

September 2021 Our Stories, Redmond Connections

Redmond Mayor Angela Birney

Hello, I'm Mayor Angela Birney and welcome to another video in my monthly "Our Stories, Redmond Connections" series.

"Welcoming," the word alone, is empowering, and when it's embraced with commitment, "welcoming" can be transformative. As a city, we strive to support equity and inclusion for everyone in our community by committing to make "welcoming" and all that it embodies one of our top priorities.

Recently we hired a full-time Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Manager who will guide our work on new initiatives, focus on strengthening our diverse communities, and encourage citywide cross-cultural interactions.

This month, as the City celebrates Welcoming Week and our diversity, I thought it would be interesting to ask the city's new DEI Manager and the CEO of the Muslim Community Resource Center, "what does a welcoming community mean to you?"

Cecilia Martinez-Vasquez, DEI Manager – City of Redmond

When I think of a welcoming community, I picture a community that takes care of its most marginalized and most in need so that everyone can enjoy a vibrant, healthy, and safe life. A community that focuses on building understanding, empathy, and compassion. A community that welcomes differences, similarities, and everything in between because it makes us better people, better neighbors, better humans. A welcoming community is one that humanizes others experiences so that we can learn together and from each other.

Nicky Sheriff, CEO – Muslim Community Resource Center

A welcoming community for me is where everyone feels safe and comfortable in being themselves and expressing their identities.

An inclusive community is when people of different culture, race, religion, age, and socio-economic status can come together to find a common ground and mutual interests without losing their identity. A community where each person shares a sense of belonging with other members and cares about their neighbor. It's a community for someone to call home away from home. A community that understands the language of smile and the power of love.

Redmond Mayor Angela Birney

For me...a welcoming community means a place for anyone regardless of who they are or where they come from can find connections and support. As Mayor and as a community member, I work every day to make Redmond a welcoming place by providing opportunities for people to learn from each other to create a stronger community.

Enough about me; I'm interested in hearing your thoughts. In the comments, please share what a welcoming community means to you using the hashtag #RedmondConnections.

And please join us in celebrating Welcoming Week. This year's theme is "Belonging Begins With Us," which is so true. Let's work together to harness our strengths, our collective talents, and individual contributions to build shared prosperity for everyone. Thank you for making Redmond a great place to live, work, play, and welcome everyone. See you next time!