

STORIES FROM OUR NETWORK

SPRING/SUMMER 2018



Amplify



LEADING
from within

Leading From Within
invests in people who drive
and create change in Santa
Barbara County and beyond.

Through our leadership programs,
ongoing alumni education, and
impactful networks, we cultivate
leaders who are renewed, prepared,
connected, and collaborating for
the greater good of all.



What's your story

Leadership comes in many forms and sizes. It comes in the small and large moments and it comes from people at all levels in the organization. We want to lift up the fabric of the stories in the network we've created together. There are over 200 of you in Santa Barbara County. For our first edition of story telling, we invite you to celebrate the success of the leaders highlighted here. We hope it inspires you to think about your own story and we welcome you sharing it with us. The more we share our stories, the more we create a norm around the importance of social sector leadership.

Share your story:
leading-from-within.org/story

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We thank the Santa Barbara Foundation for its generous support of our programs and mission.



Welcome Letter

Dear Friend,

When I moved to Santa Barbara County nine years ago, I was surprised and pleased to find a vibrant, connected community that cares about the social good. The nonprofit world in particular feels uniquely connected and supportive. The secret sauce behind the strength of our beautiful central coast community is Leading From Within (LFW).

In "Bowling Alone" Robert Putnam informed us that our American community culture was eroding. We are facing a loss of social capital, a diminishing connection. A society that expects to thrive can ill afford to be without sound social bonds. At the heart of social capital is a sense of mutual trust. Somehow, in our local social sector, we have bucked the national trend, built connections, and forged authentic relationships.

"As more and more nonprofit professionals and volunteer leaders participate in LFW's programs, I find that there is a level of trust and understanding between and among us that is palpable."

Leading From Within has not only invested in leadership training, but has also invested in building a community network. As a result, nonprofits in Santa Barbara County are able to generate new ideas and develop unexpected partnerships. As more and more nonprofit professionals and volunteer leaders participate



"One of the marvelous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn't as individuals."

Jean Vanier

in LFW's programs, I find that there is a level of trust and understanding between and among us that is palpable. We have built a culture that values community, learning and leadership, self-care, and care for one another. I've lived in Cincinnati, in the Bay Area, in Los Angeles, and in New York. I have always sought out community and actively worked to build a network of support. The nonprofit community that has emerged from the alumni of the Leading From Within network is unique and powerful. I am so proud to be affiliated with it.

As I prepared to make my own professional transition, my LFW alumni community supported me every step of the way. I turned

to friends who I met through LFW to help me understand the new organization and evaluate my fit. Others in the alumni community have provided guidance and care as I step into my new role. I'm navigating a successor/predecessor relationship with a Courage to Lead lens that is helping us get through rough patches. I make sure to take some time in the midst of transition to think about the quality of leadership I want to provide and to make sure that my values are front and center and that they guide me as I try to learn fast.

More and more, I find that my colleagues have participated in one of the Leading From Within programs. Alumni from Courage to Lead,

Emerging Leaders, Leading for Community Impact, and Katherine Harvey Fellows are creating circles of trust and innovation. We're developing authentic relationships where we can bring our whole selves to our work of improving the world. We're building a movement. I invite you to read, to learn, and to share your story.

Lori Goodman

Executive Director, Isla Vista Youth Projects
Chair, Courage to Lead Alumni Council

Alejandra Gutierrez

Santa Barbara Unified School District | Director of the Family Service Center

Emerging Leaders Alum

Alejandra is a Santa Barbara local, having grown up intertwined in two different cultures. Her Mexican roots and American attitude have supported her to interweave the different niches that exist in our town, grow as a professional, and expose first-generation students to new opportunities. She tells her students regularly, “If I can do it, so can you.”

Alejandra has worked for the Santa Barbara Unified School District (SBUSD) for twelve years and goes beyond the school board’s expectations of providing basic tutoring by matching students with role models and community projects. She tells them, “Put on your game face and *do something*, because we all have something to contribute.” Her excitement resonates as she shares stories of first-generation students being accepted to universities and developing interests in prestigious professions. “They are my biggest cheerleaders,” she says.

“Put on your game face and *do something*, because we all have something to contribute.”

Drawing upon her will to inspire new pathways for Latino youth, Alejandra recently reached out to the community to identify a medical professional to mentor one of her students. The youth Alejandra supports often do not see

themselves in many professional realms due to cultural differences and access to resources. Alejandra knows differently. The Leading From Within program taught her there are no limits to what can be achieved. “It all goes back to exposure,” she shares, “knowing through our network that resources are available.”

