

**A Community Leadership Program:  
Reflections on Civic Engagement, Leadership Development, and Democracy Education**

By

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Submitted to the graduate degree program in Education Leadership and Policy Studies and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## **Abstract**

This study is about a community leadership program (CLP), pseudo-named Leadership Greater Promisettown (LGP), located in the heartland of the United States. The study's purpose is to describe program outcomes and impact in terms of civic engagement, leadership development, and democracy education. The study's problem statement identifies lack of civic trust among citizens within the community. Using qualitative analysis, the researcher observed the LGP Class of 2012 from orientation through a retreat and seven daylong sessions and graduation, conducted a series of interviews with 11 class members, and followed up with the class using an Internet survey one year after the class ended. In addition, a comparable Internet survey was used to gather data from alumni who graduated from the program throughout its 30-year history. Although the word "democracy" was not included in the formal class curriculum, the study examines democracy education within the program according to the study's conceptual framework. The study suggests implications for future research and practice in civic leadership education.

Program impact is described by analyzing participants' civic engagement attitudes and activities and their responses to study questions about the impact of the program on their leadership development and workplace or career and greater good of the community. Analysis of the data suggests an increase in trust across five areas: (a) trust in self, (b) trust in others, (c) trust in lifelong learning, (d) trust in the community good, and (e) trust in the process of civic engagement.

Key words: Leadership development, civic trust, democracy education, youth civic engagement, civic engagement.

### **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to the students of Newtown, Promisestown, and Anytown, USA.

May they learn, acknowledge, and realize the *Promise of Democracy*.

And to Jeanne Gibbs:

Friend, colleague, and mentor,

Who taught me the process of a democratic education.

### **Acknowledgements**

A heartfelt thank you to the Leadership Class of 2012 for allowing me to be with your class and for responding to so many questions. Thanks and appreciation for the encouragement, support, and patience of my family, friends, professors, colleagues, and all the study participants. Special thanks to my spouse who tolerated the challenging times but also shared the excitement of learning.

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## PART ONE: BACKGROUND

### I. Introduction

An American cannot converse, but he can discuss, and his talk falls into a dissertation.

Alexis de Tocqueville (1835), *Democracy in America*

This study uses qualitative analysis to explore a civic leadership program, pseudo-named Leadership Greater Promisestown (LGP).<sup>1</sup> The study explores a contemporary aspect of democracy in America. LGP is one among thousands of community leadership programs in towns and cities across the United States.<sup>2</sup> The program is located in the greater metropolitan area of a medium-sized city in America's Heartland. As in other American cities, the promise of democracy is embedded in Promisestown's<sup>3</sup> public school systems and post-secondary education opportunities; city, county, and township governments; numerous nonprofit organizations; and a widely accessible public library. Promisestown is unique in its history as a railroad town beginning in the 1800s and for playing an important role in the nation's fight for freedom in the Civil War and then again in the Civil Rights Movement.<sup>4</sup> Situated in a typical American

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<sup>1</sup> Pseudo names apply to the city, the leadership program, and to individual study participants.

<sup>2</sup> As of 7-14-14, the estimate is 2,500 community leadership programs nationwide that are Independent (501 c 3) or sponsored by a chamber of commerce (a program of the chamber) or university (not a university class, but 'housed' at a university) (Personal communication, director, Association of Leadership Professionals).

<sup>3</sup> The city is pseudo-named Promisestown.

<sup>4</sup> For a historical sketch, see Appendix A.

community in many ways, this study aims to encourage discussion about democracy education and how a community leadership program attempts to transform the quality of community life.

### **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to describe the program's education process and its impact in terms of civic engagement, leadership development, and democracy education.<sup>5</sup> This study demonstrated how a class of participants and program alumni perceived the program's impact on their leadership development, actual civic engagement activities, and contribution to the community's quality of life. To accomplish the purpose, this study included interviews of class participants and observation of these participants as they interacted in various community conditions and locations. Ultimately, the analysis provides information about community leadership program education, promising program practices, and the need for further research.

### **Greater Promisestown Information**

Census data indicate that Promisestown (PT) is a mid-sized community and thus a study about PT's civic leadership program could be relevant to similar programs across the United States. The U. S. Census Bureau (n.d.) estimated PT's metropolitan population in 2012 to be almost 180,000. As a medium-sized city, PT has no extreme variations in population demographics when compared to the United States nationally in 2012. The population resembles

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<sup>5</sup> Although not within the scope of this paper that explored a contemporary concept of democratic civic education within a civic leadership education program, the researcher wishes to acknowledge that democracy itself has many definitions and theoretical concepts. Beginning with Plato and Aristotle, recognized as the earliest "political scientists" (Macedo et al., 2005, p. 6) and the prolific writing of John Dewey, much has been discussed and written in attempts to define, understand, and practice democracy. The following are examples: (Chambers, 1961; Cunningham, 2002; deLeon, 1995; Dewey, 1916; Edelsky, 2004; Eldridge, 1996; Hampsher-Monk, 1980; and Mirel, 2002a).

the national population in diversity and socio-economic status. According to U. S. Census Bureau (n. d.) reports, PT's home county's White population was 84.5%, with Black/African Americans, 8.8%, and Hispanic or Latino representation at 11.1%.<sup>6</sup> This compares to the national figures of 74.8% White, 12.6% Black/African American, and 16.3% Hispanic or Latino (U. S. Census Bureau, n.d.). The median family income was \$47,701, compared to the national median family income of \$53,000. In 2011, the poverty level was 13.8% compared to the national rate of 15.9% (Bishaw, 2012).

The community context for the LGP Class of 2012 included multifaceted societal challenges that are commonplace across the nation and negatively affect the quality of community life. For example, education statistics reported for 2012 for PT's largest school district, in its urban core, showed 68.2% of high school age students graduated compared to the statewide rate of 84.9% (4-year adjusted); 77.03% of students were economically disadvantaged compared to the statewide rate of 49.86%; and 35.8 % of third graders scored below the state standard in reading compared to the statewide rate of 15.8% (Kansas State Department of Education, 2013).

There are five other public school districts in PT's home county, yet the largest and poorest is the urban district. The statistics vary among the urban district's schools. For instance, the high school graduation rates varied from lowest rates, 38.1% and 46.7% in the district's alternative high schools, to 68.2%, 71.4%, and 84.8% in the urban district's three comprehensive high schools. Graduation rates varied in the six non-urban high schools in the county: 100% in a

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<sup>6</sup> Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

small rural community, then ranging from 95.5%, 94.25, 91.4%, to 90.3%, with the lowest rate of 22.5% for the school located on the grounds of the state juvenile correction facility (Kansas State Department of Education, 2013). The wide range of graduation rates demonstrates the variation in schools across the county.

Promisettown has significant health challenges as well. Countywide health statistics included a 30.2 % adult obesity rate (2009), 16.6% uninsured adult population (2009), and 11.1% of all births to women aged 15-18 (2009-2011), compared to the statewide rate of 9.5% of all births to the 15-18 age group (Kansas Health Matters, 2014). To put the teenage birth rate in perspective, an estimated national figure of 82% of pregnancies to mothers age 15 to 19 are unintended (Kansas Health Matters, 2014). Children from unintended pregnancies are more likely to experience poor mental and physical health during childhood and have lower educational attainment and more behavioral problems in their teen years (Kansas Health Matters, 2014).

Besides education and health problems, challenges in welfare affect the community's quality of life. According to the American Community Survey (Kansas Health Matters, 2014), PT's countywide welfare data indicate that 15.9% of the population live below the poverty level,<sup>7</sup> compared to the statewide figure of 13.2% (2008-2012), 4.4% of the civilian labor force was unemployed (April, 2014), 28.4 % of children under six live below the poverty level (2008-2012), and 3.1% of households receive cash public assistance (2008-2012). A high poverty rate suggests that local employment opportunities may not be sufficient to provide for the local

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<sup>7</sup> As noted earlier, the U.S. Census reported a lower number, 13.8%, for the single year 2011.

community. Because of decreased buying power and reduced tax revenues, among other reasons, poverty is linked with lower quality schools (Kansas Health Matters, 2014).

The above statistics are important as they underlie the general welfare and social and economic context of the community leadership program being studied. Knowing the statistics behind the challenges contributes to understanding the community and immediate needs of many of its citizens. Civic leaders are faced with the impact of these challenges on the lives of individuals as well as on the larger community's quality of life. Quality of life can go beyond daily living conditions and become a measure of the energy and power people have to enjoy life, to overcome life's challenges irrespective of the handicaps they may have (Business Dictionary, n. d.). The next section describes how the program sponsor's purpose and LGP's mission aim to prepare citizen leaders for community transformation that advances the overall quality of life. This study investigated if, how, and why LGP makes progress toward fulfilling its mission.

### **Program History**

As with many but certainly not all community leadership programs,<sup>8</sup> LGP's major sponsor is the local Chamber of Commerce. The stated purpose of the Greater Promisettown Chamber of Commerce is "to advance the general welfare, quality of life and prosperity of the greater Promisettown area to benefit the citizens and the community" (see Appendix B). LGP's mission is to challenge and motivate traditional and non-traditional leaders and prepare them to

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<sup>8</sup> Many CLPs are independent 501(c) 3 nonprofit organizations.

strengthen and transform the community by teaching *21st century leadership skills*<sup>9</sup> with information, dialogue, and hands-on experience (see Appendix C). In part because of my relationship with LGP, as a graduate and volunteer alumna, the Chamber staff agreed to cooperate fully in providing access to participants and program records and information pertinent to other aspects of the study.

As LGP's sponsor, the Chamber was and is concerned about the overall quality of community life as essential to its advocacy for business and industry development.<sup>10</sup> There is an obvious link: when quality of life suffers, so does the economy. Rather than intervening in specific problems in health, education, or welfare not directly related to its purpose, the Chamber concluded that training for more effective civic leadership was a remedy within its purview. The premise was that more effective civic leaders would be helpful in meeting the challenges faced by the community, contributing to a greater quality of life for all. Further, sponsoring the program could demonstrate the Chamber's contribution to overall community good, not just

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<sup>9</sup> LGP curriculum includes and identifies 21<sup>st</sup> century leadership skills as adaptive change skills, learning styles (preferences), collaboration, consensus, facilitation, visioning, and Steps to a Learning Community.

<sup>10</sup> Chambers of commerce operate independently and vary in their missions, programs, and political and economic ideologies. With historical basis, chambers of commerce often are not trusted to be concerned with quality of life of the overall community but are judged to be more concerned about overriding self-interests of the for-profit business sector (Mirel, 1998). In recent years, the Kansas State Chamber of Commerce has been perceived as promoting business self interests above the quality of life for all. Several local chambers of commerce have withdrawn from full membership and stopped paying dues to the State Chamber (Carpenter, 2010, September 4). The Gardner News reported via AP, "Based on media comment by the Kansas Chamber's own CEO, an estimated 60% of local chambers do not belong to the State Chamber. Among the communities that have withdrawn or considered withdrawal from the State Chamber are: [18 local chambers, including Promisestown]" (brandonh, 2012, August 6).



business special interests.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the idea of a community leadership program, an annual class in leadership training, became a reality in 1983, graduating the first class in 1984.

LGP belongs to an informal network of community leadership programs (CLPs) that began to appear across America in the 1970s. The first one was Leadership Atlanta, after which many were modeled. LGP was one of the earliest CLPs. The program director described the community context when she and the local chamber decided to launch the leadership program:

We started back in the early '80s. The economy was garbage at the time, just not very good. People were focused on work. They didn't have technology. There weren't computers around. Certainly no email, no social media, no connecting tissue, if you will, between people. It was more about the limited number of people you knew. And it limited the work the organization. The community leadership movement across the country was just beginning in the early 1980s. (Personal communication, 4-3-12)

In qualitative research, access, trust, and reciprocity with studied organizations are necessary in establishing research validity but can be difficult to build into a research design (Creswell, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This research design included all three elements as I had (a) access to the knowledge and experience of the program director; (b) cooperation by the local chamber of commerce; (c) access to classes and program and alumni files. Another aspect both of validity support and threat is the perspective of the researcher due to long-time experience with the program. As an alumna volunteer in many aspects of the program I made many critical suggestions throughout my involvement, some of which led to changes in the

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<sup>11</sup> With a 28-year history observing Promisestown's CLP, I have seen no evidence that this program is used by the chamber to promote business self-interests over its purpose as stated in mission, that is "to advance the general welfare, quality of life and prosperity to benefit the citizens and the community [the common good]." In contrast, other researchers studying another community's chamber-supported CLP identified a problem when an obtrusive control theory was used to promote business self-interest, thought not to be in the community's best interest (Bisel et al., 2007).

program. It is presumed in qualitative research that the researcher's particular values and expectations influence the conduct and expectations for the study, whether positive or negative (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). My lifetime values and expectations are aligned with education, volunteerism, and community betterment, which is why I volunteered for the program and why I wanted to learn how and whether the program is fulfilling its mission. According to Creswell (2007), the researcher's critical role and past and concurrent experience can be a source of trustworthiness and benefit to study participants. While the reader must be aware of researcher bias, the study design includes a number of safeguards by using various methods in data collection, ongoing confirmation with study participants for accuracy and trustworthiness of data collected, cross-tabulation charts, and multiple participant perspectives over time (Creswell, 2007).

### **Problem Identification: Lack of Civic Trust**

In establishing LGP 30 years ago, the Greater Promisestown Chamber of Commerce identified as a major community problem lack of trust in effective civic leadership to meet broad community challenges. Now as then, many citizens of Promisestown (PT) lack trust among PT's citizen leaders to meet community challenges (Heartland Visioning, 2008). Although no numerical data are available for PT's level of trust in local governance, inadequate citizen leadership to meet community challenges has been identified as a community concern since the early 1980s when LGP was initiated (Personal communication with program director, 4-3-12).

Trust, or lack thereof, was emphasized in PT's community visioning process, coordinated by a newly created not-for-profit organization called Heartland Visioning, the goal of which was to develop and implement a strategic plan. In 2008, over 5000 citizens participated in a series of town meetings to voice concerns and offer hopes for the future (Heartland Visioning, 2008).

A 250-member task force approved the resulting strategic plan. The plan begins with a vision statement, “Greater Promisestown region will be a growing, dynamic and trusting community with a rich quality of life” (Heartland Visioning, 2008, p. 5). The six foundations upon which strategies were developed were education, quality of life (which in this case was defined as safe and caring community with vibrant arts, culture, entertainment and recreation), infrastructure, economic development, government, and private sector leadership. The plan explicitly stated, “The issue of trust was heard constantly during public meetings” (Heartland Visioning, 2008, p. 14). Typical comments during public meetings were:

- We should look for ways to improve communications between diverse groups of people, which builds/improves relationships, breaks down barriers and builds trust.
- If ‘Trust’ is a key element, then shouldn’t new voices be heard instead of the same old men in suits over 55?
- What human behaviors can increase trust among persons and organizations in the community? (Heartland Visioning, 2008, p.14).

The strategic plan was developed as a result of the town meetings, with the first core value stated as trust. However, the plan had no specific strategy for benchmarking or building community trust.

The people of PT, like citizens across the nation, are losing trust in their leaders to solve societal problems. Distrust in effective civic leadership at the national level is high and increasing. The Pew Research Center (2013b) reported that in 2012, 73% of Americans distrusted the government in Washington to act in the best interests of the people. The Pew survey showed distrust increased to almost 90% by the end of 2013.

Historically, Americans have trusted more in state and local governments than in the federal government. Gallup reports trust in state and local government has remained relatively stable, but current statistics are cause for concern (Jones, 2013). For example, the 62% average

level of trust in state government reported in 2013 is below the historical average of 64% and is not rising. Because states face specific issues such as how they choose to handle annual state budgets, trust in state government shows more variation across time and in different states (Jones, 2013).

Kansas is a prime example of the variation in how citizens express confidence in state government. In 2012, only 40.3% of respondents felt that Kansas state government's performance was at least "good" (Sun, Brinker, & Rackaway, 2012, p. 34). A year later, a different polling mechanism by SurveyUSA (2013) measured the approval rating of the Kansas legislature as 34%, with a disapproval rating of 56% and 10% unsure. The two surveys did not use the term trust. However, the responses suggest that whatever the survey question, whoever conducts the survey, or whenever the survey is conducted, survey respondents convey a widespread lack of confidence in state and national government, which suggests all is not well in Kansas.

