

by Zach Rosen

Leading From Within



Leading From Within empowers community leaders with both inner and communal skills (photo by Santa Relis)

It is well known that the area hosts a plethora of nonprofits, covering many needs and missions. There tends to be a large focus on supporting the mission of the nonprofit and often times there is not as much consideration given to the leaders actually running the organization. Nonprofits are known to have a high rate of attrition and burnout from its employees. I recently sat down with Ed France from Leading From Within to discuss how their programs are developing nonprofit leaders and helping them avoid burnout by identifying their own mission and gifts. His own journey with the organization began six years ago while attending their main Courage To Lead program. He personally experienced the value that Leading From Within brought towards reenergizing his work with Bici Centro, which he ran for 12 years. Now as the Executive Director of

Leading From Within (LFW) he is helping hone the craft of current and future nonprofit leaders.

Established in 2008, the main principles of the LFW programming stems from the work of Parker J. Palmer, Ph.D. at the Center for Courage & Renewal. Ed emphasizes that LFW is not a professional development program, and their offerings are based around courage and renewal methodology. Part of the LFW programming centers on the inner journey and identifying one's authentic voice and the gift that you truly want to give. "Part of how we invest in ourselves is how we think about our work." Ed identifies this as an important process in avoiding burnout. "When you offer your true gift to the world, it naturally replenishes itself." These self-energizing gifts help bring sustainable roles and tasks to nonprofit leaders that allow them to thrive and grow within



The range of programs offered by Leading From Within are designed to support to all levels of leadership (photo by Santa Relis)

the organization and the community, instead of burnout. These programs also bring leaders together to help them move past mindsets of scarcity and competition. By having leaders and nonprofits build trust and connection between one another, everyone can work together to create a bigger impact on the community.

Courage To Lead

The main offering of Leading From Within is the Courage To Lead Program (CTL). Each iteration of the CTL takes about two dozen nonprofit executive leaders on an inner journey spanning five three-day retreats over 12 months at the picturesque Pacifica Graduate Institute campus. Since enrolling in the program is a time commitment, LFW offers an Introductory Retreat program so that potential participants can get a glimpse into the lessons that they have to offer. The program is largely focused on nonprofit executive directors, however is not limited to that role and does allow space for other positions of management in nonprofits and those who are on a clearly rising to a leadership position. The cost of CTL reflects their program operating expenses, however sponsorships are offered since they understand that some leaders and associated nonprofits may not be able to afford to send their executive director to the program.

While CTL is the core programming that the Leading From Within organization centers around, over the years they have introduced other programs that deliver similar concepts and techniques. The Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) is focused on mid-level employees and those who have established roles in the nonprofit and social sectors that want to develop their leadership skills. This shorter program takes participants through ten monthly sessions lasting a full day each. LFW is currently offering enrollment to the ELP with info sessions happening locally on February 27 at the Braille Institute. A while back, Leading From Within noticed the potential and need for support of the nonprofits found

around the north counties and began a new program specifically with that region in mind. Leading for Community Impact (LCI) spans the Santa Maria, Lompoc and Santa Ynez Valley, as well as the surrounding areas. This program brings together leaders and members of the nonprofit and social sectors from the north county region to explore their own leadership skills and build relationships with the other nonprofits in the area.

The Katherine Harvey Fellows program is broader in its intended participants and is focused on anyone who is looking to further their impact on the community. Now in its 20th year, this program brings together lessons in leadership development and social impact split into four components: Values Exploration, Community Education, Experiential Learning, and Connecting. Through monthly two-hour meetings over a period of 18 months, participants learn to identify the values that speak to them while gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges facing Santa Barbara County. With group projects and experiential work, these future leaders develop a better knowledge of themselves and establish meaningful connections in the area. Rather than program fees, the Katherine Harvey Fellows program asks participants for a personal contribution of any amount. From the support of the Santa Barbara Foundation, Montecito Bank & Trust, and other sponsors, all of these programs are able to be offered to participants at a fraction of their operating expense.

These different programs create an environment that allows participants to personally and professionally develop, culminating in hands-on work and capstone projects that give participants the opportunity to apply their newfound strategic thinking and project building lessons to the community. The combination of inner development and communal work establishes an effective bond of trust and connection with both themselves and their peers, ultimately empowering them to lead from within. ✪/

**Thank you to the
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