

2025
HIGHLIGHTS

Meeting the Moment



LEADING
from within



Our Mission

Leading From Within equips community changemakers to grow their ability to lead, collaborate, and drive solutions.



Hello, our Leading From Within community!

There's an energy in the air at Leading From Within (LFW), the kind that comes when a team finds its rhythm. The three of us (Rubi, Elizabeth, and Katya) have been diving into the work, meeting incredible leaders, and learning alongside one another. The office feels alive with laughter, ideas, and purpose, a reflection of the growing community of leaders we're so proud to serve.

We both were compelled to shift our professional direction to take on these new roles so we could use our time and talents to do more for our own community. LFW is the nexus of community leaders and given this unique position, we're planning to meet the needs of our Alumni Fellows, our new Fellows, future Fellows, and the entire eco-system.

That is why for our first months, we have intentionally been listening to you. This is helping us re-confirm our existing proven programs but also tailoring them and creating new initiatives to meet new needs. And we want to share this with you today so that you may consider investing with us. We are poised to meet the moment in lifting up community leaders with new services, excited about possibilities.

With gratitude,

Katya and Elizabeth

KEY TAKE-AWAY #1

Community leaders are facing government budget cuts, ICE raids, and burnout.

They need a place to convene, be supported, learn and collaborate with their peers.

How are we meeting this need?

The future looks uncertain for many of our community leaders right now which is why our two newest programs—**Growing Edge Leaders (GEL)** and **Women of Color Leadership Circle** are essential at this time. This September, 25 seasoned nonprofit leaders graduated as our first **GEL** groups. Over 12 months, LFW Founder Ken Saxon and facilitator Judy Guillermo-Newton guided these leaders to learn, lean on each other, and recharge their leadership so that they in turn advance community well-being and model this kind of leadership to others within their organizations and beyond.

Our newest alumni have asked for a new offering, a **Women of Color Leadership Circle**, and we are starting this in early 2026. We are creating this for Executive Directors and CEOs with significant organizational responsibilities. This is more than a professional development program; it is a community of belonging where leaders can find solidarity, sharpen their leadership, and strengthen their resilience while continuing to drive impact within their organizations and communities.



“There’s no other space in Santa Barbara that invests in leadership like this, Leading From Within recognizes that when you invest in people, that’s how you make long-term change that truly benefits our community.”

LAUREN TRUJILLO

Executive Director of the Santa Barbara Library Foundation and new GEL & KHF alum

KEY TAKE-AWAY #2

We all need to roll up our sleeves and use our time, treasure, and talent to help our community.

We can't leave it all to nonprofit leaders.

How are we meeting this need?

Welcome back, **Katherine Harvey Fellows (KHF)**! Our KHF program, originally started at the Santa Barbara Foundation in 2000, is specially designed to prepare individuals who want to expand their impact in the community—those working in business, philanthropy, law, faith, education, health, government, and other sectors that strengthen the Central Coast. We also encourage participation from individuals with diverse backgrounds, lived experiences, and from all corners of our counties. Can you imagine the ripple effect if we all put our talent and skills to work for the community? This could be through nonprofit board participation, mentorship, career shifts, effective collaboration/partnerships, and social impact initiatives.

Peter Karoff, one of our most inspiring facilitators and mentors, always wanted to make sure KHF's tent was big enough. That's why we are reaching far and wide in recruiting. And it is why Peter's daughter, Deb Karoff, has kicked off the Peter Karoff Fund in partnership with LFW to provide scholarships for our upcoming KHF cohorts.



“With deep alignment of personal convictions with community purpose, applying one’s knowledge and skills becomes irresistible. There is a sense of acute purpose that stretches far beyond one’s individual interests.”

PETER KAROFF



**Choose to
support
the Peter
Karoff Fund**



KEY TAKE-AWAY #3

The stress and uncertainty of these times have taken a toll on long-time leaders and we must support them but also lift up the next generation of leaders.

How are we meeting this need?

The 11th cohort of our **Emerging Leaders Program** recently concluded their journey with joy and gratitude, celebrating their growth and shared experiences during the October Changemakers Celebration, where they reflected on being Rooted in Growth and Rising in Leadership. Over the course of a year, they engaged in workshops on emotional intelligence, evaluative thinking, conflict resolution, human resources, board development, and strategic planning, all designed to strengthen their leadership and impact. This built a community of connected leaders who are better able to sustain their social sector commitment and who share a mindset that “we’re all in this together.”

In **Leading for Community Impact (LCI)**, we invest in leaders in the Santa Maria, Lompoc, Santa Ynez Valley and surrounding areas who are on the front lines of serving many of the Central Coast’s most vulnerable residents. Currently, 17 leaders are going through a rigorous, relevant, and applied curriculum on leadership skills and management strategies. Together, they are building the capacity and confidence to strengthen their organizations and create lasting change in our community.



“This program is unique and potent education for social sector leaders in our community. Adaptability, Emotional Intelligence, and Growth Mindset fluency will shape the future of our nonprofits. We, are the change makers of tomorrow.”

SARAH ABRAMS, new ELP alum



Evaluative Frameworks

- Identifying Stakeholders
- Supporting Training
- Informing Program Planning or Development
- Informing Strategy Development
- Quality Assurance
- Accountability
- Communication / Reporting
- Informing Learning and Training



A Slice of Our Impact

700+ Alumni

**Addressing more than 10
different issue areas**

(e.g., environmental protection,
human services, health,
education, immigration,
arts and culture)

82% of leaders

from our newest program,

Growing Edge Leaders,
feel “a lot” or “extremely
better” equipped to do
their job better.

from **100+**
organizations

in the past 5 years

including the Foodbank,
Community Environmental
Council, Girls Inc.

Investing In People Who Drive & Create Change



INDIVIDUALS

Growing as Leaders

PEERS

Sustaining & Supporting Each Other

COLLABORATORS

Benefiting our Whole Community

Our Team

Board Members

Ashley Costa

Lompoc Valley Community
Healthcare Organization

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Family Service Agency

Eder Gaona-Macedo

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Community
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Jennifer Reitz

Executive Coach &
Consultant

Ken Saxon

LFW Founder

Sigrid Wright

Community Environmental
Council



Staff

Katya Armistead

Co-Executive Director

Elizabeth Scharpf

Co-Executive Director

Rubi Castellanos

Operations Director



Instructors, Coordinators & Key Consultants

Katya Armistead

Miles Ashlock

Lisa Bass

Victoria Colon

Alex Dorsey

Judy Guillermo-Newton

Judy Hawkins

Stephanie Logan

Christa Roth

Danielle Quiñones-Ortega

Ken Saxon

Julie Sorenson



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“I’ve learned that being authentic and staying true to your values will help you lead with integrity, heart, and purpose — none of us leads alone. We all need a village — Emerging Leaders has become my new village.”

EDUARDO CAPRISTO

Housing Authority of Santa Barbara
and new ELP alum



LEADING
from within

Invest in our leaders today

Leading-From-Within.org

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