In national polling, trends concerning trust in local government generally are more favorable than in state or national government and have remained relatively stable over the years. Still, Gallup Politics (Jones, 2013) reported only 71% of Americans trust local government, with a range from a low of 63% in 1972 to a high of 77% in 1998. Pew Research Center (2013c) reported a similar trend of citizens' views of local government. The favorable view of 63% in March of 2013 was down from 68% in 1997).

Trust in any government or community leadership is logically linked with civic engagement and social capital. Knowledge of the link was popularized in Putman's (2000) bestseller *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Generalized social trust is related to a variety of individual and community-level outcomes, including

effective government and the health and well-being of citizens (Rahn, Yoon, Garet, Lipson, & Loflin, 2009). Further, improving the quantity, quality, and equality of civic engagement could improve the effectiveness of self-governance and citizens' collective capacity to address common problems and pursue shared goals (Macedo et al., 2005).

Non-governmental organizations in American life, nonprofit and philanthropic associations, could play a larger role in educating for "even more and better" civic activity (Macedo et al., 2005, p. 163). Plato and Aristotle, referred to as "the first political scientists," recognized that all political institutions are broadly educative (Macedo et al., 2005, p. 6). This is a corrective view to the common view that civic education is solely the responsibility of schools (Levine, 2007). The potential for greater civic engagement and civic education is complicated by legitimate concern about violating one or more of the numerous state and federal regulations affecting tax-exempt status and charitable giving (Anheier, 2005; Grobman, 2007). Sometimes avoidance of civic engagement and civics education results from fear of violating regulations as an excuse, not wanting a possible perception of political ideology that might alienate donors or donor prospects, or due to general segmentation of special interest organizations (Anheier, 2005; Grobman, 2007; Rahn as cited in Macedo et al., 2005). When segmented interests, political ideology, and competition for community resources impede civic engagement, the discussion returns to trust.

The problem of lack of trust may be reaching an all-time high, as evidenced by the dismal approval rating of the federal government and the recent drop in favorable rating of Kansas government. Concern about trust in Promisestown has been a constant issue without a specific strategy in place to increase trust or a mechanism in place to evaluate the level of trust (Heartland Visioning, 2008). With a problem concerning trust in civic leadership at various

levels of public service (Jones, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2013a; Putman, 2000; Sun, et al., 2012), community-based civic education, accompanied by detailed evaluation, becomes a strategy worth exploring to improve the level of trust (Macedo et al., 2005; Rahn et al., 2009).

Communities in a democracy always will need a supply of citizen leaders ready to serve the community with knowledge and skills to realize and work through clashing political ideologies and the influence of special interests. Today, LGP graduates confront community challenges by serving in local neighborhood associations, on school boards, and in nonprofit and philanthropic organizations; plus, they serve in numerous local, state, and federal governmental organizations. However, the literature review in this study on CLP research shows the difficulty in researching tangible cause and effect relationships between effective civic leadership education and overall trust-building or progress in working through specific challenges like competing and fragmented special interests.

It would be especially difficult to tightly link multifaceted health, education, and welfare challenges with specific outcomes of a community leadership program, even if the program would undertake to do so. Challenges change over time, and they always will be a part of any community. A superficial evaluation would suggest that the program is making a positive contribution because businesses support it, alumni volunteer to help, and there are ample numbers of applicants to fill the class each year. Due to the difficulty of leadership program evaluation (Reinelt, Foster, & Sullivan, 2002), it would be tempting to rely on such an analysis. However, without an in-depth analysis of how the program functions, LGP's effect on building trust in civic leadership would remain unclear at best.

## **Research Questions**

The following questions reflect the study's purpose to describe LGP's education process and participants' perceptions in terms of leadership development, civic engagement, and democracy education:

1. How does the LGP curriculum reflect this study's conceptual framework of democracy education?
2. How does LGP impact the development of citizen leaders and their civic engagement, their workplace/career, and the common good of the community?
3. What are promising practices in community leadership education?

By answering the research questions, this study not only suggests how LGP may contribute to trust-building and improving the quality of life in Promisestown but also contributes to the literature on CLPs by identifying effective curriculum practices that other programs may use.

## **Significance of Study**

This study aimed to offer information and insight about how democratic leadership education impacts citizen leaders and, by extension, the common good. As an in-depth case study and evaluation of one community leadership program, this study may provide a new perspective to the program sponsor, alumni of LGP, and others locally and nationally interested in enhancing democratic leadership education. Specifically, this study may provide program sponsor and organizers an opportunity for program appraisal. In addition, the study offers information and insight to a network of approximately 50 community leadership programs in Kansas (Personal communication, Shaun Rojas, Kansas Leadership Center, 3-29-12) and the estimated 2,500 community leadership programs nationwide (Personal communication, director, Association of Leadership Professionals, 3-28-12 and 7-14-14).

This study's potential significance also includes the identification of promising practices in community-based leadership education. Citizen leaders might consider the potential of these practices to increase the impact of democracy education, especially to counteract commonplace distrust, disrespect, blame, dispiritedness, voter apathy, and ineffective problem-solving seemingly so widespread in America today.

This study is unusual in the field of research on and evaluation of community leadership programs. Others (Anglin, Abbott, & Sills, 2013; Bisel, Ford, & Keyton, 2007; Reinelt et al, 2002; Wituk, Ealey, Clark, Heiny, & Meissen, 2005) evaluated general components of what was taught in community leadership classes. This study describes how the curriculum's theory, process, and practices contributed to participants' leadership development. This study examines both the historic impact and contemporary depth of the LGP program, while identifying the link between community leadership education and democracy education in America.



## **II. Community Leadership Programs and Youth Civic Engagement**

Since the 1980s, community leadership programs (CLPs) have been implemented in cities across the nation. CLPs create new interest and challenges in research and evaluation. CLPs seek to strengthen civic engagement to solve community problems as the most common approach to strengthening civic leadership in the nation today (Easterling, 2012). Typically, the programs began as annual classes, sponsored by local chambers of commerce, with participants selected from local business, government, and nonprofit sectors. Today, many programs, particularly in larger cities, are operating as 501(c) 3 nonprofit organizations with diversified programming for teens, young professionals, and seniors. Although still sponsored by the local Chamber, Leadership Greater Promisestown's (LGP) 30-year history parallels the national development of CLPs.

### **Previous Research on CLPs**

As a focal point of study, CLPs present challenges. One major difficulty in research and evaluation is the ever-changing nature of community social, political, and economic, conditions, reflected in constantly changing CLP curriculum. Another is the ever-changing configuration of class membership and the diversity within each class, dependent in part on the pool of applicants annually. Still another is that programs are volunteer-driven. For example, each year committees of different alumni decide timely program curricula and select class membership. When a local chamber of commerce sponsors the CLP, this may add conflict between business and volunteer sector interests to the mix of challenges. Regardless of the ever-changing nature of individual CLPs, a goal of community transformation remains constant in this nascent form of community education.

Since 2000, researchers (Anglin et al, 2013; Bisel et al., 2007; Reinelt et al, 2002; Wituk et al., 2003, Wituk et al., 2005) have accepted the challenges and joined the field of CLP study. Philanthropic foundations, university researchers, and others have published studies of CLPs. University Extension rural community leadership development programs have been a separate focus of study (Earnest, 1996). There are several meta-analysis studies that group leadership programs to identify their common characteristics but only a few analyze individual community-based programs (Reinelt et al., 2002). Some scholars discuss perceived value and popularity of CLPs but emphasize the need for research on actual their impact (Azzam & Riggio, 2003; Galloway, 1997; Port, 2011).

Four individual CLP program studies are described later in this chapter. What these earlier studies have in common is the collection of data generated mostly through one-time, self-reporting by participants. This study of LGP brings together a three-part analysis with (a) observation of one complete class in progress, (b) a survey of the same class one year later, and (c) a survey of graduates for a longer-term perspective. Due to its more comprehensive nature, this study may contribute to the emerging body of literature on CLPs.

To study diverse and ever-changing community leadership programs, extensive resources, consistency, and collaboration are needed. In 2002, the W.K Kellogg Foundation's report, *Evaluating Outcomes and Impact: A Scan of 55 Leadership Development Programs* (Reinelt et al., 2002) cited several reasons leadership programs are challenging to study: lack of benchmarking impact objectives at the onset; emphasis on diversity of class membership, not cohesion on addressing a particular issue; limited program time to implement and evaluate community action agendas; difficulty in realizing short-term outcomes without well-articulated

theories of change; and considerable time and investment in learning to assess long-term impact (Reinelt et al., 2002).

This list points to two distinct types of evaluation applicable to the study of CLPs: impact and outcomes. Impact is the result expected many years after the program concludes. Outcomes may be specific changes in attitudes, behavior, knowledge, skills, status, or level of functioning expected to result from program activities. Curriculum activities seldom are linked systematically with either intended outcomes or long-term impact (Reinelt et al., 2002). Some CLPs, including LGP, conduct their own immediate post-class evaluations that are very short-term, outcome-based. Often conducted during the last class session, these one-time, quick evaluations ask participants about changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes resulting from their class experience. Although not considered thorough research, programs use these short-term class evaluations to guide modification of curriculum from year to year. Accepting the research challenges, this study offers a two-year study of an established CLP that includes short- and long-term outcomes plus an evaluation of its impact.

Although lacking long-term outcome or impact evaluations, other studies of CLPs include LGP. Since the Kellogg report (Reinelt et al., 2002), two Kansas organizations, Wichita State University's (WSU's) Center for Community Support and Research (CCSR) and Kansas Leadership Center (KLC), have completed or now are conducting collaborative studies with Kansas CLPs. First, CCSR, with financial support of the Kansas Health Foundation (KHF), conducted statewide CLP outcomes research (Wituk et al., 2003; Wituk et al. 2005). CCSR's studies involved a statewide community leadership initiative of KHF called Kansas Community

Leadership Initiative (KCLI). The first study involved 17 CLPs as pioneer members of KCLI.<sup>12</sup> The 17 program directors, each with a designated lead volunteer (my role in LGP), committed in the late 1990s to change their class curricula from mostly tours and networking to concentrate on leadership skills and concepts. Skills and concepts included: Collaboration and consensus; Exercising servant leadership; Creating a learning environment; Envisioning the future; Learning/working style preferences; Community history timeline; and Experiential learning theory.<sup>13</sup>

Two years after the Initiative began, all 17 programs reported incorporating the new skills and activities (Wituk et al., 2005). The CCSR reports (Wituk et al., 2003; Wituk et al., 2005) make no mention of a mechanism to evaluate actual impact. The initiative (KCLI) seemed to maintain faith that building skill-based capacities of leaders would somehow improve the state's health and that increasing civic engagement through community leadership classes would help address complex community problems (Wituk et al., 2005). Five years later, KLC commissioned a public opinion poll, conducted by Mary Christine and Associates, LLC. Results showed CLP training was perceived as effective in addressing community issues by 67% of those surveyed, who were familiar with CLPs. As one of the largest communities represented in the poll, LGP had a rating of effectiveness of 55% (Kansas Leadership Center, 2011). Although

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<sup>12</sup>As a pioneer member of KCLI, Leadership Greater Promisestown was included in the WSU/CCSR compilation of data.

<sup>13</sup> Nationally, many CLPs have transformed from an autocratic top-down decision-making model in favor of more democratic, creative processes that build leadership capacities and leadership skills across the community spectrum (Hedge, 2002).

descriptive and collaborative, KCLI program evaluations lacked specificity or the theoretical basis to evaluate long-term community impact.

Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) is KHF's new leadership initiative. KLC is applying theory-based programming throughout its organization, including its work with CLPs (O'Malley, 2009). Founded in 2007, KLC trains a broad array of civic leaders in adaptive leadership theory, principles, and competencies. The major focus of the theory is on adaptive problem-solving for long-term, lasting impact on the common good compared to quick-fix technical solutions (Chrislip & O'Malley, 2013). Whereas technical problem-solving involves immediate focus on short-term, clearly defined, recurring problems, adaptive leadership seeks to understand and respond to more fundamental problems that impact the health and general welfare of community life (O'Malley, 2013). Adaptive leaders seek to guide a group in understanding a problem from different angles and then facilitate the process of working out the right solution (Easterling, 2012) instead of providing solutions in a top-down approach to leadership.

Now that KLC has the resources and is training CLPs, including LGP, and others in adaptive leadership theory, skills, and processes, it is likely there will be more extensive evaluation of the results of its training in the future. This in turn may more clearly demonstrate the value of KHF's investment in civic leadership and KLC and lead to expanded investment in the leadership training strategy, in accordance with its mission to improve the health of all Kansans (Kansas Health Foundation, 2014).

In 2008, LGP began to include the KLC theoretical concept of adaptive leadership and skill training its curriculum. LGP classes are encouraged to read an article on adaptive leadership prior to the class retreat. Adaptive skill training includes four basic competencies: (a) diagnose situation; (b) energize others; (c) manage self; and (d) facilitate intervention. Each

competency is discussed in class with guest presenters who are familiar with and practice one of the skills. Reflection on the discussion and the practice of the competency follows throughout class sessions. As a result of integration and training in the KLC theory (Chrislip & O'Malley, 2013), focus groups in the LGP Class of 2012 determined that seeking adaptive (long-term) versus technical (short-term) solutions was a major leadership class theme. Emerging class themes and adaptive leadership will be discussed more in the following chapters.

When applied to community-based programs, theory-based evaluation can illuminate not only what programs do but also why and how results happen. Beyond descriptions of activities or knowledge the program delivers, underlying mechanisms may be revealed (Weiss, 1997, 2000). When study participants, especially those from marginalized groups, are considered to be co-learners along with the researcher, more immediate impact may occur (Weiss, 1998). This is portrayed in Chapter V, where study participants describe their participation, especially in applying adaptive leadership theory.

#### **Four Individual CLP Studies**

While published, peer-reviewed studies of CLPs are uncommon; individual programs commonly conduct their own program evaluations. Three of the following four examples involved university student researchers. Although most results in the following program evaluations are reported as positive, the fourth program evaluation, of Leadership Lawrence, offers a negative or *deviant* view (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) held by program participants, informed by a theory of unobtrusive control that was applied by researchers affiliated with a local university.

***Leadership Newark.*** Leadership Newark, New Jersey, enlisted Rutgers University's School of Public Affairs and Administration to develop a methodology to evaluate its 14-year-

old program (Anglin et al., 2013). The purpose was to determine participants' feelings toward the program and what specific knowledge and skills they gained. The study reported an increase from 18% to 45% in feelings of "deep engagement" in Newark's public affairs. Further, virtually all alumni experienced increase in community knowledge. Seventy percent reported strong outcomes in personal growth through program training in leadership competencies such as team-building, decision-making, and listening skills (Anglin et al., 2013). Although the Rutgers study was conducted by an independent organization, its purpose was not to measure program-specific community outcomes or impact.

***Leadership Centre County.*** Leadership Centre County, Pennsylvania, employs a simple in-house formula to determine community impact (Personal communication with director, 7- 15- 2013). Leadership Centre collects data from program alumni on the number of hours they volunteer in community organizations and public service. The value of the total number of hours they report is calculated in dollars to measure what the hours mean in service to the county. For instance, the 20-year-old program has 714 graduates who last year reported volunteering over 84,000 hours, valued at \$1.6 million in contributions to the county (Personal communication with director, 7-15-2013). Although the hours contributed may be impressive, there is no indication of specific community outcomes or long-term impact.

***Leadership Greater Hartford.*** In celebration of its 35th anniversary, Leadership Greater Hartford requested an impact study that was conducted by graduate students in the Department of Public Policy at the University of Connecticut (Burge, Chowdhari, Hodge, & Tasinari, 2012). Although LGH has multiple programs, the study focused on its flagship CLP class, called Quest. Annual classes were year-long and consisted of members selected by sponsoring corporations that paid the full cost of tuition for their employees. The study sample came from within all

alumni, corporate sponsors, and organizations that partnered with LGP on community class projects.