Meanwhile, Alejandra has taken over directing the Parent/Teacher Association at Franklin Elementary, guiding parents with the resources and skills necessary to advocate for themselves and their children throughout their educational experience. “These parents grew up in a whole different culture and different value set where you don’t ask questions,” she says empathetically. “Getting parents of elementary students involved will create a pathway to success for first-generation youth.”

Alejandra leans into her Leading From Within network to broaden the support she offers community members. “Leading From Within has allowed me to have a network of peers I can count on, and more importantly given me that boost of confidence I need to grow as a professional.”

For example, Alejandra recently began collaborating with the New Beginnings Counseling Center to provide undocumented families free monthly counseling. She also utilized the connections made through Leading From Within to supply families with free food bags from the Foodbank of Santa Barbara in response to disaster recovery this past January. This initiated a new emergency pantry and



monthly produce market for families in east side neighborhoods, which has already served up to 85 families.

It should come as no surprise Alejandra was awarded 2017-18 Classified Employee by

SBUSD. They express, “Her city-wide popularity is testimony that the word has spread about her effort to connect community members to services.” Naturally, her goals are set high for what she has planned next. “We can be a powerhouse if we work together,” she says.



Ben Romo

**Santa Barbara County Office of
Emergency Management | Community
Recovery and Engagement Coordinator**

Katherine Harvey Fellows Alum
Leading From Within Board Member

Ben Romo draws inspiration from his personal experience as he helps lead in disaster relief for our community. “I had friends plucked from their roofs, others who lost their homes, and a good friend who saved his parents’ lives. I’ve heard devastating stories that cross socioeconomic backgrounds and understand how profoundly impactful this event has been.” In the wake of the Thomas Fire and Montecito debris flows, Ben accepted the appointment as the Management Recovery and Community Engagement Coordinator for the Office of Emergency Management. “It’s extremely rewarding to help people who are in a state of uncertainty and trauma on their path back to normalcy,” he says.

Ben has spent decades working in the social sector. Beginning with many years running political campaigns (for both Walter and Lois Capps), Ben served most recently as Executive Director of First 5 of Santa Barbara County, where he oversaw programs that promote healthy development and school readiness in the critical first five years of life. Prior to this, Ben was director of the Santa Barbara County Education Office’s Center for Community Education, where he was widely credited with expanding the Partners in Education program, supporting homeless and foster children and putting computers in low-income homes.

His background and experience informs his approach in his new role as liaison between residents, nonprofits, and the county in preparedness, recovery, and rebuilding efforts. He credits Santa Barbara organizations and the philanthropists who fund them for the critical role they are playing in disaster recovery and response. “To meet the increased need and be part of the solution demonstrates the strength and importance of Santa Barbara’s social sector,” he said.

“The need for strong social sector organizations was important before the Thomas Fire, and now that need is enormous,” Ben explains. And this doesn’t happen overnight. Social sector leaders and their organizations must have a baseline capacity to effectively respond to disaster, and Ben credits Leading From Within’s support of nonprofit leaders with contributing to this critical, foundational strength. He expresses the importance of having social sector leaders who understand one another’s perspectives, and know and trust each other. “That’s where Leading From Within’s programs are invaluable – providing a framework, shared set of principles, and personal connections.”

Ben was just 28 years old when he was nominated for the Katherine Harvey Fellows (KHF) program. “I was still a kid and Susan Gulbransen – a leader in the community who I respect very much – had recommended me for this program. I didn’t know what it was, but I trusted her. I came out with what I would later learn was an extremely important basis for understanding nonprofit work, philanthropy and investing in our community in strategic ways,” he says. “This would come to benefit me tremendously in my career.”

Ben says the KHF program also gave him an entrée into a world where he didn’t have a lot of connections. Those connections, particularly with the Santa Barbara Foundation, strengthened his career trajectory. “Personal relationships are everything – I can call Leading From Within’s alumni network and know that we speak the same language and have the same commitment.”

And yet, Ben identifies a pressing need to truly develop – and sustain – a thriving, effective social sector. For this, the model must change. “People need to better understand what it takes to really live and survive here,” Ben says. He explains that too many nonprofit leaders work long hours with little compensation. “Nonprofits want to please donors by showing more people served, which ends up spreading people and organizations dangerously thin.”

“If we’re not building the capacity of our people then we can’t grow as a community.”

“Our organizations are our people and if we’re not building the capacity of our people then we can’t grow as a community,” he says with precision. “People need to earn enough to survive here and we need to support current and rising nonprofit leaders so that they can succeed, or we run the risk of losing them, and ultimately the community suffers.”

Ben’s forward-thinking advocacy on behalf of the social sector stands to benefit the community as a whole. “This is a community of people who share a common purpose and that purpose is greater than them. The more we know and work with each other the more collaborative – and less competitive – we become.”

