

## The Leaders Corner - Neelam Sahota, DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society

Blog  
Denise Baker  
February 17, 2015  
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Neelam is a change maker, a bundle of energy and smarts. Her first year with DIVERSEcity has been exciting and tumultuous, with a new building in development, major changes to Federal Grants representing 70% of their budget, and a significant shift in culture for the 40 year old organization.

It is obvious that Neelam likes life best when a lot is going on. Solving challenges and seeing how the puzzle fits together is a major motivator, driving her to strategically innovate and collaborate. She credits the support of her board chair, core team, and family for the success of last year's journey and is looking forward to the community benefiting from the new facility. So much more is possible now!

**Leader:** Neelam Sahota, CEO

**Organization:** [DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society](#)

**Tenure:** 1 year

**Leadership or life motto:** "I can & I will"

**Upcoming projects/challenges:** Finalizing a 3 year capital project (DIVERSECity's new community campus) and moving the agency to its new digs!

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### What is the biggest risk you ever took?

I have a fairly high tolerance for risk. I like to frame things as opportunities rather than risks so I don't really see anything I've done to date as a risk.

### If you ruled the world, what is the first thing you would change?

Get rid of wastage and inefficiency. I like to see results so anything that stands in the way of realizing progress is red tape. Our emerging leaders need to not just visualize change but truly action it.

### What do you do for fun?

Spend quality time with my family and friends. I'm very fortunate to have a solid community of loved ones that I can unwind with. I work hard but I like to play hard too.

### How do you nurture your sense of wellbeing?

I find that my spirituality, practicing yoga, and keeping a balanced life keeps me grounded. I've also never looked back - for me, that's a waste of energy.

### What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Being able to create and maintain nurturing relationships - be it with my family, friends, bosses, professors, colleagues, or direct reports. I believe in spreading roots. Like a tree, the more spread out your roots, the more easily you are able to weather storms, no matter which angle they come from. I always have a sense that someone has my back.

### Which words or phrases do you most overuse?

I catch myself saying "list" a little too often. I guess it's due to my penchant for getting things done!! (my husband's not a fan!)

### What kind of child were you?

If you ask my parents, they always say "focused" and knowing what I wanted and taking action to go for it. I think it was also a function of being the oldest child - we tend to "lead" by nature. It also doesn't help that my astrological sign is Leo and I'm born in the year of the Ox. All these signs say the same thing! Most importantly, I think was the fact that I was always curious and pushed the boundaries when I thought I should.

### How does someone impress you?

I find that I'm impressed with people who have a positive aura and an element of surprise. They don't have to be the most educated or in the highest ranks of their careers, but rather they are people who exude a calming presence because they are content and at peace with life. Positive energy vibrates around people like that and I'm blessed to have a few in my life.

**What trait do you see as an inhibitor in others?**

Self-denial or putting up a facade. Too many people think they know themselves and yet never take stock of the footprints they leave behind until it's too late.

**What is the best gift you have ever received?**

Life! It's a bit cliché to say it but literally it's life - and to enjoy it and live with intent because this isn't a dress rehearsal.

**What is the one thing you can't live without?**

Optimism - and of course my family.