Class alumni were surveyed, asking about their civic engagement activities, if their civic engagement had increased and in what ways, compared to before they took the course. Sponsoring organizations were also surveyed to determine their perceptions of program's benefit in their workplaces and in the community (Burge et al., 2012). Partnering organizations were asked their satisfaction level and if class projects had continued beyond the time of the class (several were still in existence many years later). While relying on perceptions, reporting, and memory of participants, the study results indicated increased civic engagement after taking the class, greater satisfaction with community projects, and increased leadership roles by graduates in community and within sponsoring organizations' workplaces, all resulting from participation in the leadership class. One notable finding in the study was the belief by graduates that the LGH class positively influenced the level of engagement of underrepresented racial or ethnic groups within the community and that the program helped graduates to trust and work with people in diverse ethnic groups (Burge et al., 2012).

***Leadership Lawrence.*** While the three CLP studies described above cast a positive light on the programs, as do CLP evaluations in general, Leadership Lawrence offers a dissenting view. Researchers within the Department of Communication Studies, University of Kansas, conducted a case study of Leadership Lawrence, a chamber-of-commerce-sponsored program (Bisel et al., 2007). The results showed an underlying purpose of the program was to promote specific economic development strategies using unobtrusive control theory, described as attempts to influence decisions within an organization with overtly stating demands (Bisel et al., 2007). The result may be behavior based more on externalized values imposed and less on



internalized values of the participant (Bisel et al., 2007). Some members of the class, when interviewed, reported feeling they were under pressure by the Chamber of Commerce to promote the Chamber's interest in specific aspects of economic development which were not acceptable to the whole community (Bisel et al., 2007). Today, the program has changed its focus, which now is on building leadership skills and competencies and promoting widespread community interest (Personal communication, past board president and curriculum chair, 12-7-2013).

### **Summary of Community Leadership Program Research**

A common thread is identified in the literature: community leadership programs reflect a belief in citizen leaders' innate capacity to improve society. The studies above tell of the continuing development of community leadership programs across America since the 1980s. CLPs are a common response to the perceived lack of enough effective civic leaders to help solve new and growing community problems. The above studies confirm that evaluation of community impact is difficult and is rarely accomplished because evaluative mechanisms are difficult to identify, and even more challenging to implement. If researchers show which CLPs have long-term impact and how and why they do, then community leadership programs may become a greater force for community good throughout 21st century America and in Promisestown, U.S.A.

### **Youth Civic Engagement**

Community leadership programs offer the opportunity to engage youth in civic education. Because democracy education within the contemporary climate of public school secondary

education may be an unrealistic expectation (Rury, 2002),<sup>14</sup> the greater community provides a complementary if not alternative venue for youth engagement and civics education in democracy. Since the 1983 Nation at Risk report, followed by No Child Left Behind (NCLB), public education's emphasis has focused more on international competition in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) than on civics education (Hinde, 2008). Because schools are not focusing on civics, communities in general and CLPs specifically can help fill the void by encouraging youth participation in CLP classes. For example, since 2001, LGP has included one to four high school students in its classes, engaging youth in leadership training alongside adults in a community setting. As youth become empowered through their CLP experience, they may in turn impact civic health in their schools and other community settings (as demonstrated in the stories of Phillip, Polly, and Princeton in Chapter V).

The practice of integrating youth and adults in LGP offers a promising model for educating youth in community leadership with actual community practice. Increased physical separation of children and teenagers from the rest of community life was a societal development that expanded at the turn of the 20th century in part due to the creation of nonprofit youth organizations, the Boy Scouts in 1901, with Girl Scouts, Camp Fire, and 4-H soon to follow. Separating youth from interacting with the adult public has contributed to a protracted period of non-engagement of young people in mainstream society (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). At the turn of the 21st century, a new interest in researching such separation and inclusion of youth in the community evolved. While the study of civic engagement in general had emerged since

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<sup>14</sup> Rury (2002) describes the historical context with issues of “(a) race and the growth of school segregation, (b) the rise of a youth culture and the movement for students' rights, and (c) the changing national economy, especially with respect to rising educational expectations” (p. 307).

Putman's (2000) *Bowling Alone*, the study of youth/adult community partnerships is increasing in the literature. With interest growing in the topic, LGP's practice of educating youth alongside adults as equal participants presents a potential promising practice model, especially for other CLPs, to re-engage young people in a democratic society.

Civic engagement crosses school and community sectors. Schools should not be the only venue for civic development of young Americans, especially considering the decline in civics education in schools and youth civic engagement (Levine, 2007; Macedo et al., 2005). In fact, LGP's curriculum employs all the components featured in a Carnegie-funded report, *The Civic Mission of Schools* (Levine, 2003). The report identifies six research-based components constituting best practices in democratic education: "a) Instruction in important content; b) Discussions of current events and controversial issues; c) Service learning; d) Participation in extra-curricular activities that teach civic skills; e) Participation in school governance; and f) Simulations of democratic process" (Hess, 2008, p. 373). The principles of civic education within the civic mission of schools are similar to the principles embedded in the curriculum of at least this one CLP. Thus, this study provided the opportunity to examine a practice of youth/adult civic engagement and the development of youth as citizens, not in a school but in a community leadership class.

As CLPs attempt to deal with contemporary issues like school reform, listening to the voices of young people may be riding a new wave. The impact of involving students as partners is beginning to be recognized in school reform efforts (Mitra, 2006, 2008; Quiroz, 2001; Schultz, 2008; Shor, 1996; Swaminathan, 2007). Also, the literature reveals a positive impact in community problem-solving from listening to and acting alongside youth as partners (Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; Kirshner, 2009). Involving the young people of different walks of

life and having them come together from different cultures and social classes can help solve the community problems (Freire, 1996). When young people are allowed to discuss their personal situations and participate in problem-solving, their apathy and indifference subside as ideas arise of what might be accomplished (Greene, 1995). LGP encourages a safe environment in which all participants, youth and adults as equals, are invited to share their lived experience to imagine a greater quality of community life.

As educational philosopher Maxine Greene opines, “Surely it is an obligation of education in a democracy to empower the young to become members of the public, to participate, and play articulate roles in the public space” (Greene, 1985, as cited in Apple & Beane, 2007, p. 8). In this study of the LGP Class of 2012, students members brought with them diverse life experiences and a desire to improve their community environments – just like adult class members did. The LGP Class of 2012 included four high school students and two college students in a class of 37, adding diversity beyond their age as they came from upper and lower income families and had both unique abilities and disabilities. Descriptions of youth experiences in this leadership program present a unique contribution to the literature concerning youth/adult civic engagement.

### III. Conceptual Framework/Methodology/Research Design

I think that it is extremely difficult to excite the enthusiasm of a democratic people for any theory which has not a palpable, direct, and immediate connection with the daily occupations of life.

Tocqueville, 1835, *Democracy in America*

In Tocqueville's terms above, the purpose of this study was to investigate the existence of "a palpable, direct, and immediate connection" with a 30-year-old community leadership program, pseudo-named Leadership Greater Promisestown (LGP), and civic engagement and quality of life. This chapter explains the theoretical or conceptual framework of democracy education and the qualitative analysis in this study's design. Inquiry methods include observation, interviews, focus groups, and Internet questionnaires. The study depicts the leadership program's impact on leadership development of class members and graduates, their workplaces, and the actual civic engagement activities of graduates. Further, study results suggested an overall effect on the community's quality of life.

#### Conceptual Framework

A three-part conceptual framework unites democratic education theory, process, and practice to frame this study.<sup>15</sup> The framework provides structure for investigating the major

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<sup>15</sup> As noted earlier, although not within the scope of this paper exploring a pragmatic contemporary concept of democratic civic education within a civic leadership education program, I acknowledge that democracy itself has many definitions and theoretical concepts. Starting with Plato and Aristotle, recognized as the earliest "political scientists" by Macedo et al. (2005, p. 6) and the prolific writing of John Dewey, many others have discussed and written in attempts to define, understand, and practice democracy. The following are examples: (Chambers, 1961; Cunningham, 2002; deLeon, 1995; Dewey, 1916; Edelsky, 2004; Eldridge, 1996; Hampsher-Monk, 1980; and Mirel, 2002a).

research questions regarding impact on participants' leadership development, democratic and civic engagement, and the overall community good. It also supports exploration of democracy education within Leadership Greater Promisestown. While John Dewey (1916, 1938) is renowned in virtually all aspects of democracy education, beginning in the early 20th Century and continuing through the present, I draw upon two contemporary 21st century education theorists, Gutmann (1987) and Gibbs<sup>16</sup> (2001), to complement the framework.<sup>17</sup>

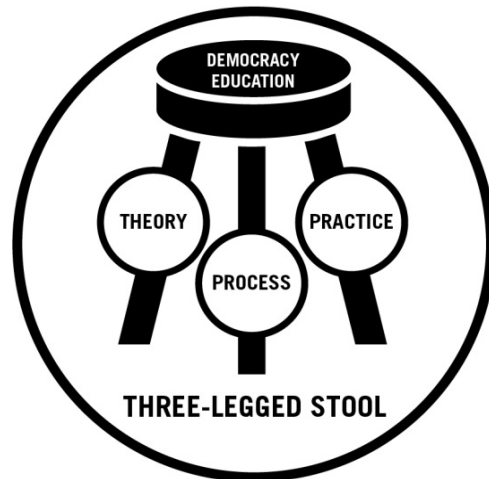
The framework is represented by a three-legged stool, with each of the three components or legs necessary for the framework to support the investigation. Components are democratic education theory, democratic education process, and democratic education practice resulting in civic engagement. All three join together to become a conceptual structure for democracy education as illustrated in Figure 1.

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<sup>16</sup> Gibbs has been a friend and colleague of mine since the late 1970's.

<sup>17</sup> I selected the liberal/pragmatic conceptualization of democratic theory, rather than a strictly political or formal, classical conceptualization, partly because of the audience and context of the study itself. Beyond the academy, the targeted audience for this study is within the community and is more likely to be involved in pragmatic application. Also for that reason, I selected theorists who have their foundation in modern times and who use language the public is more likely to understand.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Study



First, a basic theory of democracy education incorporates ideals of democracy such as respect for individuals and individuality, equality under the law, and decision-making that leads toward greater community good. While many others write extensively about the moral, philosophical, legal, and practical applications of democratic values and theories of education (Apple & Beane, 2007; deLeon, 1995; Edelsky, 2004; Eldridge, 1996; Mirel, 2002a, 2002b), I chose Gutmann’s work for this framework as “a widely cited examination of educational principles and practices” (Rury, 2002, .p. 308). In Gutmann’s (1987) democratic education theory, two basic rules are essential for democratic education – (a) a deliberative decision-making process and (b) respect for all individuals as free and equal citizens. Both must be accomplished within the constitutional principles of non-discrimination and non-repression.

Second, a democratic education process relates to democratic theory in this conceptual framework. Gibbs’ democratic education process includes democratic principles of human interaction similar to those described in both Gutmann’s and Dewey’s democratic education theories. In explaining the theoretical underpinnings of her process, Gibbs discussed Benjamin

Bloom's<sup>18</sup> questions about which of the following would make a more lasting imprint: the manifest facts of the history lesson or the latent curriculum of social interactions, which include “the fear of being teased, ... the powerless feelings of being pressured by peers, the fair or unfair ways that decisions occur” (Gibbs, 1978, p.xiii). Gibbs' process integrates subject curriculum with social interactions that complement and support the learning process, whether in history or other subjects. Years later, Gibbs' process and program, called *Tribes* continues to be recognized as a model program in the field of cooperative learning (Slater & Grant, 2007)

Gutmann (1987) acknowledges the cooperative learning process as an effective strategy in democratic education, citing the research of Slavin and Cooper (1999, pp. 63, 163). The work of Gibbs (2001) and Gibbs and Allen (1978), early and continuing pioneers in the cooperative learning field, provide the standard learning process for this study's framework. Gibbs and Allen (1978) and Gibbs' (2001) work emphasized a democratic process with small, permanent learning groups. Three key steps to the process are: (a) inclusion; (b) influence; and (c) community building. The process emphasizes nurturing individual voice, visioning community good, building skills in deliberation and decision-making, and reflecting on learning experiences. In a respectful class environment small groups provide a safe setting where diverse individuals learn together while growing and developing as individuals. At the same time they learn to express their uniqueness freely, they also understand they are part of a group, with responsibilities to the whole and one another. (Gibbs, 1978, Gibbs & Allen, 2001, Gibbs & Ushijima, 2008).

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<sup>18</sup> Benjamin Bloom (1913-1999) of the University of Chicago was an influential education theorist.



The third component is the practice of lifelong democratic education in the physical and social contexts of the community. Dewey pointed out, “It is commonplace to say that education should not cease when one leaves school” (Dewey as cited in Gutmann, 1987, p. 232). Dewey described the purpose of education and the inseparable process of education as encouraging young citizens to become empowered and to practice acting with social intelligence for the betterment of individuals within democratic society as a whole (Dewey, 1916). He viewed the aims of education and democracy as intertwined, not as isolated institutions of school or governmental systems but involving the whole community.

Dewey’s (1916) words summarize the conceptual framework that underlies my study:

A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living of conjoint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individual who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity. (p. 87)

This conceptual framework offers simplicity in applying democratic education theory to community leadership program curriculum. From Dewey’s time in 1916 through today, the essence of this framework for democratic education is enduring. In summary, this study is framed in theory-based democratic ideals. It pictures a diverse population, learning respectfully together and becoming a force for community good.

Civic engagement is a new term in the literature on democracy education. Today, there is a push to engage citizen leaders, students, elders, and it seems all segments of the population. Civic engagement is simply defined by Levine (2007) as learning and acting on behalf of the common good, taking into account one’s self-interest so long as it serves the best interests of a democratic community. Indicators of engagement include interaction, action, and the impact of lived experience of people as determined by civic service activity, political behavior, and acting

with political voice (Levine, 2007, pp. 1-2). This study of leadership class participants employs these indicators. However, it goes beyond these common elements to assess not only civic/political engagement activity but also the program's impact on graduates' leadership development, their workplace, and the community.

## **Methodology**

A single case study using qualitative analysis and mixed methods research design was chosen to study the education process and impact of a community leadership program. A single case descriptive study may be simple in design but provides important data that can inform and encourage future research (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This section describes: (a) how qualitative data was obtained for this study; (b) survey research, which was selected to obtain systematic, numerical data for the study; (c) the population and sample for the study; (d) the study's data sources; and (e) data collection, analysis, and procedures used to gather data throughout the research process. The components are organized by attention to context, voice, relationship, emerging themes, and aesthetic whole.<sup>19</sup>

**Survey research.** A survey research component was included in the research design to provide a way to systematically measure the 2012 LGP participants' perceptions and views about civic engagement at the beginning of the leadership course and again at the end of the course.

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<sup>19</sup> The qualitative methodology in this study suited my goal of having a study available to a broad community audience. I was heavily influenced by the work of Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot (2002) and portraiture as a methodology as capsulized in the following quotation: "By convergence of narrative and analysis, and the goal of speaking to broader audiences beyond the academy, portraiture lends itself to linking inquiry with "public discourse and social transformation" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 2002, p. 14).

The survey also served to complement, validate, and expand study methods. The addition of the survey component also provided a process to compare the 2012 LGP participants' pre-class and post-class opinions about the course and to compare them with prior course participants' opinions.

Surveys are an accepted method to obtain information about samples' characteristics, perceptions, and experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). While cause and effect cannot be established through survey research, Creswell (2007) indicated that surveys are an efficient way to gather information about attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and practices. The survey included in this study included a Likert scale to obtain numerical data and open-ended questions to provide participants a way to give personal opinions and cite examples. Descriptive statistics were calculated for the Likert scale data and the open-ended questions were utilized in the analysis, along with interview information.