The Leading From Within Alumni Network: The numbers behind the stories

260
leaders

who focus on advancing the common good and improving local communities.

Our programs served:



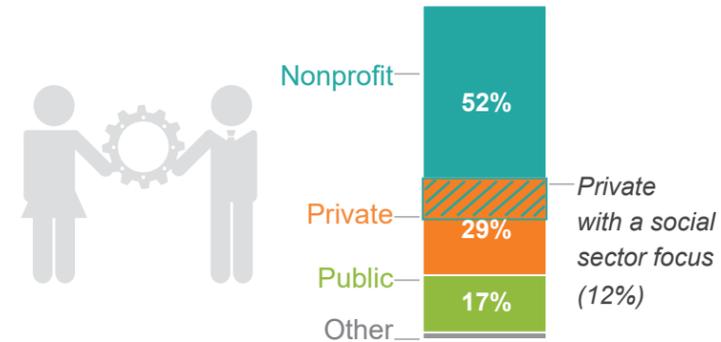
200+
organizations

from the Santa Barbara County social sector are served by LFW alumni.¹

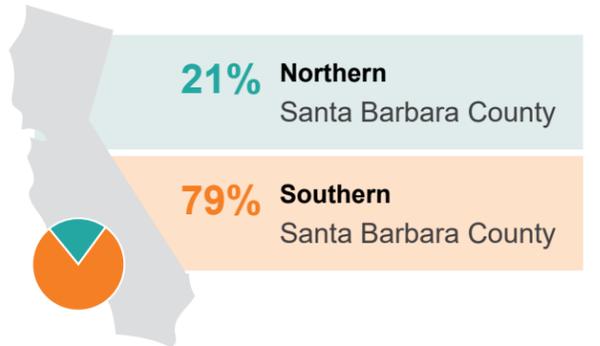
¹ Of the 279 leaders who served in Santa Barbara County while participating in LFW Leadership Programs, 260 (93%) remain in the county. The 19 leaders who no longer serve Santa Barbara County are not included in the data reflected here, nor are the additional 53 leaders from outside of Santa Barbara County who have participated in LFW programs.

We seek to cultivate a **diverse network of leaders** who work across boundaries to advance the common good.

LFW alumni serve professionally in the nonprofit, private, and public sectors.



LFW alumni serve throughout Santa Barbara County.

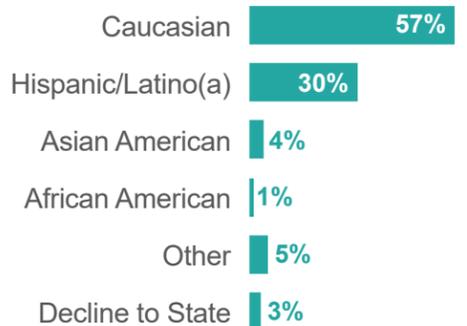


LFW alumni focus on a variety of issue areas.²

- 28% Health & Human Services
- 23% Public, Societal, & Community Improvement
- 17% Education
- 10% Professional Services
- 8% Arts, Culture, Humanities
- 6% Youth Development
- 5% Environment
- 2% International Development/Disaster Relief
- 2% Housing & Homelessness

We are committed to cultivating an alumni community that is diverse in terms of race and ethnicity.

Our current participants identify as:³



² LFW alumni serve professionally with Santa Barbara County organizations that have a social sector mission. This data represents the primary issue focus of the organizations for which they work.

³ We are committed to cultivating a community of leaders that reflects the racial and ethnic makeup of our county. Our historical data does not allow accurate insight into the makeup of our current alumni community. In 2018, we plan to improve our data collection to support our progress toward this goal.

Michael Heck

Community Solutions, Inc. | State Director
Leading for Community Impact Alum

Michael's path to leadership was anything but ordinary as someone who spent ten years of his life in prison. And yet, his uncharacteristic background led to his present success and strong desire to help other ex-offenders change the course of their lives. As a participant in Leading From Within's inaugural Leading for Community Impact (LCI) cohort, Michael gained the confidence, skills, and inspiration he needed to establish a fully funded vocational training program allowing ex-convicts to become healthy citizens, thereby reducing the level of recidivism in our country. Michael says his goal is to set a precedent for how California – and eventually the nation – vocationalizes ex-offenders.

"It wasn't until I learned about inspiring a shared vision, managing up, and challenging the process that my company was willing, for the first time in its 54 year history, to enter into a contract without knowing where the funding was coming from," said Michael. Though the subject is serious, Michael is animated when describing his vision. "Cognitive restructuring and economic stability work hand in hand," he explains, "and we'll be able to not only measure the positive impact, but feel it too."

