Making a Difference in Your Community: Community Leadership Essentials

by Kristina Ricketts, Assistant Professor, Community and Leadership Development, University of Kentucky

It’s easy to find leadership opportunities in today’s society. They are all around us. What’s a little more difficult to identify are successful leaders - especially within the context of community. Different types of leadership are needed within different contexts and for different reasons. The social organization of community is unique from the military, a business, or an educational setting. A community leader is a person who works with others to develop and sustain the health of the community (Krile, 2006). Specifically, within the context of community:

- Leadership is not an end in itself, but a means to something else;
- (Community leadership) Is not a set of traits or a special position;
- Anyone who works to develop or sustain a healthy community can be considered a community leader;
- Community leaders are identified by what they do, not by an official position;
- Generally, communities don’t need outside leaders to make things happen. In other words, community leaders usually come from within. (Krile, 2006)

Effective leadership is imperative within today’s communities for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, communities of place continue to be where we choose to live and raise our families. Common sense tells us we want the best quality of life for our families. In addition, the communities of today are very different than they were 50 years ago. Carolyn Corbin has termed today’s communities as “Community 4.0”, describing how global technology has allowed people to choose their communities for quality of life and place rather than for the aspect of location (being close to the organization that employed them). Finally, the complexity of life has also affected how today’s communities act and interact.

“Community 4.0” communities are different from traditional communities of place, and this is reflected in their profile:

- Distributed power - power is distributed throughout the community, from grassroots organizations to leaders with formal titles
- Diversity - diversity is honored as the root of creativity
- Innovation and tradition - traditions are honored while innovation is fostered
- Global viewpoint - Community 4.0 realizes they are connected globally, and is constantly finding ways to benefit from this
- Calculated risk approach - being willing to step outside their comfort zone to move toward prosperity
- Acceptance of chaos - the recognition that change is constantly occurring, and being able to successfully deal with periods of chaos
- Long-term vision - the ability to “see” the future for a long timeline is a great predictor of a community’s success

(Story continued on page 2)
FROM THE DIRECTOR...

The theme of this newsletter revolves around leadership. We have wonderful resources within the College of Agriculture to support extension educators and the communities they serve (Kris Ricketts). We have programs designed to specifically foster new leaders, for instance the Kentucky Ag Leadership Program (led by Steve Isaacs and Will Snell) and the Kentucky Entrepreneurial Coaches Institute (a program led by Ron Hustedde to train coaches to foster entrepreneurship in rural communities). The Kentucky Nonprofit Network works with nonprofit organizations to create strong leaders and effective boards. Finally, we have the Center for Leadership Development that focuses on the research side of leadership development.

So I think it’s fair to say that leadership development is something the college values and will continue to promote for as far as we can see.

Speaking of leaders, it’s time for the South to say goodbye to one of its most influential leaders in the area of community and economic development. Dr. Bo Beaulieu will be leaving the Southern Rural Development Center at the end of March to take over the reins at Purdue’s Center for Regional Development. His move to Indiana means that no matter how far we try to draw the line that divides the South from the North, Indiana just won’t ever be considered part of the South. Bo’s leadership at SRDC over the last 15 years has been unparalleled.

The SRDC has been the foundation for community and economic development programming in the South and without its presence I am not sure where we would all be today. I know I personally have benefited from the tools and resources that the Center provides as I know many of you have as well. The future of the Regional Rural Development Centers remains unclear during tough federal fiscal times. Bo has worked so hard to make community and economic development programming a priority in DC and for that I know we are very thankful.

I feel fortunate that we will now have Bo as a neighbor to the North and I can promise we will continue to partner with him and his center and new synergies will be created where there were once none. However, the South needs to rally now to ensure the sustainability of community and economic development programming and to maintain the collaborations and cooperation that made us so successful over the last 15 years. Bo’s leadership for the South cannot be replaced, but I know I speak for the 13 southern states when I say that we will work hard to keep the momentum going. Bo, we wish you well in the next stage of your career.