**Population and sample.** The population for this study was the LGP Class of 2012 and LGP graduates from previous years. Although other programs in the state were considered, LGP was selected as a purposeful convenience sample because of its geographic proximity, comparatively good record keeping, and researcher access. The entire LGP Class of 2012 (N = 38) volunteered to participate in the study and signed informed consent forms (see Appendix D) prior to the beginning of the study. One person dropped out of the study due to illness, resulting in a final participant group of 37. Of these class members, eleven accepted invitations to participate in interviews at a place and time convenient to them. Invitations were made to gain a representative sample of the class in ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, profession, and sponsorship. Although the original plan was to interview only six class members, an additional five were added. The additional interviews resulted from the opportunity to study student

involvement made possible by the unprecedented number of students in the class. The survey sample of 492 local alumni with email addresses was identified through records of the Promisettown Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber sent a notice of the upcoming survey by U.S. Mail to the identified persons and encouraged their participation. Then, the identified persons received an email invitation and a link to participate in the survey by completing an online questionnaire. Of the 492 individuals contacted, 185 completed the questionnaire and ten others partially completed the questionnaire. The online instrument included an informed consent statement (see Appendix E).

**Instruments.** Two formal instruments, a semi-structured interview protocol and a questionnaire, were used to collect data from participants. The observations made throughout the course of the class, described in the procedure section below, were considered to be an informal instrument of data collection. A description of the two formal instruments follows.

***Interview protocol.*** I originally developed a five-round interview protocol (see Appendix F), which was modified and reduced to two individual interviews. The remaining questions were incorporated in focus groups and Internet survey questionnaires. In the series of two interviews there were nine semi-structured interview questions. Interviewing was conducted in a structured but open conversation format (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). A standard list of questions was asked of all participants, but each individual was able to give additional information and respond to follow-up questions for additional information or clarification. The semi-structured format encourages a free flow of ideas from the participant that results in richer descriptions of the participant's experiences as suggested by Creswell (2007). In departing from the original design, the third round of questions was modified and conducted in post-hoc focus groups of interviewees within weeks after the class ended. The focus group discussions emphasized the

class themes. Focus groups became advantageous because of the cooperation, interaction, established relationships of interviewees, and limited time available (Creswell, 2007). The fourth and final rounds of questions were incorporated into the Internet questionnaires a year after the class ended.

**Survey.** The survey instrument used was adapted from The Tisch College "National Survey of Civic and Political Engagement of Young People" (in public domain, personal communication Kent Portney, 11-8-2011). The post-class survey questionnaire of the Class of 2012 had 38 questions and the alumni version had 25 questions (see Appendices G and H). These items included demographic information, civic knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, self-reported civic engagement. Three questions asked respondents their perceptions of specific LGP program impact and their recommendations for greater program impact. While adding validity to the study as a whole, the national survey instrument connects the LGP program to a larger body of literature. For example, a research question regarding trust in the government in the current LGP study relates directly to a question in the Tisch survey instrument.

**Data collection and analysis.** Tocqueville (1835) noted, "The health of a democratic society may be measured by the quality of functions performed by private citizens." Data collection and analysis in this study are measured and analyzed in different ways to understand how *functions performed by private citizens* within the microcosm of one LGP class can provide information about *the health of a democratic community*. Data collection included face-to-face interviews, focus group interviews, survey questionnaires, and observations. Analysis included tabulation and cross tabulation, and logical matrix formation. The following section describes how each type of data was collected and analyzed.

*Interviews and observational data.* Individual interviews were conducted with 11 of the 38 LGP Class of 2012 participants. The interviews were scheduled at a mutually agreeable time and place at the convenience of the interviewee. The interviews lasted approximately an hour. Two interview sessions were completed with each participant. The interview sessions were scheduled at different times during and immediately following the course.

The first round of interview questions was conducted early in the course to learn participants' early reaction and impression of the leadership program. Initially, it was necessary to reassure the interviewees there were no right or wrong answers to the questions. Four semi-structured interview questions were asked during the first interview, identified as Round 1 in the interview protocol (see Appendix F). The second interviews were scheduled later in the course or shortly after the course ended to explore participants' perceptions regarding the process, outcomes, and developing relationship to civic and political engagement. The second interview asked five questions and is identified as Round 2 in the interview protocol. The two interview sessions provided in depth information over time about the participants' perceptions about the LGP class.

Each interviewee was invited participate in a focus group weeks after the course ended. Three focus groups were scheduled. Eight of the 11 interviewees participated in one of the three focus groups. The third group had only two participants due to scheduling conflicts. The focus groups provided an opportunity for participants to review and confirm the transcript of their individual interview responses or suggest modifications of any information for them to discuss as a group the themes that were emerging from the data, and for me to thank them for their participation.

Data analysis of interview responses, class observation notes, and open-ended responses from the survey questionnaires examined the following features, among others: context, voice, relationship, emergent themes, and aesthetic whole (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The analysis provided a structure suited to describing democratic education within the LGP curriculum.

**Survey.** The online survey was conducted through Survey Gizmo to capture statistical data and information about study participants' actual civic engagement and their perceptions of LGP program impact. Participants were provided access codes to the online survey site and asked to complete the questionnaire. The LGP Class of 2012 participants completed a questionnaire at the beginning of the course and a similar questionnaire at the end of the course (see Appendix G). Responses to the two surveys provided a method to determine whether the participants' opinions had changed as a result of the course. LGP previous graduates responded on the alumni questionnaire immediately after the Class of 2012 participants completed their post-class questionnaires. The alumni and post-class questionnaires were nearly identical with only slight variations, such as demographic information previously gathered and rating of class themes, which were based on the Class of 2012 experience. Questionnaire responses for both groups offered a time-lapse portrayal of the LGP program over its 30-year history.

I retrieved the participants' completed questionnaires for data analysis. Data analysis consisted of calculating descriptive statistics for the numerical data. The open-ended question responses from the survey results provided a range of LGP class participant perceptions. The survey component created a baseline for ongoing statistical data analyses in future research.

**Procedures for data collection and analysis.** Following is a summary of the procedures used for collecting and analyzing the data.

1. A pre-class online survey of the LGP Class of 2012 gathered perceptions in questionnaires regarding class members' civic behaviors and knowledge, as well as pertinent demographic information. Post-class, the survey was repeated one year later to assess program impact. 100% of the class participated in both the pre-class survey (N=38) and the post-class survey (N=37 due to one member dropping out due to illness).
2. Observations of program sessions took place from January until May of 2012 and included a two-day retreat, seven daylong sessions, and graduation. This totaled over 80 hours of observation. I attended all sessions and took notes on legal pads, recording observations in the left column and impressions/interpretations on the right side. At the same time I both observed and developed casual relationships with class members, in class and in sponsored socials.
3. Interviews with 11 members of the class took place at various places and times separate from class sessions. The interviews began in February, shortly after the class began, and continued into the summer after the class ended. Each interviewee had at least two interviews. The scheduled length of time per interview was one hour. The average number of transcribed pages per interviewee for the first interview was 13 pages; for the second interview the average was 18 pages. Combining their two interviews, the total number of transcribed pages per interviewee was approximately 31 pages for a sum of 341 transcribed pages of all individual interviews.
4. The interview design provided an opportunity to develop individual narratives while giving voice to participants. Focus groups followed the series of individual interviews. Eight of the 11 interviewees were divided among three focus groups.



- The other three interviewees were unable to participate due to time conflicts. The groups served multiple purposes. First, the time at the beginning of the meetings provided an opportunity for each person to review his or her transcribed interviews for accuracy and approval. Second, the groups were a method to bring focus to emerging class themes. Third, the focus groups provided an opportunity to thank the 8 interviewees for their participation as individuals, as a group, and as a class.
5. To analyze emerging class themes, I first developed from interview transcripts a matrix to uncover patterns and class themes. Cross-classifications in matrix format can suggest areas where data may be logically uncovered and to guide further explorations (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p.159). Focus groups were then used to check tentative conclusions about preliminary themes, explore unanticipated issues, and refine concepts and wording. Focus groups, when combined with other methods are reputed to have “high face validity” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 114). Then, the themes were evaluated and rated by perceived strength by all class members, in the post-class on-line questionnaire. The themes data may be a benefit for the sponsoring organization for program planning.
  6. Profile development of the 11 interviewees, based on interview transcripts, applications, class exercises, and survey questionnaires, proved the most intense and time-consuming part of the data analyses. This was due to copious data, in large part because I expanded my original goal of six interviewees to 11. It also was due to my ethical commitment to understand and represent each person justly, confirming information with each person as the analysis continued and with a final check planned before submitting the final dissertation.

7. Democracy education theory, process, and practice became the next stage of analysis and interpretation of class data. I built a matrix of participants' descriptions and interpretations (emic) of their curriculum experience. Then, I applied my researcher interpretation (etic), eventually tying into the study's conceptual framework to identify the presence of democracy education (Creswell, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Maxwell, 2005).
8. A summary of democracy education components rounded out the study of the Class of 2012.
9. A third online questionnaire provided civic engagement data of all LGP alumni and various indicators of program impact on leadership development, their workplace and career, and community good. Besides contributing to the historical narrative of the program, the results provided a method to establish validity through adding questionnaire tabulation and cross tabulation analysis of comments as methods distinct from the interviews and observation methods within the study of the Class of 2012.
10. The alumni survey was conducted in the spring of 2013. Both qualitative analysis of open-ended questions and numerical charts of responses to questionnaires completed the data collection and analysis. The questionnaire consisted of questions about far-reaching aspects of democracy education, establishing a foundation for further study and analysis.
11. The final chapter of this study includes recommendations of promising program practices and questions for further study.

## PART TWO: THE NARRATIVE

### IV. Context: Class Organization, Setting, and Composition

Americans of all ages, all stations of life, and all types of disposition are forever forming associations...In democratic countries knowledge of how to combine is the mother of all other forms of knowledge; on its progress depends that of all the others.

Tocqueville, 1835, *Democracy in America*

As the Tocqueville quotation above suggests about the process of *forming associations*, Leadership Greater Promisestown's (LGP) *progress* may depend on *knowledge of how* to recruit, select, and *combine* members to form the class association. Once the class is formed, progress depends upon individuals, how they act and interact with the curriculum and with each other. This chapter describes contextual characteristics of LGP, how the program is organized, how 37 individuals came together, their class settings, political and cultural snapshots, specific community engagement activities, and the demographic characteristics of the Class of 2012. In addition to describing contextual organization, setting, and composition of the class, the chapter includes a brief profile of the program director.

#### **Organization**

The entire organization is driven by LGP's mission to challenge and motivate citizen leaders by teaching and strengthening leadership skills relevant in today's world. The curriculum scope and sequence is imbedded with adaptive and servant leadership theories.

Each year the program director forms two organizing committees of ever-changing volunteer LGP alumni. The two committees are charged with class selection and program development. The names of members of the first committee, the Selection Committee, are not disclosed publicly to reduce outside influence on the choice of class members from a pool of

applicants: However, outside influence is not eliminated completely. Applicants may self-nominate, be nominated by alumni, or be sponsored by an employer. Two barriers affecting the pool of applicants are the tuition cost, which in 2012 was \$850 (although partial scholarships were available), and the class time required to be away from one's employment. Applicants who are sponsored by their employer are accepted regardless of their application. The number of sponsored applicants for the Class of 2012 was 13 in the pool of 62 applicants that year, more than one-third of those selected.

Sponsorships contribute to overall program costs and contribute to the program's ability to offer scholarships to candidates who request help with the cost of regular tuition.<sup>20</sup> Still, questions often arise about the number of class slots allotted to sponsoring businesses and about sponsored applicants' initial motivation to engage in civic leadership. The Selection Committee task is to select an annual class of 36 to 38 active citizen leaders reflecting diversity in occupations, age, and stages of leadership development, which includes the sponsored candidates. Each year the classes are filled and there are always more applicants than spaces allotted. The program director reports an alumni group of 921, with over 70% living and active in the community today.

The second committee, the Planning Committee, develops each year's program with a focus on contemporary interests and issues. This committee considers timely environmental, political, and cultural context in determining the curriculum. Along with the constantly changing curriculum are the constants of the same basic structure of a seven-session course each year and

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<sup>20</sup> In 2012, each class sponsor was charged \$1,700. The cost for individual tuition was \$850, which included program materials, meals, social functions, and transportation. Scholarships were available to applicants (Chamber promotional materials and brochure, 2012).

the Chamber's ongoing program support. The Class of 2012 schedule and curriculum outline is included as Appendix I.

While program components and curriculum descriptions are integrated throughout this study, two components require separate explanations. One is the consistency and leadership of the program director who merits a separate section. The other critical component is the presence of alumni volunteers and presenters.

**The program director.** Underlying virtually all technical and adaptive aspects of LGP is the program director (PD). Serving as Vice President - Public Relations of the Chamber of Commerce since 1979, the PD initiated the program in 1983 and has continued to serve as director and facilitator throughout the program's history. The word facilitator is all encompassing. As the lead facilitator of the curriculum, the PD is ever-present in all class sessions. Yet, her time in front of the class is secondary to the class collaborative learning process, various activities, guest presenters, and programs. All the while the PD is encouraging class members to take over the leadership as the sessions progress. Seeing the mild-mannered appearing person in the lead, one would not see under the surface the administrative person responsible for the technical details: curriculum organization; schedule and alumni volunteer participation; marketing and class recruitment strategy (see Appendix J); application and acceptance process; financial accounting; scholarships; class session organization from environment to food to tours to socials; program evaluation; and maintaining the network of 921 alumni as of 2013. Along with all else, the PD manages to stay current on leadership trends and happenings statewide and nationally while also maintaining awareness of current community trends and attitudes within the private and public sectors.

I asked a convenience sample of 12 alumni for quick thoughts about the PD. Below are typical descriptions respondents gave for the leader of LGP. The first is how an alumnus describes the personal impact of the PD's leadership on him (Personal communications, 11-18-2013).

She helped break the stigma of not having a title, other than as a citizen who cares about the community and its youth, ... pushing me out the shell I have had for most of my life to speak and contribute, no matter who I am and what I look like. She let me know that I am somebody (Class of 2001).

She has a unique ability to allow each LGP Class to drive the direction and outcome of the discussions and lessons learned (Class of 1997).

Her desire to make Promisestown the best it can be is evident by her passion for developing its leaders. I can think of no one else who would have had the tenacity to continually improve the LGP program and to inspire its participants to work together effectively for the benefit of our community. She's a gem. (Class of 1985).

She's like a mighty duck -- so calm on the surface, but she has to be paddling like the dickens under the water!! (Class of 2008).

An alumna (Class of 2002) commented, "She is many things to many people." Her comment was affirmed when comments from alumni duplicated only four words: colleague, mentor, encouraging, and energetic. Other terms they used were accepting, savvy, respectful, articulate, willing, non-judgmental, insightful, understanding, fun, passionate, tenacious, organized, knowledgeable, happy, always smiling, thoughtful, calm, caring, gem, angel, experienced, remembers people and their names, teacher, inspirational, persistent, team-builder, hard-working, master of juggling, dynamic, moderator, empowering, and community visionary.

**Observation:** The descriptions above describe the PD with a variety of words and phrases with many indicative of a leader of democracy education. The descriptions fit the criteria in this study's conceptual framework: respect for individuals as equals; encouraging all voices to be heard; and engagement in community practices for the common good of the

community. Besides the descriptive words accepting and respectful, specific phrases from above that are indicative of a democratic leader are empowering others, that each class drives or decides its own direction and outcome, she inspires participants to work together for benefit of the community, and she encourages participants to express themselves, “no matter who I am and what I look like.”

**LGP alumni throughout.** The depth and breadth of the network of LGP graduates was visible throughout class sessions. Not only did an LGP graduate chair each session but also most panels, tours, and host sites afforded the Class of 2012 the opportunity to meet, greet, and learn from civically engaged LGP graduates. From the lead engineer conducting the tour of the Capitol renovation to elected officials, leaders in law enforcement, two school superintendents, and others; the LGP 2012 experienced civic engagement first-hand through LGP graduates. One graduate described the impact of her participation in LGP as “accepting the torch” to carry on the passion for the community. Today she is proud of her role working alongside other LGP alumni in the progress of downtown redevelopment.

