



Pew Partnership
FOR CIVIC CHANGE

Nonprofit Organizations Need to Mobilize Support and Resources

LeadershipPlenty® Can Help

LeadershipPLENTY®
Success Stories



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LeadershipPlenty® can easily act as a complement to the extensive training offered by national and regional organizations to equip their members to deliver specific programs. For example, a national association of affordable housing providers no doubt already has a wide array of training opportunities related to housing-specific issues. However, without broader support in the community, local affiliates often have difficulty implementing ambitious plans. LeadershipPlenty® is a tool local affiliates can use to convene a broad base of stakeholders and equip them to work together, negotiate differences, and move forward on specific plans in the community.

In communities where LeadershipPlenty® has been implemented, graduates have worked together to mobilize communities by either creating new organizations or, perhaps more importantly, reinvigorating existing – but fatigued – organizations. For instance, a number of LeadershipPlenty® graduates in Parkston, South Dakota have revived the community’s local development corporation. The corporation now receives city funding and has become a member of the Southeast Enterprise Facilitation Project, a program that provides grassroots business development assistance. Graduates also helped facilitate the formation of the Parkston Area Foundation; the foundation has a goal of \$1 million in assets, within a few weeks of forming the group had already raised \$100,000. Several LeadershipPlenty® graduates sit on the foundation’s board and have assisted the group with its local fundraising efforts.

The turnaround in Parkston is remarkable in terms of its scope but sometimes what is needed are local leaders who recognize an immediate pressing need and mobilize to meet that need. Such was the case in Arlington, South Dakota, where residents were faced with preparations for the town’s 125th Anniversary celebration with little community support. After a number of years of



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declining membership the Arlington Community Club had been reduced to three or four individuals who organized an annual street dance fundraiser but didn't have time for much else. Monthly meetings were the same handful of individuals and, in the words of one local community development expert, "the Community Club was not exactly a robust organization." LeadershipPlenty® graduates got involved with the club, immediately focused their attention on the group's membership problems, and set to work solving the problem. At the next meeting over 20 people were in attendance, allowing the group to confidently begin preparations for celebrating the town's anniversary.

LeadershipPlenty® graduates are also trained to recognize and work to bridge differences between community members in order to have a broad coalition of support for community development efforts. In Okolona, Mississippi LeadershipPlenty® graduates recognized that racial division was a serious problem that impeded the efforts of citizens to work together for the community good. Through the auspices of the William Winter Institute at the University of Mississippi the graduates organized a racial reconciliation meeting of diverse citizens including elected officials, businessmen, clergy, and retirees. Participants talked about their experiences with race and, as the local Daily Journal reported, "Sometime during the telling of these stories this week, an invisible barrier fell, revealing pieces of the larger puzzle this community has been struggling with for years. The diverse group of people ... became equals, seeing each other through different eyes."

The ability of a community to work together is vital to development but so is the ability to set goals and organize the work necessary to attain them. LeadershipPlenty® graduates have identi-



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fied needs and organized projects to meet them in locales across the United States. LeadershipPlenty® graduates in Custer, South Dakota are using a community assessment survey and assistance from a landscape architect, the city council, the chamber of commerce, and the South Dakota Department of Transportation to create a plan to upgrade the vistas from the road into their community. As one LeadershipPlenty® graduate put it, “Custer does not currently present a welcoming or aesthetically pleasing perspective for visitors coming here from Mt. Rushmore.” Changes to the vistas may come as early as Summer 2006.

There is no shortage of stories about what LeadershipPlenty® graduates have set to work doing. They have registered over 8,000 new voters from schools in the Pensacola, Florida area using a nonpartisan informational campaign ... graduates in Marshall County, Mississippi have organized beautification efforts in their local area ... they are implementing a feasibility study for a community wellness center in Winner, South Dakota and are working towards the creation of new community soccer fields in the Lake Francis Case region of South Dakota ... a graduate has gained a seat on their tribal council in the Moscow, Idaho area and credits LeadershipPlenty® with this success ... and graduates are working to preserve a historical cemetery in downtown Pensacola, FL while others are leading a food drive for the elderly in that same city.

There is a long list of new community initiatives created, staffed, and driven by LeadershipPlenty® graduates across the country. For national and regional organizations a LeadershipPlenty® Institute for local affiliates is an investment that yields these types of results where communities come together to successfully address problems.