Alison

Making a Difference in Your Community: Community Leadership Essentials

(Story continued from page 1)

Awareness that leadership differs from management - leadership defined as the ability to drive change resulting in a positive impact is as important as good management skills (i.e. planning, organizing, analyzing, etc.); recognizing the need for both is necessary and valuable

Smart – social as well as intellectual capital is important for success (Corbin, 2011)

As a direct result, Community 4.0 leaders must have unique skills to successfully lead these dynamic communities. Community 4.0 leaders need to have:
1. Vision
2. Purpose
3. Team orientation
4. Courage
5. Ethical character
6. Selflessness
7. Flexibility
8. Responsibility
9. Self-knowledge
10. Judgment
11. Interpersonal insight
12. Comfort with technology
13. Transformational mindset (Corbin, 2011)

It should be noted that while all of these are valuable leadership skills for today’s community leaders, finding an individual with all of these skills (and the ability to use them effectively) is rare. Perhaps this is why much community leadership these days is shared among many individuals, or performed within a committee or group.

So that begs the question - Are you a community leader? Try answering the questions below. Are you someone who:

- Wants to improve your community?
- Has something to contribute?
- Serves your community in a selfless way without consideration for your own agenda?
- Is willing to share power in order to cause a project to succeed?
- Doesn’t wait around for someone else to get the job done?

A positive response to any or all of these questions indicate you may already be a community leader, or are at least well on your way. Unlike other types of leadership, often community leaders identify themselves by becoming involved with a cause or issue they are passionate about. So if you are interested in making a difference as a leader within your community, the first step is identifying change you want to see. Once you have identified your cause or issue, other actions that community leaders undertake are:

**Listen to people** - listen to what other community members are saying. You need their input; listening leads to a more engaged community.

**Decide that you are the person to take responsibility for your community** - you have to make the decision to lead and view yourself as a community leader. What do you bring to the table? No one else can contribute what you can.

**Set specific goals** - set short-term as well as long-term goals. For example:

- Long-term goal: Reduce childhood obesity by 50% in my community by 2022.
- Short-term goal: Collaborate with other community members to develop a walking trail around my community by 2014.

**Develop a team** - it is much easier to encourage community action as part of a group, rather than as an individual

**Propose programs and policies** - What program or policy would help address/fix the issue you have identified?

**Get the work done** - often follow-through is the most difficult phase of all

**Recruit and teach others to become leaders** - the power behind community leadership is that it is shared leadership - and there is strength in numbers. The more individuals you recruit to help (who develop into leaders through the process) the lighter the “community leadership” load will be.

The bottom line is today’s communities are different, therefore we need a different type of leader to encourage community success. The good news is that we can all be community leaders - we just need to decide where to start!

**References**


**Kris is one of the CEDIK Extension Faculty.**

**You can contact her at k.ricketts@uky.edu**

The [Kentucky Extension Leadership Development Program](#) is one of Kris’ leadership development efforts.
Leadership development is a necessity in the world today as it was in 1956 when an assessment of leadership roles in Montgomery County was conducted by UK sociologists. (A copy of which is always kept close for inspiration to maintain a high quality program). Their findings then indicated a need for more trained leadership within the county, especially among minorities.

In the early 1990’s, a foundation was laid by the Extension Office and Chamber of Commerce to develop a community leadership program. The program became a reality in 1992. The Extension Office has always been the lead agency in curriculum development, facilitation of educational programs, and in support of the program. LMC is continuing to make an impact in the lives of those graduating and on the community in which they serve.

Annually, an evaluation is conducted to measure the impact of the program on the lives of graduates and the community. Positive results continue to accumulate. Examples are: nineteen classes have been conducted with 247 community leaders having graduated. Graduates are in active leadership roles on state boards, local boards, elected offices, civic organizations, churches, etc. Graduates are sought after by city and county officials to fill roles on boards and committees. The class of 2013 has eleven members.

In evaluations, participants continue to state an increase in knowledge, plans to become more involved in leadership roles, plans to make positive changes in their lives, and an increase in networking with other leaders. Monthly evaluations are always conducted and a majority of those reveal a rating of 9.6 on a 1-10 scale indicating strong curriculum is being maintained.

Class projects continue to make an impact on the community. Examples are: Rails to Trails, formation of a Foundation to support the local public library for its improvement, a recycling assessment program and most recently, a drug education program at the middle school level and a renovation of the local juvenile diversion center along with a self-esteem program for the teens housed there. Each class has completed some type of community service or enhancement project leaving a positive mark in the community.