**Cultural and historical context.** The cultural and historical contextual foundation is laid at the opening class retreat. In a curriculum activity called History Timeline (Clark & Heiny, 1997), participants are encouraged to relate their own historical knowledge and cultural experience. The director/facilitator hangs a long and colorful, hand-drawn timeline stretching across the front of the room and leads a conversation about Promisettown’s history, including its major turns and twists. Drawings of significant national events move across the top of the sheet of paper as a contextual backdrop. For one example, drawings depict Promisettown’s early roots as a railroad town. A Mexican flag symbolizes immigrants from Mexico who helped to build the railroad. A drawing of a church symbolizes the Mexican-American neighborhood where railroad

workers settled. Another colorful drawing symbolizes the popular annual Mexican Fiesta. Yet another drawing of railroad tracks symbolizes the establishment of the corporate headquarters of a major national railway company. Extracurricular reading and additional learning material concerning specific cultural and historic information is offered at various places on tours, such as at the state Capitol and State Library and Great Overland Station railroad museum.

The timeline offers interactive learning. One participant in the Class of 2012 connected her own family to that railroad history. She shared her experience of growing up in the closeness and identity of the Hispanic neighborhood and spoke about why and how she chose to raise her family in another part of town. As Promiseton's timeline reached 2012, class members suggested additional symbols be added marking an increase in arts and cultural festivals reflecting the German, Indian, Jewish, plus African and Native American influences, with vibrant music, drama, and art enriching the multi-ethnic community's quality of life.

The "Where-were-you-when ..." question in Timeline revealed the diversity within the Class of 2012 like no other activity. Class members' age, ethnicity, geographic history, and community and career interests converged in relation to the Brown v. Board of Education decision requiring integration of schools, community rebuilding following a disastrous flood in 1951 or tornado in 1966, and the local reaction to the 1999 Columbine school shooting. Respectful silence and attentive listening were obvious during the activity. Throughout the sessions and in class evaluations, the history and cultural timeline of Promiseton was often referenced. The activity's link to fostering respect for individuals and for class and community diversity emerged in class members' comments during interviews and in questionnaire results signaling the activity's influence on democratic leadership development.



**Political context.** The political context surrounding the LGP Class of 2012 reflected the ideologically polarized climate of the times. Citizens were being subjected to radically opposing viewpoints of far-right and religious conservatism along with the recently organized Tea Party conservatism in contrast to more moderate viewpoints, which many in the public were calling traditional Republican and Democratic views. Opposing political viewpoints were ubiquitous across the state and nation, with unprecedented dollar amounts spent on media and in multimedia venues never before imagined. The supercharged political backdrop was especially evident at one class session when a guest presentation turned into a class controversy, characteristic of the extreme political polarization of the times.

This class presentation was staged as a debate between a conservative, controversial Secretary of State and a representative from the known-to-be-liberal ACLU. As the speakers clashed, so did class members - with open discussion and agreement and disagreement on the topics of immigration and election fraud. One usually quiet class member, himself a recent immigrant from Ghana, was especially engaged in the conversation.

The political controversy continued in conversation at the social gathering that evening and even into the written evaluations after the program ended. The divisiveness culminated with a pro and con controversy within the class about whether the curriculum in the future should include timely political debate. The louder enthusiasm of the proponents who appeared in support of including political issues seemed to prevail, compared to the quieter eye rolling of the

apparent opponents. Nonetheless, deciding future controversial curriculum was left for the next year's Planning Committee.<sup>21</sup>

A politically charged class presentation with class members freely discussing a controversial topic in itself became controversial. That particular scenario in a civic leadership class might have amazed Tocqueville but perhaps not surprised him with respect to his following observation: "I know of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in America" (Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, (1835).

### **In Class Setting – Learning Environment**

Community places and spaces replaced any semblance of a traditional classroom in LGP. The retreat and each of seven class sessions were held in different places throughout the community. The scene was a kaleidoscope of blues at the two-day lakeside retreat, with blue jeans the predominant attire. In contrast, class members dressed in business attire, all wearing bright yellow hardhats for a bustling tour the state capitol restoration site. Awe was the predominant facial expression during the high school robotic class tour, while a child-like excitement was reflected in the behind-the-scenes visit at the zoo with elephants, hippos, and giraffes. Laughter and bright colors dominated the environment in two end-of-the day programs when participants first were invited for "serious play" at the new children's museum and on another day created colored-paper "masterpieces" at the university's art lab. Shock and awe were standard reflections after police ride-alongs as well as on a stop-along tour of

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<sup>21</sup> The Planning Committee might consider in their decision-making the words of education historian Jeffrey Mirel (2002b): "America's democratic culture hinges on a paradox; it is precisely the *shared* experience of controversy over common values that enables it to flourish" (p. 55).

neighborhoods labeled as high-risk on a neighborhood health map produced by the city/county planning department.

While class community tours were usually scheduled for the afternoon, teaching curriculum was presented in various classroom settings in the mornings. However, the classroom setting did not resemble a traditional classroom. Each member had a large three-ring notebook, with a plethora of information available for class perusal. In each class session, new color-coded folders were on the tables for each class member. Folders contained supplemental information related to the day's civic engagement topic and always included an inspirational quotation. The quotes corresponded to colorful wall posters with information and additional quotes. Small toys and candy was placed on each table to augment comfort and the freedom to be active, creative learners. The class scenes invited curiosity and creativity with visible curriculum content, inspirational quotes, and a colorful, active, and learning environment.

Finally, the May graduation event at a downtown hotel had a festive touch with table decorations and lapel flowers for the graduates. Family and friends listened as class members recounted the highlights of their class experiences. The guest speaker, a former Kansas governor, praised the new graduates, challenging them as "citizen leaders" to progress beyond the extreme ideological divide of the day and build a greater society. The formality of graduation with warm hugs and promises to stay in touch came full circle from the lakeside retreat when the class first commenced to understand the community in greater depth - and each other.

### **Outside of Class – Individual Learning and Community Learning Assignments**

In addition to in-class learning activities, the LGP provides opportunities for class members to engage in learning activities in the community and encouragement for further

learning. Extracurricular reading is encouraged with bibliographies and articles referenced as supplements to class sessions (see Appendix P). A lending library of leadership books belonging to the Chamber is made available during the retreat for perusal and checkout. There is even a bibliography available and hard copy examples of children's books relevant to community leadership. The LGP 2012 class curriculum included four assigned outside experiences: a community service activity at the retreat; police ride-alongs; public meeting assignments; and class project group presentations. Each of the major community learning assignments is described in the following sections.

**Community service activity at the retreat.** For the past several years, a volunteer alumnus, who is president of a community bank, has conducted a closing activity at the opening retreat, which he did for the Class of 2012. The community service activity set the stage for later class projects. On the afternoon of the second day of the retreat, the class watched a trigger film about how little things can make a big impact. Then, they were challenged to go out in the community and find a way to make a positive difference. The six newly formed class core groups each were given \$40 dollars and about 90 minutes to go out into the community and use the money. They were to report back on what good they had accomplished and how they spent their \$40. When the PD made the assignment, one member said out loud "Oh yeah, right!" while other skeptical looks were obvious across the classroom.

When they returned after the exercise, one group expressed difficulty, but the other five were convinced they had a positive impact on peoples' lives. The five projects were (a) buying school supplies for a kindergarten teacher, (b) paying a delinquent water bill, (c) buying needed clothes for day-care children, (d) delivering Valentine tulips to brighten a senior-care facility,

and (e) contributing socks for the homeless to the Rescue Mission. When the groups reflected on how easy it turned out to be, they celebrated with cheers and tears.

At the close of the retreat, class members reflected on their early civic engagement and expressed amazement at how quickly everyone became friends and how quickly groups were able to cooperate and make decisions. Right then, class members seemed to realize the class' potential to have a positive impact in the community. One member, who frequently stood on the sidelines, summarized the retreat experience this way: "Love is what it's about."

**Police ride-along and public meeting assignments.** Two activities related to civic engagement and democracy education were assigned for completion outside regular class sessions. Class members signed up individually in response to the local police department's invitation to accompany an on-duty police officer on a police ride-along. Afterwards, in Session 5 – Law and Order Day, a panel discussion of law enforcers assisted class members in debriefing their various experiences in the ride-along activity. A second assignment was to attend a public meeting of elected officials (city, county, or school board). The same process of debriefing for public meeting experiences took place in class Session 6 – Government Day. The panel members, hosts, and guests for both days included LGP alumni: the chief of police; the county sheriff; a county commissioner; a state senator; and other members of the police and sheriff's departments. As LGP alumni, law-enforcement officers and policy-makers demonstrated their civic commitment while engaging new LGP participants in specific sectors of the community.

**Class project group presentations.** Class project groups were formed by the program director as special interest groups determined by individual vision statements. Each of the five project groups presented their results in Session 7, the morning of the last class. The project groups were assigned to incorporate the adaptive leadership concept and to use skills in the class

curriculum such as inclusive decision-making, listening, collaboration, and consensus. Each group was allotted \$300 for expenses and contribution to its non-profit partner. The five class project presentations listed below exemplify the process and results of LGP 2012 curriculum with actual practice in the community.

1. Making Promisestown Attractive – New website, “365 Things to Do and See” with interactive history timeline and community calendar.
2. Meeting Basic Need - Assistance with Ronald McDonald House’s ongoing fundraising/recycling project.
3. Healthy Lifestyles – Grade school carnival – involved setting up YMCA obstacle course and purchasing and distribution of pedometers.
4. Education: Learning Never Stops - Middle school focus – Assistance with transportation and finances for motivational field trip for sixth graders to visit innovative high school programs, including a robotics class.
5. Education Equal Opportunity – Third grade reading priority, project at Boys & Girls Club, setting up volunteer readers.

Throughout the presentations, class members reported practicing LGP skills of consensus, collaboration, and adaptive versus technical problem-solving in actual community settings.

### **Composition of the Class of 2012**

The LGP Class of 2012 was a diverse group. Volunteer alumni on the Selection Committee each year work diligently to select a class that represents a broad cross-section of the community from the pool of applicants. Information in the following subsections was submitted by 100% of the class and gathered from their original applications and from the Internet pre and post-class questionnaires. Pseudonyms for class members are used throughout this document as explained in the confidentiality section of the Informed Consent Statement, which was signed by each class member (see Appendix E).

**Demographics.** The 38 participants selected for the class were evenly divided by gender, 19 males, 19 females; however, one male dropped out due to illness making the new total 37. Ages ranged from 17 to 56, with a mean age 36 and the median age 38. As shown in Figure 2, the ethnicity of the members of the Class of 2012 included 30 (81%) White/Caucasians, three (8%) Black/African Americans, two (5%) Hispanic/Whites, one (3%) Native American, one (3%) Multi (African American/Greek/Cherokee). For comparison, race/ethnicity demographics of greater Promisettown home county population were reported as 84.5% White/Caucasian, 8.8% Black/African American, and 11.1% Hispanic or Latino (U. S. Census Bureau, n.d.).<sup>22</sup>

Figure 2: Class of 2012 Ethnicity Distribution

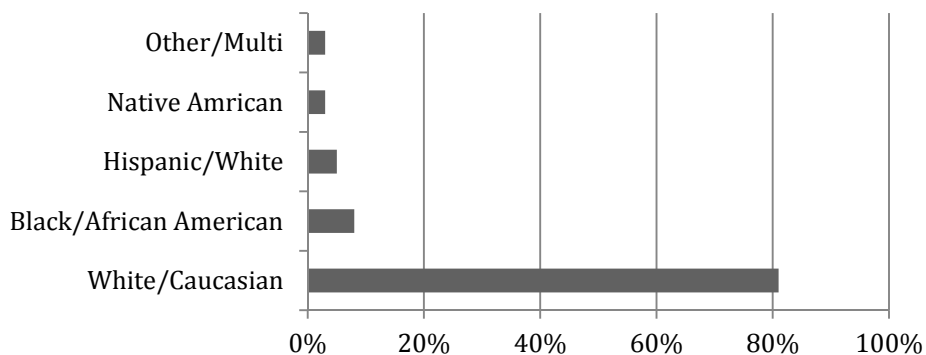
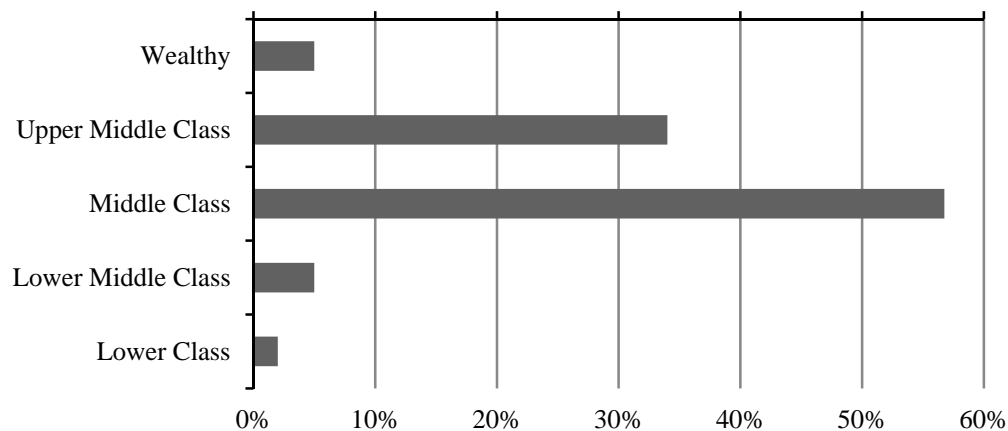


Figure 3 shows the results from the pre-class survey when class members were asked to describe the current socio-economic status of their household. An inspection of the data revealed that two participants checked more than one response for this category, which resulted in data indicating 39 choices. One participant checked both upper middle and wealthy categories and one checked

<sup>22</sup> As stated previously, Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

both middle and upper middle. The data reported includes all responses. Thus, the numbers and percentages will sum to more than 100. With 100% (N = 37) of participants response to the survey question, the class configuration was 21 (57%) middle class, 13 (34%) upper middle class, two (5%) lower middle class, one (3%) lower class or poor, and two (5%) wealthy. Data in Figure 3 also shows that more than one half of the class members identified with middle class. The next largest group, about a third, considered themselves to be upper middle class. As discussed earlier in this chapter, barriers affecting the pool of applicants are cost of tuition and amount of time required to be away from one's employment.

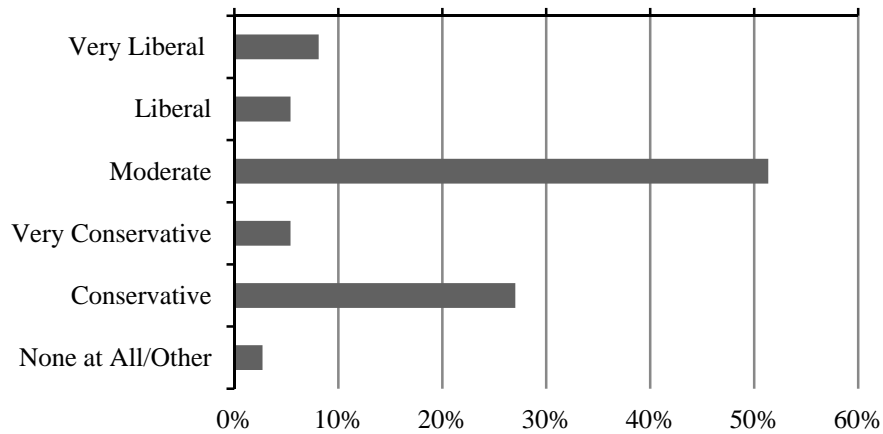
Figure 3: Class of 2012 Current Socio-Economic Status



Class members were asked to describe their personal political orientation. Responses indicated 19 (51%) of the class members identified as moderate. The next largest group, 12 (31%), identified as conservative or very conservative, while six (16%) identified as liberal or very liberal. One participant gave no response to the question. Figure 4 shows a summary of participant responses.

