

# Community Leadership

A partnership between community organizations and Libraries, Community and Voluntary Services Branch (LVCS), Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Wild Rose Foundation, Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture

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## The Community Leadership Movement

All around the province, people come together in their communities to envision and create new possibilities for their collective future. Despite their differences in age, background and perspective, they share a belief that working together, using their minds, hearts and hands, they can help to shape the world we live in.

While each organization working in the community is distinct, responding to its own unique context, all the efforts of individuals and community groups reveal a few common beliefs: that human beings can unite around shared meaning; that each person's

contribution is vital to a flourishing community; and that creating a culture of public learning and civic engagement that connects generations and cultures is at the heart of self and social transformation. These beliefs translate into positive and inspiring images, ideas and actions.

There is also growing recognition that though individual group effort is part of the solution, a convergence of effort on many fronts is needed to deal with the complex, systemic challenges we face, thus, the need for meaningful and productive collaboration.

(con't pg.2)

## Welcome...

This newsletter provides you information about leadership development in Alberta. Its purpose is threefold:

1. To provide you with an opportunity to share information, experiences and approaches to leadership development;
2. To begin to make connections between the people and organizations that develop and deliver leadership workshops, courses and programs
3. To support continued research and learning for the kind of leadership our communities need in the future and perhaps... a provincial strategy.

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Learning Leadership from History...

The Persons Case is a legal history milestone in Canada. Five women from Alberta, known as the Famous Five, asked the Supreme Court of Canada to declare that women were persons under the law; after the Supreme Court turned them down, they appealed to the British Privy Council. The Privy Council found for the women on October 18, 1929, declaring that women were persons under the law.

# The Community Leadership Movement (con't)

With access to global information, the understanding and sense of responsibility to others in the province, country and world is influencing how leadership is evolving. People are seeing themselves in communities larger than their own geographic locality - the community of humanity and the community of life. This is evident in the interest and commitment to environmental stewardship and in the growth of social justice groups. This evolution has an impact on leadership development as it requires an expanded focus and a more sophisticated set of competencies.

Recognizing the benefits of collective and public learning, many communities have developed a leadership program specifically focused on community leadership. The first “community leadership program” was launched in Philadelphia in the



late 1950's in response to racial tensions in that city. Other American cities followed the Philadelphia example, recognizing that leadership was key to building strong, unified communities. There is a network with over 700 community leadership programs throughout the world today, including 21 in Canada in such places as Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Wood Buffalo, Ottawa, Vancouver, Victoria, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, and Waterloo. There is also a national network in Canada that works to provide peer support between the

community programs.

Community leadership programs vary in their programs, but all are committed to creating an environment for people from diverse backgrounds and sectors to learn, strive and care together.

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## The Goal: Well-Rounded Leaders

What is the purpose of leadership development?

Henein and Morrisette in their book, “Made in Canada Leadership” describe a well rounded leader as one who can interpret events, detect patterns, decipher trends and most importantly “formulate reasoned answers to unpredictable events: judgment, wisdom response instead of knee-jerk reaction”.

Ken Lowe of the Action Studies Institute defines a leader as someone with wisdom, who has the ability to think and act independently and creatively when appropriate (self-authorized), who shows judgment by seeing what needs to be done (and what ought not to be done) and takes action applying disciplines and in-depth and broad understanding of consequences and impact.

Key elements to consider in your programs are:

- Broad knowledge of the world—how it works and how we fit into the larger context
- Big -picture thinking—training the mind to work at the conceptual level, noticing linkages and patterns below the surface, within and across systems
- Adaptive capacity and initiative—ability to apply discipline to our thinking, create new realities and move beyond the comfort of convention
- Social responsibility—leadership first and foremost being an act of service
- Balance—between individual and community learning, between content and process, theory and practice.



## A Youth at the Global Youth Assembly

Imagine a conference centre packed with hundreds of youth from Alberta and around the globe. Picture young adults dispersed throughout the crowd sporting brown and navy t-shirts, passing off laptops and hurriedly handing out name tags. Throw in a handful or two of inspirational leaders and motivators dressed in suits, or the latest hip-hop fashion couture, surrounded by an eager crowd of media and documentary film makers. Add in a long row of booths displaying the lead organizations of the nonprofit sector, with community activists encouraging visits to complete the picture, and you've got Edmonton's 2007 Global Youth Assembly.

As someone involved with the project in many different capacities, I was able to see the successes of this conference, hosted by the John Humphrey Centre, from a few different angles; firstly, as an exhibitor. Volunteer Alberta, my place of work for the summer months between semesters at the University of Alberta, secured a booth for the assembly and had great success in connecting with youth volunteers. Volunteer Alberta's aim was to provide the over 500 youth in attendance with a volunteer centre contact in their communities.