The twelve member advisory committee of LMC are all graduates of the LMC program. They continue to hone their leadership skills as they guide the development and conduction of the annual program. They utilize class evaluations to enhance each monthly program. For the past few classes, both members of the class and the executive board have participated in the John Maxwell program entitled “The Leader Within You”, a resource provided by the County Extension Agent for ANR and taught by a local community leader.

The program begins each year with a weekend retreat at the Leadership Center in Jabez. Monthly sessions are then conducted that include: Quality of Life (two sessions), Community & Human

For more information about Extension Programming in Montgomery County please contact:

Ron Catchen
Extension Agent for Ag & Natural Resources
rcatchen@uky.edu
(859) 498-8741

“GRADUATES ARE IN ACTIVE LEADERSHIP ROLES ON STATE BOARDS, LOCAL BOARDS, ELECTED OFFICES, CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS, CHURCHES … [THEY] ARE SOUGHT AFTER BY CITY AND COUNTY OFFICIALS TO FILL ROLES ON BOARDS AND COMMITTEES.”
Teen Club and STAND:
Youth Leadership Programs in Muhlenberg County

By Tom Harrison, Extension Agent

As with all of my 4-H programs I strive to incorporate key elements of 4-H into our Teen programs. I pair teens with caring adults and create a sense of belonging. I provide teens opportunities to master new skills, especially communication and leadership. I provide teens with numerous opportunities to experience generosity and give back to our community. I provide our teens with opportunities to see themselves in the future, being key contributors to their community.

I work with teens in several of my 4-H programs: Horse Club, Shooting Sports, Clover buds, Livestock, Councils, just to name a few. My two key teen programs are Teen Club and STAND (Students Teaching about Negative Decisions.) My Teen Club is very active with 35 passionate members meeting twice monthly and my STAND group is 90 members strong meeting at least monthly. Both groups meet before school for 7:30 a.m. meetings as our middle and high school first periods do not begin until 8:45 a.m. Both groups meet at the Extension Office and transportation is then provided to schools from the office.

I personally serve as the key leader of our Teen Club.

Our County Judge Executive asked that I as a youth development professional and UK Cooperative Extension Service representative to spearhead an effort to work with Teens in combating substance abuse and other negative decisions. I brought together our Community Education Coordinator and 6 teens initially and organized STAND. Today we have 90 teens involved.

With both the Teen Club and STAND, I involve many community leaders who serve as role models for our teens. At most meetings we have a guest speaker, either informative or seeking our assistance. Teens develop relationships with these community leaders as they work together on various community projects. We’ve developed long standing relationships with many civic organizations. The Teen Club and STAND provide teens with similar interests the chance to work together thus
providing a sense of belonging.

Teens involved in these programs have the opportunity to master many skills, particularly communication and leadership skills. The following are a few examples of their many undertakings: teens plan and implement a summer day camp for 35 clover buds, teens plan and implement monthly clover bud meetings, teens plan and implement Red Ribbon Rallies for all 4th-12th grade students, teens present current programming impact to Chamber, Lions, and Rotary civic organizations, EYSC (Engaging Youth, Serving Community) teens conduct community forums and present anti bullying programs to all 5th grade students, teens serve on committees spearheading numerous service projects, teens work with Extension Agents to present Truth and Consequences to 250 Freshmen, teens present Extension Agent share sessions, teens present at the KY Volunteer Forum, teens present to the Board of Education and much more.

In the way of service, our biggest undertaking is raising the funds for our Food for Kids Backpack Program. Our Teen club raised over $50,000 last year for the program. The teens plan and implement a “Penguin Plunge” as their primary fundraiser. These teens not only raise the funds to buy the foods for the backpacks, they also deliver the backpacks to the schools on a weekly basis. This is a quite an undertaking for teenagers. Our teens also put on a safe night Halloween Party and New Year’s Eve Party for High School Students, with approximately 200 students attending each. Our teens work fall festivals, paint the town, park cars at sky fest and make a presence at numerous community events.

With all of these opportunities, teens are finding their place in our community. They’ve learned that they are valued and that they play an integral part in the planning and implementation of innovative community initiatives. They see clearly how they can contribute to their community as they reach adulthood.