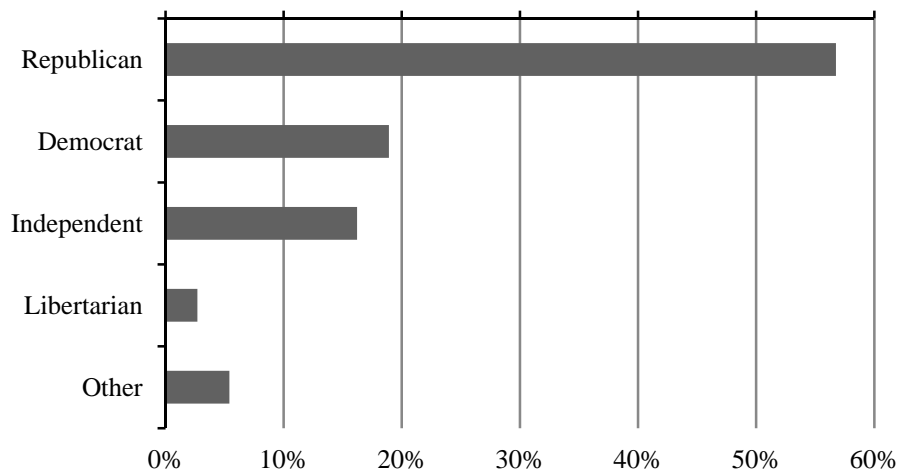


Figure 4: Class of 2012 Personal Political Orientation



Participants were asked to identify the political party with which they were affiliated. Responses indicated that the 21 (57%) of participants identified as Republican, seven (19%) as Democrat, six (16%) as Independent, one (3%) as Libertarian, and 2 (5%) as Other. Figure 5 shows a summary of the political party affiliation data.

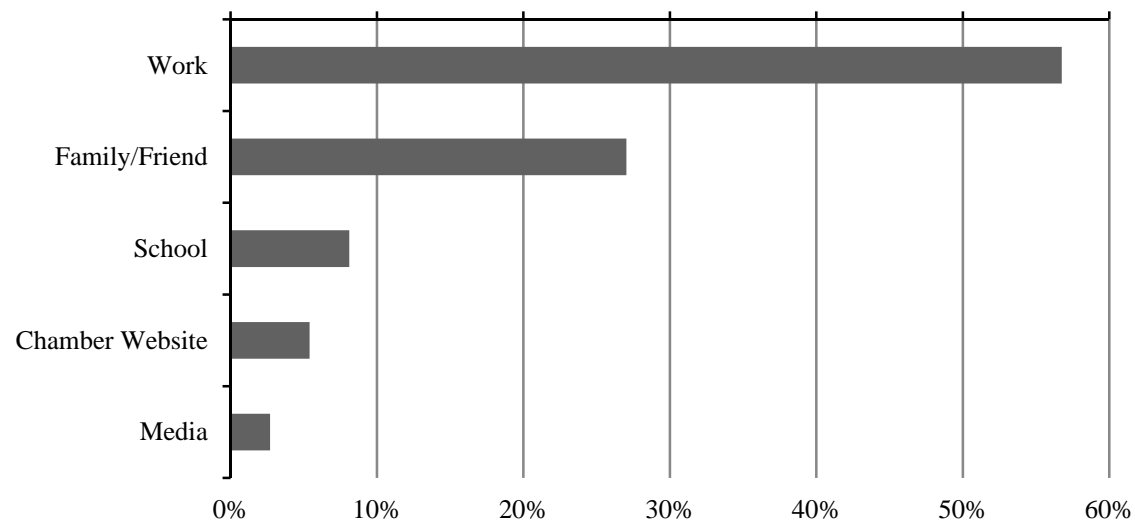
Figure 5: Class of 2012 Political Party Affiliation



In summary, Figures 2 through 5 show the class configuration met the program objective of including a broad cross-section of the community, while taking into account the low total number of persons selected are from a limited pool of LGP applicants each year.

**Additional class information.** Information was also obtained about how participants first learned about the LGP program and what motivated the participants to apply for the program. This information may be helpful to the Chamber in LGP class recruitment strategies as the program seeks to fulfill its mission to “challenge and motivate traditional and non-traditional leaders.” The latter group may not be predominant in the workforce. Participants responses indicated that 21 (57%) learned about the program at work, 10 (27%) from a family member or friend, three (8%) at school, two (5%) from the Chamber of Commerce’s website, one (3%) from the media. Figure 6 shows a summary of participants’ responses.

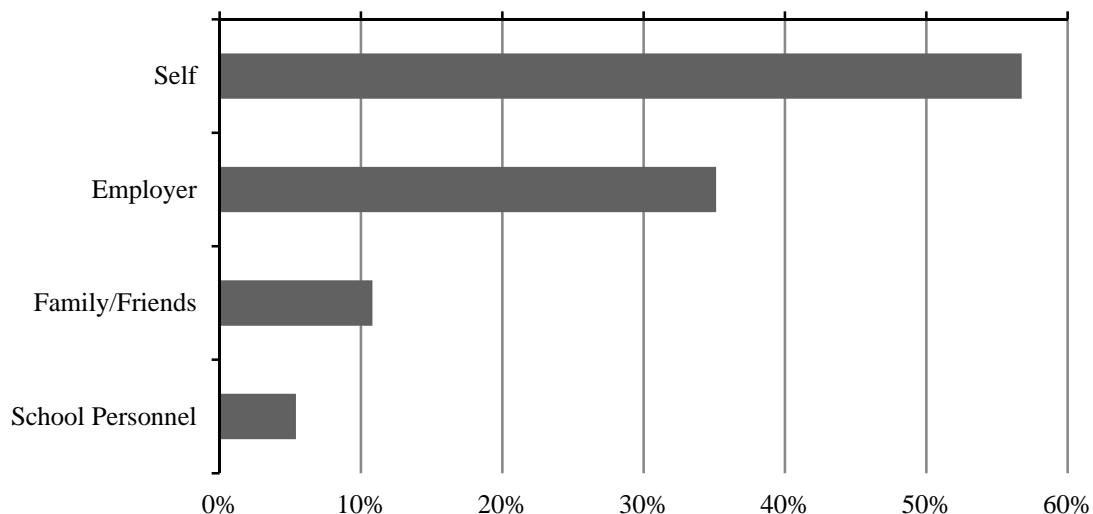
Figure 6: First Received Information About LGP



The Chamber staff initiated the question of motivation as the information may be of particular interest to LGP alumni who help select program applicants and help facilitate classes. Because

intrinsic motivation is often more important in learning regardless of the curriculum, a question arises as to whether the initial motivation of class members is lower when they are asked to participate and became a *sponsored* applicant with their acceptance assured and their tuition paid by their employer. Participants were asked about what motivated them to apply for the program. Two participants checked more than one response in this category: One student checked “school” and “self” while another participant checked “school,” “family,” and “self.” All responses have been reported, which results in totals summing more than 100. With regard to what motivated them to apply for the program, 21 (57%) believed they were self-motivated; 13 (35%) reported their employer provided the motivation, four (11%) indicated family or friends were the motivation; and two (5%) responded school personnel motivated them. Figure 7 depicts a summary of the responses.

Figure 7. Primary Source of Motivation for LGP Application



This chapter showed the diversified context of LGP Class of 2012 with descriptions of program organization and activities, setting, and participants’ demographic information. While

the chapter focused mainly on the 37 participants, the content also described the program director, sponsoring organization, and volunteer alumni involvement. Descriptions of how contemporary community interests such as classroom settings, presenters, tours, and class projects affected curriculum decisions were included. The description of the LPG provided by the participants shows fluidity with respect to evolving leadership training concepts and in contemporary political, cultural, and social contexts. The next chapter continues to reveal program context through the voices and unique perspectives of 11 participants who were interviewed about the LGP experience.

### **Reflection on Leadership Theory within the Organization**

The discussion of LGP's organization would not be complete without a closing reflection on leadership theory that is integrated within the organization and curriculum scope and sequence. Adaptive leadership is the explicit theory, which is represented by Kansas Leadership Center (KLC),<sup>23</sup> and taught through suggested reading, skill development, guest presentations and discussion, and incorporated into class projects. Servant leadership is another leadership concept that is taught at the opening retreat with encouragement to practice throughout the class. Adaptive leadership theory originates from an academic tradition, Harvard University, Harvard's Kennedy School - Center for Public Leadership and is carried forth in Kansas Leadership Center's training of state CLPs. The concept of servant leadership is apparent in the universal religious tradition held in common by many faiths exemplified by The Golden Rule or "Do unto others what you would have them do unto you." Both concepts have a foundation of service to

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<sup>23</sup> For explanation of KLC's adaptive leadership theory, see Appendix N.

the community and fellow citizens. This is in contrast to autocratic leadership with strong leadership exercised by the few. In theory and in practice both of the predominant LGP leadership theories implicitly hold to the concepts of equality among citizens, service for the common good, and citizen leadership.

## V. Voice: People, Voices Within the Class

History is a gallery of pictures in which there are few originals and many copies.

(Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835).

This chapter showcases individual people and unique voices within the LGP Class of 2012. Consistent with the above quotation, the class *gallery* has portraits of 11 class participants. All of them are *original* although the profiles contain human and democratic traits recognizable as universal or having *many copies*. In this study the story unfolded through numerous study participants in their various voices. Based on two separate individual interviews, these 11 participants, in their own voices, describe their experiences with the program's curriculum and with each other. The chapter closes with impact statements made one year later by interviewees on the study's post-class Internet questionnaire.

The interviewees represent the class diversity in ethnicity, age, and occupation. By happenstance, this class included a larger number of students than previous classes. Because of my career interest in student voice, I expanded my initial goal of six interviewees to 11 and included three high school student participants. In addition to participating in individual interviews, eight of the 11 interviewees also participated in post class focus groups. The interviews took place outside of the class setting early, midway, and following the class sessions at a time and place convenient for interviewees. Each interview format followed the research methodology with consistent questions to each about context, voice, relationship, and emerging themes. The interview focus was not to focus on weakness but to begin by asking "What is happening here, what is working, and why?" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 142). Study participants sometimes were reminded that there were no right or wrong answers to the

questions, but the questions afforded them an opportunity to freely express themselves and their perceptions of their leadership class experience.

Individual profiles follow, including interviewee insights, quotations, and assessments. Following each profile are summary comments and researcher observation and interpretation of each class member's experience. Demographic and other information was drawn from class applications, written class exercises, and Internet pre- and post-class questionnaires in addition to the interviews.

### **Portia, "Along for the ride"**

Portia,<sup>24</sup> age range 31-40, is Caucasian, an attorney in the government sector. She described herself as growing up in the lower middle and now being in the middle socio-economic category. She identified herself as a very liberal Democrat.

Often described by her LGP colleagues as a "live wire," Portia related she was "along for the ride" in LGP and ready for whatever came her way. At the time of our interviews Portia, a practicing attorney, was representing citizens on behalf of a state agency headed by an elected official. Portia also was serving by mayoral appointment on the municipal university's board of regents. She is the mother of an active preschooler who sometimes goes along while his mom makes time for additional volunteer work. Portia said her greatest concern is education, which she demonstrated with passion throughout LGP sessions.

I first interviewed Portia in a conference room at the state agency where she was employed. As I waited in the elegant foyer of the historic building, Portia bounded down the

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<sup>24</sup> Although the pseudo name Portia metaphorically may call to mind a popular sports car, less known is a link to associations of women lawyers and law students in the early 20th century called Portia Clubs (Concannon, 2012, p. 572).

wide-open staircase wearing casual jeans on a Friday afternoon. That was the beginning of an energy-filled interview alternating intense intellectual reflection with light-hearted laughter.

Throughout the interview, Portia compared her experience in LGP's learning process to her many other professional development and education experiences. She described her other education experiences such as continuing legal education, as informational, but boring with little actual application:

In a typical education process you're informed, spoken to, or lectured on the topic, the history or whatever the actual information is. Whereas here, it's more of a brainstorming, 'Let's talk it out. Who has ideas?' I think that's how it's different. It's interactive from the beginning. It's the people who facilitate, everyone wanting to participate, everyone having an opinion, but presenting it in a non-argumentative way, or possibly a questioning way, presenting ideas and working together.

She cited as an example LGP Session #1 on adaptive/technical leadership when guest speakers talked about leadership capacities. Each speaker represented one of KLC's four competencies, to illustrate the LGP learning process: "We talked about something and then we had a guest speaker who gave us information as to the 'why' of the speaker's experience." She noted the circular movement of the class and how one topic flows into another. She commented:

The structure is well thought-out, well-planned. There's a very nice flow to different topics, not beating one topic to death, but also recognizing eventually all these topics come together in a full circle and involve and evolve around each other.

Portia touted the structure of the small group community project, which she cited as one of the best practices in the course. Early in the class, individual members filled out a form describing their vision for the community, which the director used to assign those with similar interests to develop and implement a community project. Portia's group topic was education. Each person began by telling the story of "why" he or she was personally concerned about



education. Some personal experiences were so moving, she reported, “We were all in tears.” The group decided on a long-term, adaptive approach, not a quick-fix, technical one. “By the time students get to high school,” Portia laments, “it’s too late. They already may have been put on a course for non-success.” Sharing personal stories and applying an adaptive approach led the group to tackle an education project emphasizing early and continuing motivation of young students.

To further explain her small group’s project decision, Portia described a class visit to a local high school with two innovative, technical career-oriented programs (one robotics, the other certified nursing assistant). When a class member asked why more students were not being successful in these two excellent technical programs, the school administrator pointed to poor choices students made in middle school that too often started them on the road to failure before they ever arrived at the high school. After describing the class field trip, Portia again expressed pride in how her small group project had evolved:

The project itself, there was very little guidance, “Here’s \$300, go figure something out. And we did it! Seeing what everyone has done is really great. I am still amazed by the people in our class.

Portia then described networking with the “amazing people” in her whole class:

The individuals in our class have created a network within ourselves, using networking, paired with other ways of getting to know someone, and saying, ‘Hey look, I think you would be interested in this because of what you said.

It’s interesting, beyond my expectations. You can be really smart and want to be a leader, but if you don’t know anybody, you’re not going to be very effective. It is something that will go beyond just this course. So far, that’s been over the top of what I thought it would be.

In closing, Portia again jumped to her own conclusion without waiting for a question.

With hearty laughter, she admitted, “I know, I always jump the gun!” She concluded:

I love Promisestown. I think I have more of a commitment to make, especially now that I’m raising my son here and making this his town, his city, where he’s going to grow up. So being a role model, but also making the city the best it can be. That’s what’s important to me.

**Observation.** Portia was on a fast track in leadership, acting on her belief in the promise of Promisestown. She demonstrated commitment to serving the public good as an attorney, as a volunteer in higher education, and performing community service. She was especially motivated to help Promisestown be the best it could be today, while driving her vision forward, with her young son’s future clear in her focus.

Her story demonstrates engagement of all voices in an inclusive, interactive, respectful decision-making process, with community practice and action for a greater good.

### **Phillip, “Optimism overhaul”**

Phillip, age under 21, is Caucasian, a student planning a career in business. He described himself as growing up and continuing to be in the upper middle socio-economic category. He identified himself as a very liberal Republican.

At the time of the LGP Class of 2012, Phillip was student body president at his high school and a top honor student. He was in the midst of final decision-making on which college he would attend in the fall, one with a highly-rated business school. For the first interview, we met at an upscale coffee shop close to his school; subsequent interviews were at the public library. Throughout our conversations, Phillip compared and contrasted his past experiences with new ones and with his observations of others. About LGP: “Leadership Promisestown is

different, because you see it functioning in society, and you know you can apply it to your own life, whereas in high school you learn something basically for the sake of learning something.”

For Phillip, education mattered. “Education is a huge thing for me. I’m involved in most every aspect at my school and I’ve seen every type of student.” He described how students “just kind of go to school, they don’t do anything.” He reflected for a minute on society, especially missing a sense of community at his school, of people not caring nor feeling they belonged, and what he saw as a lack of “real” relationships with adults. “I was raised in a household where I saw success, and so I knew what it looked like. I knew what it could bring, as opposed to a lot of the time society today ...” He paused thoughtfully, then continued:

I think a lot of people lack that positive experience, so when you start with a negative I think it just continues the rest of your life (pauses then goes on) to where negativity is normal to you. So they live their lives like that.

Phillip paused again, with a sad look in his eyes, then added:

If something’s affecting someone and I see that it’s hurting them, I try to make things better for other people. I have to see the optimism in everything that surrounds me in school and the community.

