IICF Los Angeles Women’s Leadership Forum Recognizes the Importance of Cultivating Diversity Before an Audience of Insurance Professionals

Industry leaders, Olympic Gold Medalist and Trailblazing Executives highlight the importance of driving a culture of diversity in the workplace.

Los Angeles, July 10, 2018 – The Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation (IICF) hosted a capacity crowd at its Women in Insurance Western Regional Forum at the Millennium Biltmore in Los Angeles, exploring diversity, inclusion and leadership in today’s workplace. Insurance and other professionals from around the country as well as Olympic gold medalist Stacy Dragila met to discuss “Driving Diversity: Cultivating Individual and Industry Confidence,” at the June 21st event.

“Leadership engagement is critical and paramount for real progress on diversity and inclusion; we need leaders to act as architects and owners. We cannot delegate this duty with a hands-off approach to chief diversity officers,” Ivy Kusinga, senior vice president and chief culture officer at Chubb, told the audience. She added that diversity and inclusion initiatives promote innovation and success for any business, providing compelling statistics to substantiate. According to a 2018 McKinsey & Company report on ‘Delivering through Diversity’, companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on their executive teams were 21 percent more likely to experience above-average profitability than those in fourth quartile.

Mandana Sadigh, senior vice president and treasurer of Mattel Inc., addressed the crowd on “C-Suite Readiness,” saying “Women should focus on breaking through their internal barriers in order to make progress towards closing the gender diversity gap.”

Stacy Dragila, the first woman Olympic pole vault champion, shared her journey with the audience. Her words focused on the institutional bias she faced early on as a pioneer of women’s pole vaulting, and her techniques and tenacity in becoming a leader and Olympic gold medalist in her sport. Her words inspired the audience to challenge against workplace stereotypes, encouraging attendees to “Do whatever you can to cultivate courage in your lives.”
The Los Angeles Forum featured enlightening speaker presentations and workshops designed to educate and provide actionable advice. These presentations focused on a variety of important issues, including:

- Types of bias and how to overcome them
- Conflict management and negotiation
- Inclusion through innovation
- Strength finding and sales effectiveness
- C-suite readiness, leadership skills and style

“Each of our forum’s speakers have their own diverse and unique backgrounds – ones that provide ideal illustration of how we can cultivate diverse experiences to promote greater individual and industry success,” said Melissa-Anne Duncan, executive director of the IICF Western Division. “Sending our forum attendees off more educated, encouraged and enthusiastic will help to inspire change and provide a catalyst for continued promotion of diversity and inclusion initiatives in the industry.”

Attendees found the forum useful and enjoyable. In a post-forum survey, 100 percent of responding attendees rated the forum “extremely valuable” or “valuable.” Additionally, 98 percent of respondents said they would “highly recommend” or “recommend” the forum to others.

Proceeds of the 2018 Western Regional Forum benefit the IICF Western Community Grants Program and the IICF Early Literacy Initiative, which helps deliver literacy resources to children in underserved communities. Through the IICF Early Literacy Initiative, in partnership with Sesame Workshop and insurance industry supporters, a donation of more than 2,300 copies of our “Book Buddies” storybooks to the nonprofit Jumpstart, in Los Angeles and San Francisco, was announced by Jon Axel, managing partner, The Liberty Company Insurance Brokers and chair of the IICF Western Division Board of Directors. A text-to-give campaign during the event lunch raised an additional $1,600 for the IICF Early Literacy Initiative.

The forum in Los Angeles was part of the IICF Women in Insurance Conference Series. IICF hosted similar events in New York on June 7, Chicago on June 14, in Dallas on June 19. For details on the events please contact Betsy Myatt at emyatt@iicf.com or visit http://womensconference.iicf.org/. Stay tuned for registration information for IICF’s three-day Women in Insurance Global Conference, hosted in New York at the Sheraton Times Square Hotel, June 12–14, 2019.

**About the Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation**

*Celebrating twenty-five years of helping communities and enriching lives, together.*

The Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation (IICF) is a unique nonprofit that unites the collective strengths of the insurance industry to help communities and enrich lives through
grants, volunteer service and leadership. Established in 1994, IICF is celebrating twenty-five years as the philanthropic foundation of the insurance industry, contributing over $31 million in community grants, along with 270,000 volunteer hours by more than 100,000 industry professionals. IICF reinvests locally where funds are raised, serving hundreds of charities and nonprofit organizations, for maximum community impact. IICF is a registered nonprofit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. Learn more at www.iicf.org or follow us on Twitter @doubleicf.