the HQ team;
- increased board involvement and oversight for culture and inclusion.

We believe that this work is critically important, and we are taking these steps so that as we continue to grow the organization, it remains aligned with our values and reflects of our communities. We will continue to work to build an organization where everyone feels welcome and included.

As Executive Director, I've made it a priority to hire staff and recruit leaders and board members from all walks of life and diverse backgrounds, knowing that this is just one step in ensuring that we have multiple perspectives represented. I believe that focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels of the organization is necessary and urgent.

GDI has always been a community-powered movement, and we are grateful for your involvement. We want to hear from you, and we will continue to listen intently until we achieve our vision of a world where people of all genders and backgrounds are included in building a better future through technology.

Thank you,
Corinne Warnshuis
Executive Director

--

We welcome and encourage your feedback via info@girldevelopit.com. If you have an incident to report regarding behavior that violates our Code of Conduct, please use [this anonymous online form](#) or send details via email at incidents@girldevelopit.com. Both the anonymous form results and the email go to our Director of Operations and our Director of Programs.