My second "hat" was worn as a volunteer moderator, facilitator, and side-line project participant. The John Humphrey Centre developed an education program in conjunction with the assembly, which began in January. Its aim was to educate youth from Edmonton on UNESCO's eight pillars of peace and consequently send them to a community in Alberta to facilitate a discussion with local youth around what can be done in their communities to forward the pillars. I was given the opportunity to moderate break-out sessions at the assembly and facilitate a table full of youth on the last day, helping to give the participants a start on their project ideas for their communities. From the perspective of a volunteer and a "friend" of the organizers, I was able to see all the hard work and long hours that went into making this youth conference so successful. This hat also came with really cool benefits, which included meeting the keynote speakers, securing bragging rights there after, and of course, the ever-present free t-shirt.

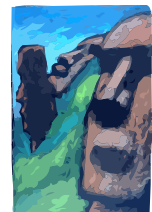
In my third capacity, I was strictly a participant, which to tell you the truth, was an awesome experience all on its own. The assembly and speakers inspired, motivated, and amazed me. The other participants were exceptionally interesting youth from all over the place (both physical and social places) and I came away from the whole thing feeling ready to basically conquer the world.

by Lana Cuthbertson

## Redefining Progress...

In his book Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed, Jared Diamond offers many illustrations of societies that collapsed because they defined progress too narrowly, ignoring the other threats and opportunities. The inhabitants of Easter Island, for example, paid no attention to the larger demands of life (sustaining the forest, wildlife and water systems) and focused primarily on one aspect of life - religion. Their story offers a dramatic case study of the consequences of pursuing a path that is misaligned with a larger more complete view of progress that integrates all human and life needs. Easter Island is the classic example, and we often marvel to think that the inhabitants could have been so short-sighted, but we see the same myopia today. The threats, opportunities and capacities they concerned themselves with worked over the short term, but ultimately threatened the long-term viability of a society.

If someone writes a sequel to Collapse in a hundred years, how do we ensure Alberta not be included as a case study? What are the larger threats and opportunities that we need to pay attention to? What capacities are needed to be able to successfully meet those threats and opportunities? What are we doing to develop those capacities in this province?



## Books worth reading...

How do we learn the competencies and wisdom to serve our community and world in the best way?

We learn in three ways: directly through our own experience, direct contact with others' experiences and, by drawing on cultural resources—reading, researching and studying to discover the best

of human thinking and action and then testing it, eventually incorporating the “best” into your own leadership journey and story.

Every issue we will bring you excerpts or brief notes from books that support the development of community leaders.



“Words do more than plant miracle seeds. With you writing them, they can change the world.” Ashley Rice

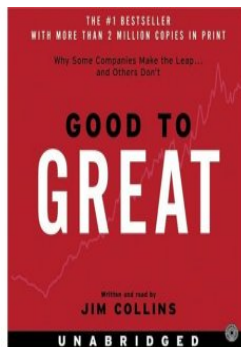
## “Good to Great” and “Good to Great and the Social Sectors”

Jim Collins

Jim Collins, through his extensive research into why some companies are good and some are great, believes that in order to deliver superior performance, make a distinctive impact and achieve lasting endurance, the organization needs:

**Disciplined People:** Collins recommends an inclusive approach to leadership that diffuses power. He also notes that you need to ensure the right people are in the right seats “on the bus”. This may require reshuffling, letting people get “off the bus” and recruiting new energy before you proceed.

**Disciplined Thought:** requires the ability to confront the brutal facts and application of what Collins calls “the hedgehog concept”. The hedgehog concept is understanding and working on three intersecting circles: 1) what you are deeply passionate about, 2) what you can be the best in the world at, and 3) how can we develop a sustainable resource engine to deliver superior performance relative to our mission?



**Disciplined Action:** Collins states that you must develop a culture of discipline, which embraces the idea of managing processes, not people. Within this concept is the responsibility of people to demonstrate self discipline (part of getting the right people on the bus). A key factor in achieving disciplined action is to create a “flywheel” where you build your success stories and these lead to increased support, which in turn leads to more success and so it spins on and on.

**Building Greatness to Last:** is having the idea that you are clock building not time telling. Expand your vision to be larger than the tasks associated with it.

For an assessment tool that incorporates all these concepts, see the following website:

<http://www.goodtogreat.com/pdf/Diagnostic%20Tool.pdf>



# Wild Rose Foundation

Leadership Institute **“The sequel”** will be playing in various communities throughout Alberta this fall. In response to the expressed need for leadership training within voluntary sector organizations, the Wild Rose Foundation undertook to deliver a series of Leadership Institutes throughout Alberta from 2003 to 2006. These Institutes were considered very successful and feedback indicated they met the needs of participating individuals and organizations. However, participants also expressed a need for more training of this kind, but at a higher level.