Having grown up in what he describes as an "outlaw family", Michael was accustomed to crime and spent many years of his own life cycling in and out of jail and prison. Yet, Michael says "a light went on somewhere along the way" which fueled him to break the pattern. "I wanted to learn how to be a citizen



and began by acknowledging that I had the power to change my life."

Michael's motivation to do well and give back to the community was lifted when he began working for Community Solutions, Inc. (CSI) six years ago. CSI is an all-encompassing support system that provides transitional housing, job training, cognitive behavioral therapy, and other community-based alternatives to incarceration for parole clients. "Knowing who I am and fulfilling the role of a contributing citizen inspired me to help others achieve that as well," he shares.

When beginning the LCI program, Michael was hesitant to share his past with his classmates and facilitators, but his strong

desire to learn and advance allowed him to let down his guard and gain tremendous confidence as a leader. "The year that I spent with LCI has produced, above all, a confidence in not only what I am doing, but why I am doing it."

Michael is especially energized around having learned the importance of emotional intelligence and modeling. "I now understand that emotions convey priceless information, and I've witnessed a measurable improvement in teamwork and connectivity once I allowed employees to share their feelings," he explains.

Michael's tenacity in leadership was recently recognized with the promotion from Program Manager to State Director.

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Leading From Within is enormously proud to support a leader like Michael in enabling his professional skills and truly incredible vision – one that is now helping 99 ex-convicts pursue their own paths to success.

Danna D. McGrew

Bartlett, Pringle & Wolf, LLP | CPA and Partner

Katherine Harvey Fellows Alum

Danna's talents extend well beyond her accounting and business expertise. With exceptional candor and positivity, Danna juggles a big family, full-time career as an audit and accounting services partner, and four current boards, which include the Santa Barbara Scholarship Foundation, the South Coast Business & Technology Steering Committee, the Storyteller Board, and the Santa Barbara Foundation. She was also instrumental in the planning of Leading From Within's inaugural Possibility Lab.

Danna can trace her passion for service to a long line of first responders. Her father is the former Fire Chief of Santa Barbara and her brother served as President of the Police Officers Association and a founding member of the Police Foundation.

Danna, however, chose a career path more akin to her mother's in accounting. As a child, Danna was a whiz with numbers and this talent led her through school to working her way up over 25 years from staff accountant to partner in the local firm, Bartlett, Pringle & Wolf, LLP (BPW).

In her very limited spare time, Danna supports causes she deeply cares about. As a mother of four, she recognizes the value of early childhood education and joined the Storyteller Children's Center Board to ensure homeless children receive a quality preschool experience. At the other end of the spectrum, Danna served as chair of the Alzheimer's Association,

feeling drawn to help given the potential of the disease to bankrupt our national economy, and of course to support the many families affected. Danna has also served for many years on the finance and audit committees of the Santa Barbara Foundation, a connection gained through the Katherine Harvey Fellows (KHF) program.

"I love to help others, learn, grow, and build relationships," says Danna. At a young age, her parents instilled in her the importance of giving back. From this, she ensures that BPW integrates service into the corporate culture. Danna credits the KHF program for honing her skills in both the social and for-profit sectors.

"I love to help others, learn, grow, and build relationships."

"The KHF program broadened my perspective of how nonprofits operate, beyond finance and audit, and built my confidence to lead on multiple nonprofit boards. This in-depth understanding allowed me to feel more comfortable initiating new projects and accepting leadership roles," she explains.

It's not surprising that this driven, tenacious go-getter received the 2007 "Accountant of the Year" accolade, "Who's Who in Professional Services," and the *Pacific Coast Business Times* "40 Under 40" and "Top 50 Women in Business" awards. She was also nominated by the California Society of CPAs as 2017 Women



to Watch in the Experienced Leaders category. Her humble, understated nature belies her impact on policies and programs that benefit hundreds of Santa Barbara residents.

For Danna, joy comes from those she's met along the way.

"One of the greatest gifts of the Katherine Harvey Fellows program was the people I met both in my cohort class as well as consultants who presented on key topics. I'm now able to call on these experts to address my business and board colleagues, as needed. Many have become close friends," she says.

Above all, however, Danna is most proud of her children. She was a single mother to her two older children (now 28 and 20 years old), both of whom proudly followed in her footsteps and work for the top business consulting and accounting firm, Deloitte. She also has twin teenagers with husband John Britton, who is also a partner at BPW.

Danna is committed to her hometown of Santa Barbara – and given her outstanding track record of service, the town is lucky to have her. She is a quiet yet powerful leader whose compassion is contagious.



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**Support people who drive
and create change in
Santa Barbara County**

Contact Carrie Randolph at
carrie@leading-from-within.org or
805-770-3232 or visit our website
at www.leading-from-within.org