In contrast to his school community, he described as “eye-opening” how he saw positive community engagement in LGP: “I see all these people who love their community and are super involved in their community.” He added he does not normally see that kind of engagement anywhere else, not at school or in the greater community. “I see lots of people in the community just living here, not doing anything to better it. They’ll talk about things they don’t like and they’ll never do anything to change it.” Throughout our interviews, Phillip repeatedly expressed his opinion about how an optimistic attitude could lead people toward positive changes in their lives, a more positive environment in his school, and positive changes in Promisestown. He

coined the term “optimism overhaul,” which others picked up and carried on after the class ended.

Besides sensing the positive civic engagement, another aspect of the program Phillip emphasized was the feeling of equality in the class, and of his own feeling of being accepted:

Another big thing I’ve loved about the program: the opportunity to interact with different personality types in the class, not just interact but to feel as though I’m their equal. For instance, I feel like instead of having all those people just being adults, I feel like they’re all my friends. It was hard for me at first, but being able to feel acceptance and see the benefits of being able to interact with adults on a more real level --- I think that is the most unique part of my story.

He then laughed at one of the more tangible results of his new relationship with adults in LGP:

“I’ve gotten more emails now than I’ve ever gotten in my life! It’s all of us interacting with each other to make sure we’re on the same page, that we all get a say in what we do.”

He described his experience at the retreat and an especially meaningful encounter during trust-building activities led by area Boy Scout staff. He admitted he was scared at first of not being respected by adults he surmised were highly successful community leaders. As Phillip recalled:

I still remember the very first day at the retreat, when one of the adults grabbed me and took me into jump rope with him. I was scared to interact with any of the adults. Just making small chat with them was what I had done my whole life, but this was such a different environment. That was the first step in forming a relationship with them, just like they formed a relationship with me. They let me know that just because I was young doesn’t mean that my opinion is any less valid.

He then told how the small group process helped, giving an opportunity for everyone to have a voice, as opposed to “when you’re with 30 people, it’s much harder for your voice to be heard.” He said one thing he would change in the curriculum was trying to have more small

group activities with other members of the class, saying he felt like he was “missing out” on getting to know other classmates better.

Phillip explained the positive feeling of equality that comes when everyone contributes: I think the passion for the community is what links us. I see my passion and I see that passion in every single person in the program. It’s different things for every person, but as soon as they hit their vision, as soon as they start talking about what matters to them, I see that same glimmer in everyone’s eye.

He continued to be analytical throughout our interviews, often contrasting his LGP experience with what he observed elsewhere: “In this program, everyone has a chance to speak, whereas in everything else I’m involved in, select people have a chance to speak. It’s because they have a title, either they earned it or they campaigned for it. I don’t think it’s right; it’s just human nature.”

As the class curriculum encourages, Phillip applied what he was learning in class within his own leadership experience. The contrast of LGP and his high school environment was stark. “Optimism is such a huge thing in the context of LGP that I’m trying to take it everywhere else in my life”. Phillip applied his new leadership skills in student council:

I’m motivated to make sure I hear every opinion, because now I realize I had been skipping out on a lot of important opinions—like, in student council, I started bringing in people from other clubs and from other activities, because decisions we were making were affecting them. So now, I get to know 20-30 more people, work with 20-30 more people, and hear 20-30 more opinions. Eventually that leads to a much more successful, happy environment for our school. I see it working. It’s nice to be able to take something from the leadership program, apply it at school, and then see it be successful.

Another contrast he drew was between what he experienced at school and in the LGP experiential learning process:

In school a lot of it is just theory. 'We'll teach you this. You may use it, you may not.' You never see it actually applied. You just learn the theory of it, whereas in Leadership Promisetown, you learn the application of it. We learn [theory and skills] in the morning and then we go see the practical application in the afternoon. That was probably my favorite part of every session. I knew in the afternoon we would get to go see what we just learned, being applied in our community. It's valuable, because you see it functioning in society, and you know it works, and you know you can apply it to your own life.

In closing, he referred to Kansas Leadership Center's philosophy, "Leadership is an activity, not a position. Anyone can lead anywhere, any time."

That probably is my biggest takeaway: Before the experiences in LGP, leadership was a very outer thing for me. It was about positions. 'If I'm president, I'm the leader.' Now I recognize and I try to be a much more inner leader to where even if I'm not president, I can still lead people, and I can still help others lead other people.

**Observation.** Phillip portrays an optimistic, analytical person, a student of human nature who gained skills and a new sense of leadership, particularly in his relationship to others. His leadership experience includes actual, practical application, using his new skills and awareness to make changes in his school community "to hear every opinion." His challenge for an "optimism overhaul" for the greater good of Promisetown will remain long after he leaves for a Midwestern college experience.

Phillip's story exhibits sensitivity to equality and inclusion, in his LGP experience and in his ability to create similar experiences in his school setting. It includes deepening understanding of community leadership, democratic group processes and leadership without a title and new skills in adaptive societal problem-solving for a greater good.

### **Peyton, "Pushing beyond the comfort zone"**

Peyton, age range 41-50, is Caucasian, an engineer in the business sector. His company sponsored his participation. He described himself as growing up in the lower middle class and

now as being in the middle socio-economic category. He identified himself as a moderate Republican.

Peyton, a civil engineer, wound a theme throughout our conversations of “pushing beyond the comfort zone.” Though he is a self-described pessimist, Peyton consistently appeared positive, helpful, and polite, in business-casual attire with an athletic look about him. All along, Peyton was quick to step up and help with the class, often arranging tables and helping with cleanup, as well as offering access to his business’ resources. He seemed quite comfortable discussing his work, family, and role in the community.

During our conversations, Peyton repeated that he wanted more push from the class experience and was trying to push himself to engage in more active leadership at work and in the community. His employer is a long-time LGP corporate sponsor, which guarantees a place in the class for one of its employees. This year was Peyton’s turn. He told how his office echoes the comfort zone theme. “At the office they say, ‘We want you to expand beyond your comfort zone so you grow and expand and get better.’” As an example of Peyton’s push for more internal leadership development, he wished the class had gone into more depth in identifying and responding to personal “triggers” as part of learning KLC’s leadership capacity of “Manage Self.” Here is how Peyton summed up the experience:

99% of us will go through this class and gain from it, but until we actively engage in what we learn to change society, nothing will happen. The hardest part is applying what we’ve learned. I admit I fall back into that rut.

Yet, instead of acting like a rut-hugger, Peyton leaped into applying the curriculum concept of adaptive problem-solving with skill and determination. In class discussions, he would point out the difference between technical and adaptive solutions. He did the same in explaining

his small group project. His intellectual grasp of doing and encouraging others to do adaptive work was unmistakable for one who called himself a “technical kind of a guy.”

For example, he adeptly explained adaptive leadership while describing his group’s community project, first with factual information, then with the decision-making process. “The one statistic driving a lot of our project direction, our cause, was 80% of all third graders who are not reading at third grade level will see a jail cell in their future.” He then described in detail how group members kept coming back to an adaptive solution, early literacy, not a technical one, building more jails. The group decided pushing the idea of helping young children learn to read would contribute to the greater good of society, particularly diverting money wasted on “the number of jail cells we have to build.”

This “technical kind of guy” offered insight into the emotional aspect of leadership. Although he laughingly disclaimed being an emotional person, he connected emotion and leadership. He commented on the various leadership quotes the director placed on tables and on the wall at each session and saw the emotional aspect. He summarized:

I’ve come to the realization, through this leadership class; emotion is part of the process. You have to have some emotion to help sell your message and get others on board.

One person Peyton brought “on board” was his teenage daughter, by involving her in his LGP experience. His pride was obvious as he told the story:

I’m involving my daughter in some of these conversations [throughout the class]. I asked her to come to our group event at the Boys and Girls Club. Within two minutes, she jumped in and started interacting with kids, and did a great job!

He commented that if he had “a crystal ball” and had known what a great job she would do, he would have had television cameras rolling so other high school students could have seen her example and been motivated to get involved. To him, showcasing his daughter’s example would



have been “the ideal scenario” for his small group project to have impact. He went on to say about his daughter:

She’s experiencing something she’d never done before, the opportunity to help others. And I gave her that. If nothing else, I’ve exposed my daughter to something bigger, something much bigger.

**Observation.** Peyton skillfully applied his intellectual grasp and application of KLC’s adaptive leadership concept in class discussions, while consistently offering assistance in class arrangements. While he questioned how much he and others would opt to use their leadership training to change society or whether they would stay in a “rut,” Peyton was engaging his daughter in civic life, “in something much bigger.”

His story shows application of adaptive leadership theory in decision-making for the common good and personal transformation (Chrislip & O'Malley, 2013), engagement in community-building by involving others, and actual practice in physical and social environments of the community.

### **Polly, “Cautiously optimistic”**

Polly, age under 21, is African-American, a student planning to major in psychology. She described herself as growing up and continuing to be in the lower socio-economic category. She identified herself as a moderate Democrat.

Polly was one of several highly qualified high school student leaders who competed along with adults to win a place in the Class of 2012. Throughout our interviews, Polly displayed a positive, albeit guarded, attitude about bettering public education by changing the culture as she saw it. Her greatest concern was street violence and gang activity. She referred to herself as being “cautiously optimistic,” a term she learned from the high school principal charged with raising the academic standards of her high school. She expressed passion about

helping others succeed through motivation and education and by helping people acquire skills for a successful life journey.

This cautiously optimistic young woman was applying her LGP insight to the culture she wanted to help change. Midway through the LGP class, she wrote in a letter to her principal, "Our school needs to work on changing the culture and encouraging students to take pride in their school image and in themselves." She applied the LGP concept of adaptive leadership: "This is an adaptive problem that will only be accomplished over time. Many students' self images aren't so great, so we need to find out what they care about, listening to students' voices." She went on to say she now realized the value of adults telling their stories of success or failure so students can connect to adults on a personal level, using teachers as a positive example. She closed her letter with this: "Our students need more interaction with positive influences and interesting stories, just more interaction with positive people from our high school community." So what would be next for Polly, so she could continue to help change the culture?

An excellent student, Polly was exploring her options for which university to attend in the fall. Although she was encouraged to join the military with college expenses a part of that package, Polly was determined to go to college independently, doing whatever it would take in part-time jobs, financial aid, and scholarships. She eventually settled on a university in the family's home state of Mississippi. She planned to return to Promisetown after graduation to help improve her areas of concern within the community and to continue to be a role model for her two younger siblings.

Polly described starting early in life to seek a variety of leadership and learning opportunities at school, in Junior R.O.T.C., and in the social service network. Now she was exploring these opportunities in the greater community. Although she told of always being

supported by her parents, she acknowledged spending time in foster care with extended family, expressing appreciation for the life skills taught by counselors along the way. She described her leadership style as analytical, constantly seeking better understanding of diverse people and places, while staying focused on her goals and on the greater good of society.

In the following account, she described a small core group activity the second day of the opening class retreat:

When we had a kind of a show-and-tell, when we brought something in a paper bag, I was seeing what was important to others. They had their family—they mainly brought pictures of their family and things like that. I really didn't think too much about telling about my family, because—you know, they have a ways to go. So I brought something about myself to show and tell how I overcame racism my freshman year. That kind of thing ties into Leadership Greater Promisestown, because it's such a diverse group. Being a diverse group, they want all the input from everyone, male, female, black, white.

Polly described herself as feeling “somewhat liberated” in LGP, observing that everyone listened and everyone was free to offer opinions, say how they feel about various topics, and offer each other positive feedback.

She went on to explain how and why she learned to speak up to educate people about minority stereotypes. The following was the story she shared about what happened when she encountered racism at a summer camp her freshman year:

This was one of my very first realizations I needed to speak up. There were some things said about me, and so I'm like, 'Hold on, this is not true. Maybe they're just curious and they're trying to figure things out.

What I'm saying is that sometimes minorities believe that others have this view of them. So, they're more standoffish and they keep to themselves. Instead of going out and trying to interact with diverse society, they try to stay on the path of where they think they're supposed to be.

Like her LGP classmate Paul, Polly talked about educating people to counteract racial stereotypes: “One of the things about Leadership Greater Promisestown, there are some people who don’t understand—they’re not, like, stupid, they’re just kind of untaught about some things.” She later applied the same concept to some citizens’ opposition to Promisestown’s downtown development project that the majority of her LGP class supported. She reasoned that opponents simply need more education to understand the overall value of any particular issue, project, or cultural group.

She said she wished the class had spent more time learning from each other in the small core groups that began at the retreat and less time in the community project groups. She wondered out loud if some of the people in her community project group considered students in the group as true equals, being able actually to contribute something in the community project. “I wonder if some in my project group are really hearing all voices,” she said. She then laughed as if she had a sudden insight, “but I didn’t always express my opinion.”

She told how the community project group experience helped her want to express herself more. “It helped me be more open and wanting to say, ‘Why can’t we do this or that?’” She explained that she did not feel like she was getting as much out of the project as she “should be.” Once again, she integrated her thoughts, applying the learning experience to her future: “So now for the future, I know that if I want to be somewhat satisfied, I need to say things.” She added, however, it was probably okay at the time because she judged, “It would have been a little inconvenient because we had a time schedule to finish the project.”

Looking back on the class, Polly singled out learning the LGP skill of facilitation. “I think facilitation is good for diversity. Facilitation makes it easier.” She explained how she sees

facilitation working when everyone has a say, from many different backgrounds, and how the concept of facilitation could be applied in different ways:

A facilitator is somebody who understands diversity and that they can bring people together and learn how to get somebody to say something and another person who is different to say something else, and learn from their time together. I see how facilitation can come in different ways. I don't think it necessarily has to be a person facilitating people; it could just be through some *thing* besides words.

She applied the concept of facilitation to community-building in her old neighborhood among folks she said did not trust one another. She described how they came together spontaneously in a community space for a cookout, surprising themselves by sharing a variety of food from multi-ethnic households.

There was a White family who lived here, and right next door there was a Black family, and right next door there was a Hispanic family. So it was right there, but nobody talked. If there was a barbeque, that would be the facilitation.

She saw what turned out to be a positive experience for everyone – *facilitating* or making it easier for people to better understand one other when sharing a meal.

Polly's closing words capture her personal leadership journey and LGP experience:

There are more things to life than just what you see. You need to go and poke in the pod and try to open up doors and experience different things. I've done that through Leadership Greater Promisestown. And there's a whole lot more. Diversity, being able to have more diverse experiences, is pretty much the only way we can move forward as a whole, a society, and a nation.

**Observation.** Polly easily communicated her past and future leadership development, connecting it with family, school, and community. Although feeling “liberated” to express herself, she was quick to analyze her choices before making decisions, either in her group project or about her future. She expanded her explanation of diversity beyond racial terms to include new people, places, and concepts she experienced in LGP. Polly applied LGP skill of facilitation

to her commitment to make it easier for people to come together and move forward. She applied both insight and determination toward accomplishing her life goals – and was determined to help change the culture for community betterment.

Polly's story tells of seeking and valuing new and diverse community voices and strengthening her own voice and skill to decide when to have input. She expressed a desire to seek the greater good, with a new ability to facilitate interaction and change in broad social and physical environments.

### **Pierce, "Filling in the canvas"**

Pierce, age range 41-50, is Caucasian, a banker in the business sector. His company sponsored his participation. He described himself as growing up in the upper middle and now being in the middle to upper middle socio-economic category. He identified himself as a conservative Republican.

Pierce was the picture of a banker, conservatively dressed in coat and tie during our interviews. He described the situation when he recently came to work in Promisettown: "It was just a white canvas - as far as customers, networking, and things of that nature. LGP has been a wonderful opportunity for me to start filling in that painting, if you will." Not surprisingly for a banker, Pierce viewed LGP in terms of investment. He invited me to meet for our interviews in a conference room of the downtown bank where he works. Although he was new to Promisettown, he had been employed in banks elsewhere in his native state of Kansas. He viewed this bank as different. Although his previous employers cared about their customers, he noted this bank not only cares about customers but also cares about and invests in its community.

As evidence of this hometown bank's investment, Pierce is the seventh LGP participant sponsored by the bank, which means sponsorship dollars plus guaranteeing a place in the class.