To address this expressed need the Wild Rose Foundation will be offering this fall and winter a new program, tailored to the needs of senior leaders of organizations within the Alberta nonprofit community. This program consists of a two-day course focusing on leadership skills and best practices essential to leading an organization in the voluntary sector. The new Institutes will cover the following topics: Networking; Planning; Managing Boundaries and Essential Relationships; Organizational Culture; Conflict management within the organization. More information will be sent out shortly as courses are confirmed.

“Remember , only dead fish swim with the current.”

Anonymous

## Municipal Leaders Workshops

### **Municipal Affairs and Housing: Roles & Responsibilities for Council, Councillors and Administrators**

Municipal Affairs and Housing offer on request workshops for elected officials and administrators. With elections this fall, a number of workshops are being booked throughout the province.

The workshop is designed to inform

and increase understanding of the roles, responsibilities and relationships in governance at the municipal level. The workshop will allow time for interaction and exercises and plenty of time for questions and answers.

It is open to all councillors and administrators, regardless of whether you’re an incumbent or newly elected, whether you’re experienced or new in the job.

We encourage anyone in either municipal role to participate and there is no fee for attendance. The sessions will have a minimum enrolment of 10 and a maximum of 50.

For further information you can call Sandra Dohei at: Municipal Affairs and Housing at 780-427-2225 or toll free: 310-0000.

## Beyond Convention...



Leadership Calgary is a community-based, leadership development program of Volunteer Calgary formed in 1999.

Each year, a group of individuals representing the public, private and nonprofit sectors embark on a 10-month leadership journey. This experience provides an opportunity to gain a deeper fundamental understanding of community issues, a greater sensitivity to community diversity, and a new commitment to community cohesion and steward-

ship. Through this program participants establish and build an active alumni network.

Leadership Calgary is gearing up for its Class of 2008. In the coming year, this group of 30 individuals representing the public, private and nonprofit sectors will set out on a 10-month leadership journey. The Leadership Calgary program encourages existing and aspiring leaders to work collaboratively to build a healthy and caring community. As part of their experience, participants

will explore a comprehensive leadership framework that examines their own orienting story, explores the disciplines needed for adaptive leadership, and engages their thinking, caring, learning, striving and action in the context of the human venture. “It’s not a program you take to learn the answers, it’s a program you take to learn the questions” commented a recent alumnus.

[www.leadershipcalgary.ab.ca](http://www.leadershipcalgary.ab.ca)

# Recreation and Community Leadership

I was introduced to leadership at the age of sixteen.

At the time, our local YMCA identified youth leadership as a priority. To involve teens, a number of sororities and fraternities were developed. I was one of eighteen members of "Delta Chi" when I suddenly and unexpectedly, found myself elected president. In addition to our own social events and a variety of fundraising events for the YMCA, we made and delivered Christmas gifts at a nearby home for seniors and volunteered with a number of children's programs. It was a busy year!

Working in my new leadership capacity, empowered and supported by the YMCA powers-that-be, I learned skills such as planning, time management, organizing, budgeting, marketing, fundraising and problem solving. I learned to prepare agendas, to chair productive meetings, to resolve conflicts, to communicate effectively and to motivate others.

That valuable learning experience, combined with what I learned about discipline, working in groups and team building by taking part in competitive track, volleyball, baseball and figure skating, impacted my life in an unanticipated and extraordinarily positive way.

While my career path first took me into the corporate world, I was attracted to, and moved to the field of recreation because of its focus on helping people grow and be healthy, building strong families

and communities, working with those who were disadvantaged, protecting the environment, and adding to the quality of life in our communities.

As a recreation leader, I subsequently worked at a Boys and Girls Club, in municipal recreation, teaching, and now with the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) and their exciting Active Communities project. Somewhat ironically, Active Communities is supporting and coaching emerging leaders just as I was empowered by YMCA staff all those years ago.

Along the way, I've learned and grown in ways I could never have anticipated. And, I'm guessing I'm not the only one who has benefited from their personal experiences in recreation and sports.

In fact, research demonstrates that recreation, sports, and arts and culture produce leaders who serve their communities in many ways. Even Fortune 500 executives are more likely to have participated in sports than to have been on the honour role.

Still not convinced leadership is an outcome of recreation and sports?