Our teens have been recognized highly. They’ve received numerous KY Hall of Fame Awards at the KY Volunteer Forum for outstanding team and outstanding community service honors. 13 teens received achievement honors last year with 2 being Kentucky’s top 10 Gold Honor recipients. We’re not all work. We kicked this school year off with a white water rafting weekend excursion on the Ocoee, and a concert at the KY State Fair. 56 of us will go snow skiing next weekend and an end of year kayaking trip on the Ocoee is planned. Fortunately we have generous sponsors, the Felix E. Martin Jr. Foundation has awarded 4-H programming approximately $50K this past program year.

For more information about Extension Programming in Muhlenberg County please contact:

**Tom Harrison**
Extension Agent for 4-H Youth Development
tharriso@uky.edu
(270) 338-3124

Muhlenberg County teens traveled to Lexington in 2010 to attend a John Maxwell Leadership Conference.
CEDIK’s Statewide Advisory Council

On December 12th, 2012 our Statewide Advisory Council met in Lexington to learn more about CEDIK and to network with one another.

We had a wonderful discussion with our members who represent a diverse set of organizations committed to community and economic development in Kentucky.

You can visit our website for a complete listing of the people who sit on CEDIK’s advisory council.

Grant Funding Opportunities

DEADLINE SOON...

The Citizen’s Institute on Rural Design (CIRD) program offers rural communities the following: An annual competitive opportunity to host an intensive, two-and-a-half day community workshop, supported through a $7,000 stipend and in-kind technical assistance and design expertise valued at $35,000.

Informational conference calls and webinars on key design and planning topics for rural communities that will be open and freely available to communities nationwide. Web-based access to a wide range of rural design resources. CIRD will select as many as four communities to host CIRD workshops in the Summer and Fall of 2013.

There will be three conference calls before the submission deadline (3/5/13) to assist those applying.

Check out their website for the RFP: http://www.rural-design.org/

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES...

The Rural Development Leadership Network assists community leaders to strengthen their practical skills, knowledge and credentials while remaining involved in their community development work. Applications accepted on an ongoing basis.

For more information visit: http://www.raconline.org/funding/details.php?funding_id=685

COMING SOON...

ARC Flex-E-Grants, June to November 2013 Cycle

Brushy Fork Institute undertakes this program in partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the Kentucky Department for Local Government to provide training for community leaders and administer $380,000 in Flex-E-Grants for Kentucky’s distressed Appalachian counties. The Flex-E-Grant program was designed by the ARC to provide small investments in short-term projects that will build community capacity to mobilize local resources, gain leadership experience and strengthen community institutions and networks. Flex-E-Grants are small (up to $10,000) awards provided to communities for these capacity building projects.

For more information about Flex-E-Grants visit: http://www.berea.edu/brushy-fork-institute/arc-flex-e-grants-for-kentuckys-distressed-counties/
Upcoming Events & Important Dates

January 24, 2013
Urban Extension Forum 8:30am-4:30pm Lexington at Embassy Suites info

February 11, 2013
Webinar: “Engaged Advisory Committees” 12:30pm EST info

February 14, 2013
Webinar: “Top 10 Trends and Cool Tools in Social Media” 2pm EST info

March 7 & 8, 2013
Kentucky Health Literacy Summit Covington at Cincinnati Marriott registration

March 14, 2013
Webinar: “Pinterest for Your Business” 2pm EST info

9th Annual Tri-State Diversity Conference
February 21-22, 2013
Hebron, KY
http://ces.ca.uky.edu/tristatediversityconference/index.html

The theme of this year’s conference is Bridges to Cultural Inclusion. The goal of this conference is to network and link resources to help integrate diversity into programs, policies, and practices for creating community well-being. Organized by UK, KSU, OSU, and Purdue Extension.

Community Development Academy
March 25-29, 2013
St. Louis, MO
http://muconf.missouri.edu/commdevelopmentacademy/

The Community Development Academy is an intensive, experiential, five-day course offered by the University of Missouri Extension Community Development Program. Our three courses combine leading edge thinking with practical applications. We enhance the capacity of people to work effectively with a broad range of community issues.

Public Issues Leadership Development Conference
April 21-24, 2013
Alexandria, VA
http://jcep.org/pild-conference

This year’s conference theme is Public Issues and Leadership Development—What You CAN Do! At this conference, held in our Nation’s Capitol, you will have opportunities to hear from those who live and work in the area as well as leaders from other states who are involved in telling the Cooperative Extension story at the state and local level.

CEDIK QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to building Kentucky communities with a true sense of pride and place, rich natural and built amenities, and a strong economic base.