Try doing your own informal research. Regardless of the setting, the next time you are at a meeting or event and see someone who is demonstrating leadership skills, pull them aside and ask about their background. Chances are they too will have learned about leadership in a recreation or sports setting.

by Brenda Herchmer

The Alberta Parks and Recreation Association is a not-for-profit, public interest organization playing a leadership role by acting as a catalyst in advocating the benefits of recreation and parks to quality of life, general population health and wellness, preventative social services, lifelong learning, economic sustainability and the stewardship of natural resources in Alberta.

ARPA is dedicated to advancing:

- recreation participation for a full and meaningful life;
- recreation participation involving the advocacy of safety, fair play and gender equity;
- recreation activities that build youth self-esteem and positive self-image;
- play for children as essential to human development;
- ethnic and cultural harmony through recreation participation;
- recreation development as a means of economic growth and corporate wellness; and,
- open spaces that bring beauty to an area while conserving natural resources and, improving our quality of life.



# Leadership Profile: Martha Parker

Martha Parker may have retired from her sixteen-year position as the Executive Director of one of Canada's most successful volunteer centres, but has not even come close to retiring from her work to strengthen the voluntary sector and its position in this province.

Her commitment to the voluntary sector is evident and has stepped up to play a leadership role on many fronts. Martha served on the Joint Coordinating Committee of the National Voluntary Sector Initiative and was one of the first members of the National Advisory Council of Volunteer Centres.

In addition, she was part of a seven-year community based steering group responsible for the establishment of the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations in 2004 and a founding member of both Volunteer Alberta and the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks. Martha sits on the board of directors of The

## The Human Venture...

You can't lead if you don't know where you are going, and you can't lead with wisdom unless you understand what real human progress is, and what it isn't.

Leaders lead by activating something in people, but there are many different types of "something", and the easiest to activate typically don't bring out the best in people. Becoming a leader is not that difficult. Leading with wisdom is hard.

We are often told that integrity is an essential aspect of respected leaders, and that integrity means "walk the talk" - leading by example, following one's convictions. This is only half the story. The other half is what's behind the talk, how the convictions are formed and checked for ignorance and error. Hitler acted on his convictions. Real integrity requires not only the integration of our convictions and actions, but also the integration of our convictions, learning and actions with the best efforts of humanity.

Muttart Foundation, and is actively involved with a variety of local, provincial and national projects that continue to focus her volunteer work on cross cutting issues that impact the voluntary sector. Martha was chosen to receive one of the first five fellowships presented by the Muttart Foundation (Edmonton, Alberta) in 1997. The title of her research project was Partnerships: For Profits and Not-For-Profits Together.



Martha has just retired as co-chair of the Alberta Nonprofit/Voluntary Sector Initiative which has put in place a framework to collectively address common issues between the government of Alberta and the sector. With the human resource, funding and infrastructure crisis the sector is facing, it is a worthy and timely endeavor.

Martha is loved dearly by all who work with her, for her feisty and forthright spirit, her passion for social justice, civic engagement and community development. Martha is truly one of Alberta's outstanding leaders.



We need to ensure we align our thinking, learning and action with the "**HUMAN VENTURE**". The human venture is the collective and cumulative efforts of individuals and societies to shape our own evolution in ways that are wise and not destructive. It is seeking out the best of humanity and striving for wisdom, sustainability and wellbeing, for not just for the community of human beings, but of all life systems.

Action Studies Institute, 2007

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### Contributing Partners

Alberta Parks and Recreation

Association—Brenda Herchmer

Action Studies Institute—Ken Low

Leadership Calgary

Volunteer Alberta - Lana Cuthbertson

*Supporting Community  
Leadership Development*

## From the Editor...

This is the first of many newsletters about community leadership. The first one is a bit lengthy (I did cut and save 10 other pages of articles!) The next one will be 4-6 pages. As strong believer in the principles of community development, I could not do this without you...

- Would you like to be part of an advisory team that decides what the content focus should be?
- Do you have a story from your community or organization you would like to share?

If so, please give me a call or email me—I would love to hear from you...

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## From Municipal Affairs and Housing—Community Services Section

The Community Services Section provides a variety of client driven support and services that focus on building and enhancing the capacity of community leaders, organizations, communities/networks, and government ministries, Boards, and agencies to achieve their goals and have a positive contribution to the lives of Albertans.

The Community Services Section staff are conveniently located in ten regional offices across the province. They provide facilitation and skill development in areas such as strategic planning, community collaboration and partnerships, board development, and public participation processes.

### How do we contribute to leadership development?

We can help you develop and enhance the knowledge and skills needed for your leadership role. We recognize the demands of leadership vary depending on the situation, and can tailor learning opportunities such as workshops, mentoring situations or long term processes to meet your needs, and help you find resources. Whether you are working in a coalition to address a comprehensive community issue or just getting started as a new Board member in a small organization—we can help.