Two bank employees, both LGP graduates and active volunteers in the community, greeted me as I entered the bank. As I walked by a large inner window, the bank president waved from behind his desk. He too is a Leadership Promisestown grad, active in the Chamber of Commerce and in many aspects of the LGP program. Pierce spoke about how class members came together with the same purpose, whether their employers sponsored them, paid their tuition, or whether they found a way to pay for the class themselves:

The reason we're in the class is because we've either convinced our employers to invest in us, or some classmates have decided to make the investment themselves. All have a true desire to become involved in the community and make a difference by actually investing themselves in the community.

Although he suggested his employer nominated him for LGP primarily to network for business development, Pierce saw the opportunity included personal and social development:

Personally, I have a bigger picture, new acquaintances, new friends, and a new outlook on everything. It gives me a much deeper background on where we live and work. I see the framework is all here - with things I didn't know existed. Now I am better able to connect bank customers with the resources they need.

Pierce reflected on the investment LGP makes in the future by selecting high school student participants for the class. He laughed as he talked in glowing terms about the high school students in his class:

They're just outstanding kids. There are times when I think these aren't normal high school kids. They're more focused, I think, than your average high school kid. You really need to throw in a flavor of kids that are typical high school kids.

He went on to describe his vision of retaining young people in the community:

My issue going into this, my passionate spot was keeping young people in Promisestown - and not losing them to get a job wherever else. I'm starting to see all the quality people in the community who offer just as much, probably in a better setting, than another city would offer.

Other than valuing the information presented, Pierce talked about his perception of the learning process, sometimes comfortable and sometimes uncomfortable. He had trouble in earlier class sessions, feeling uncomfortable with the silence of focused reflection, which routinely occurs at the beginning of each session. He wondered, “Why don’t they just get on with it!” However, looking back, he appreciated how group reflection provided an opportunity for everyone to think and contribute one’s thoughts.

Besides the guest speakers, tours, and networking, Pierce valued and found cohesion in both of the small group curriculum components. First, at the retreat the director divided class members into six small core groups based on diverse characteristics and encouraged them to share their unique stories and leadership styles. The second small group configuration was according to common community passions. The second small groups were charged with developing short-term community projects. Pierce reflected: “The core groups, the common bond is more, ‘You’re one of us.’ Yet, you’re the one with this personality trait or that one. Then in the second, it’s the project that’s the common bond.” Pierce then summarized the LGP curriculum:

I don’t know how they do it, how it is planned or has been researched. It’s pretty ingenious, I think, the way most of it happens - with information, insights, and shifts in your thinking.

**Observation.** The LGP experience helped Pierce add to his white canvas with graphic images of his new community. His main interest in LGP was to learn what Promisestown offered to help keep young people in town for education and career opportunity. He ended the class positioned to make good on his own and on his employer’s investment in LGP, now seeing himself in the picture, ready to serve the community as he learns of new opportunities.



Pierce's story emphasizes community-building. His goal for his LGP participation was to learn more about education opportunity and community resources, so he could match what the community offered with individual bank customers' hopes and needs. His leadership goal focused on assisting individuals in their pursuit of success for a greater quality of life in the community.

### **Parker, "Connecting the dots"**

Parker, age range 21-30, is Caucasian, a university student planning a career in the business sector. He described himself as growing up and continuing to be in the upper middle socio-economic category. He identified himself as a conservative Republican.

After four years in Promisestown as a student with a business major and leadership minor, Parker thought about how and where to begin his career and community life in Promisestown. He looked forward to learning how various people and places fit together in the community. Parker's goal for his LGP experience was more about learning how the community works and less about his own leadership development. He expressed satisfaction with his university's leadership curriculum and his prior leadership experience in the small Midwestern community where he grew up. Parker questioned whether LGP would have any effect on his leadership development. He admitted he was observing and evaluating the program for academic credit, while comparing and contrasting his own previous leadership training, adding, "I'll just have to see, to see if there's any change."

What interested him most was learning the deeper connections of the community he planned to make his home. He explained:

What I was looking forward to the most and probably what I've drawn from the most, is figuring out what's out there in the community, why and how it works together, connecting the dots.

As a university student he said he had heard about unique community attractions, but only in wisps of information. “I hear about places in the community, just those little whispers that you hear. Then when you actually go to these places, you take in the whole image.” He saw the biggest advantage of the LGP program was gaining a deeper understanding and appreciation of the connections involved in economic and community development. He specifically appreciated learning about the cooperative development of the new nonprofit children’s museum - with support of city and county governments and the parks and recreation department. Another example he cited was the economic development collaboration – business, government, and vocational/university leadership – resulting in a major national company’s decision to build a new plant in Promisestown.

When I asked the interview question about voice, his own and others emerging within the class, Parker once again had a quick, almost whimsical response. He laughed when beginning to explain his own voice, “For the first time I’m trying to control all of my impulsive questions because I could ask questions 24/7.” He continued:

I’m going to answer this from an observer’s standpoint, because I’m at that time in life where you really don’t know what your voice is, because you’re trying to find that, and you’re supposed to be moving around. So I won’t be able to concretely define my own. I did notice there are some people in the class that have really obvious voices in both the large and the small groups.

He offered his definition of voice as “the impact people have on others when they communicate.” He then commented on a few of his classmates, who were not among those interviewed in the study. He pointed out Patti with her obvious passion for connecting people and the arts in Promisestown. He then described Penelope, followed by Perseus:

Penelope is kind of that silent back-row kind of person who wants to understand everything before, so she can help you later. She's kind of like a shoveler. She wants to shovel all the information. Of course, she works in a library.

Then there is Perseus. His voice just comes in a huge package. I appreciate what he has to say most of the time, because I think he represents what a lot of people don't say or don't ask.

When Parker described *voice* as the impact people have on others, he first mentioned some of his classmates. He continued by describing how the LGP curriculum structure effectively involved people from outside the class. For example, he appreciated having different day chairs for each of the seven sessions, "getting a different flavor" for each session. He was referring to volunteer day chairs from the Planning Committee who contribute their expertise and help organize each session. For Parker, Baskin-Robbins type variety was important, as he was prone to become bored and quick to connect to his iPhone and iPad, or simply "zonk out." As he explained, "We come from a world where I'm connected everywhere. And you sit me in a classroom? Really?" On the other hand, he was surprised he actually "connected" with speakers he had anticipated would be boring, citing the three-superintendent panel on Education Day. And others? He explained that by listening to some of the speakers he thought would be boring, he found a way to connect, and then added his opinion the curriculum "could still be more dynamic."

Parker ended our second interview with an evaluation of the overall effect the class was having on him:

The journey's not over, but I don't think there have been major revelations yet. I got to know the community better. I think I have a better grasp of how the different parts of the community are represented, how individuals from each part are doing things in their own separate ways and across boundaries of our community. I think the biggest thing is understanding how those interactions and connections work – and my connecting my own dots."

**Observation.** Parker was in the transition from four years at the local university to thinking about a job after graduation. He was clear he was in the class to observe and to learn about the community, and that he was neither seeking nor expecting to experience leadership development. He also acknowledged he was getting college credit for writing a paper on LGP for his university leadership class.

For Parker, connecting his own dots was his priority and not actual leadership development. Although his purpose for class participation ran counter to the purpose of LGP, his story does tell of increased community awareness in broad social and physical environments.

### **Phaedra, “Building an arsenal” “Saving the world”**

Phaedra, age range 31-40, is Caucasian/Hispanic, a credit union administrator in the non-profit sector. She described herself as growing up and continuing to be in the middle socio-economic category. She identified herself as a very conservative Republican.

In community awareness, trust in others, and confidence in having a positive impact, Phaedra was building her arsenal of leadership skills and determination. She described the LGP class as providing “ammunition for when you get those skeptics out in the crowd” and also helping “to arm” her with greater capability to respond to people and issues. Her tough talk aside, Phaedra exuded sensitivity, awareness, and caring for others, especially children and youth, along with a passion for education. Phaedra was banking resources through LGP in order to make a greater difference in the world.

A former banker, Phaedra appeared happy with her career change to a leadership position in the nonprofit credit union industry. “It’s just different—it’s not so cutthroat, it’s cooperative. We’re working together to take care of our people.” She expressed surprise that regardless of occupation or position, LGP classmates were building trust in one another in such a short time,

beginning immediately at the opening retreat. She described classmates as forthcoming, transparent, and helpful in sharing “work stuff” with a non-competitive attitude. She was especially appreciative of a new network of trust with other finance professionals in the class.

We met in her office, with her desk overlooking the large lobby area. Although she was engaged in our conversation, her eyes often showed interest in the sights and sounds outside the windows of her office. Phaedra’s satisfaction with her current position was apparent when she explained how her banking background and community volunteerism contribute to her ability to help her customers find the resources they need.

Like Portia and others, Phaedra expressed appreciation that the education process of LGP was open and sought everyone’s opinions and was based on seeing and doing, not just listening. She commented how the curriculum immerses the class in a particular sector each session. Phaedra showed her own passion for education, evident in her LGP application and throughout our interviews. She cited the daylong session on education as her example of the learning process. On Education Day, Session 4, the class toured education sites, including a vocational-technical school and the municipal university. Besides hearing from higher education administrators, the class also had conversations with a mix of rural and urban public school superintendents. Phaedra described the process:

Just immersing in the whole culture and having people answer our questions and educate us on what their various views are. For example, having the university president talking about the transformation of the campus – it created a lot more buy-in to the leadership skills we were learning that day.

She went on to describe other typical trainings as one-sided: “You’re usually only getting one side of the story. They don’t ask you what you think or what your opinion is, or ‘How does that make you feel?’” I followed by asking what she thought or felt about Education Day. With her voice almost trembling, her passion for education and children began to surface:

There was so much information I learned that I had never even been exposed to. Those numbers were staggering, 76% of students in Promisestown's urban school district on the reduced lunch program. That's huge. It breaks my heart—if their socio-economic status is so bad to have to be on reduced lunch, not that there's anything wrong with that, but just—

They're worried about a lot different things than what we're worried about. They're worried about putting food on the table, making sure there's a roof over their heads, staying warm at night - Stuff my kids hopefully are blessed enough they'll never have to worry about.

How do you take care of that when you're trying to teach kids in the classroom, when they don't even have the food to be able to nourish their bodies? It's just heart-wrenching.

When I asked why she did not participate more in the conversation that day, Phaedra had quit looking out her office window. She worried out loud about people thinking she was “a snob” or thinking she thought she was better than anyone else because her children attended private schools. In the voice of a mother, she defended her choice, wanting to keep her children “in a bubble” as long as she could. She alternated between objectively extolling the positive aspects she was learning about public schools and then subjectively considering her own children and the value of private schooling for them. All the while she weighed in on her sadness for children less fortunate than her children. At moments she had tears in her eyes, sitting quietly, before refocusing on the conversation.

Phaedra echoed what other classmates expressed about the adaptive leadership concept in the LGP curriculum. She was thinking out loud:

I think people—they don't get the big picture. I don't think we will ever get the big picture unless we take the time to sit down and say, “What is it like for you guys? What are your struggles?” And what are the positives?

I think the most powerful thing a lot of us got from the education session was the socio-economic impact of what some people are dealing with. And how do you fix it? It roots from the home, not from the school. How do you get past that? Although my passion is for children and youth, and for those who teach, it 's almost too emotional to express, just seeing children in those situations. It breaks my heart.

As our interview continued, Phaedra's eyes danced with excitement when talking about her work engaging high school students and teaching them financial literacy. She commented about helping to break the cycle of self-destructive financial practices, continuing generation after generation. She added, "I've always wanted to be a teacher. It's one of my goals to get my masters and then hopefully a doctorate later on, not in education, but within my current field, hopefully to change lives."

Although recognizing she already is helping to change lives, Phaedra hoped to discover in LGP how she could have greater impact. Perhaps her greatest insight was how small acts in public settings outside of schools can change lives and contribute to the greater good. The insight came when fellow classmate Penelope, who works at the public library, became emotional about the young people who come to the library with little support or resources at home – and described how as a librarian she knows her interaction with them is making a positive difference in their lives. Although Phaedra had been taking her children to the public library regularly, she began to see the library through a wider lens:

Penelope really got me choked up when she was talking about just how—the way she impacts people just by her everyday job working at the library. I told her, "I never even thought about that." And then the next Saturday, when I took my daughter to the library, I was a lot more observant.

She told about noticing the older children in the library who were responsible for little ones and seeing the need for clean diapers, even wondering if she might bring extra diapers on her next

visit. Phaedra gained insight through the voice of a classmate about the public library's place in so many people's lives, every day, and the contribution her classmate was making.

Like others, Phaedra talked about the value of social and professional networking in LGP, and valuing class diversity. She referred to all 37 classmates as helpful resources toward achieving both her personal and professional life goals and expressed confidence she could call on any one of them for help in the future. As she talked about the diversity in the class, she cited the example of Paul and Perry:

I believe having Paul in our group has been tremendous in the aspect of 1) he is a strong African-American leader, and 2) he's disabled. But yet, he's still doing it. He's amazing. He brings a great element to everybody. Even when I see him with Perry, going back and forth, jiving at each other just like they're old-time frat buddies. I think it's great to be able to see them being able to engage. Because they're two people who probably would have never, ever met on the streets and started talking to each other about different things.

Phaedra shared her closing thoughts:

The engagement of everyone coming together - it's like we're our own little community learning about each other. "What do you do to make a difference? Oh, OK, I never even thought about that." Then we can transfer who we are and what we're learning to the greater community.

Phaedra ended the last session a hearty laugh, "We are saving the world. We're working on it one day at a time."

**Observation.** Armed with an arsenal of new resources, leadership skills, insight, and a broader network of contacts, Phaedra gained confidence in her ability to contribute to community betterment. She began to see the public library in a new democratic light. She questioned the public good intended by public education for most, in comparison to the private benefit of



independent schooling for some; it is a question she is likely to explore further as she considers her future career goals.

Her story points out the public library and public education as being equal access institutions existing for the common good. Her story conveys the leadership challenge of determining why this democratic society is not breaking the cycle of generations living in poverty.

### **Perry and Paul, “The twain do meet”**

When Phaedra talked about class diversity, she cited Perry and Paul. “They’re two people who probably would have never, ever met on the streets, but they still engage and talk about things that matter.” Indeed, their leadership stories and voices within LGP are as different as their basic profiles, yet their stories come together in a story of community building. Before I describe each individual’s LGP story, a short juxtaposition of the two is necessary. At the end of both profiles, Paul’s story culminates with an account of how and when the twain did meet.

First is Perry. Perry is in his thirties, Caucasian, who is an established young professional in the insurance business. He identified himself as a moderate Republican. He described growing up wealthy and now being in the upper middle socio-economic category.

He is a native of Promisestown, educated in local private schools, as were generations of his family before him. He was quick to express pride in his private education, his many leadership trainings, following his father in the family business, and his wife who is an LGP graduate. We met twice in his private office, which was large and well-appointed, with hues of red, awards displayed, large bookcases, and a brick fireplace along one wall.

Next is Paul. Paul, age range 21-30, is African-American, a student planning a career in the government sector. He described himself as growing up in the middle and now being in the lower middle socio-economic category. He identified himself as a very liberal Democrat.

Paul is a 24-year-old university student, an African-American, who was about to graduate with a B.A. in political science. He is a “preacher’s kid” from a military family, the first in his family to finish college. He graduated from high school in a nearby community with an active military installation. In May, the class applauded his selection as a summer intern in Washington D.C. for U.S. House of Representatives Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi. For convenience and in consideration of Paul’s disability due to cerebral palsy, we met in two accessible locations: first in a study room at the public library and second in the law school courtroom on his university’s campus.

Both Perry and Paul used symbols when talking about their framework for community leadership. Perry referred to community leadership as “the puzzle” in which he carefully chooses on which piece to focus, leaving the rest to others. Paul metaphorically talked about using a “magnifying glass,” preferring to see the whole picture in detail with a wide-angle lens. While Perry claimed he was not in the class for personal development but “just to check it off his list,” Paul was using the class to learn whatever he could to develop his internal leadership skills. Perry shunned what he perceived as an “emotional” aspect in leadership education, saying he does not even like the word “feeling.” Paul used the word “love” 15 times in our interviews. Next are their individual LGP profiles beginning with Perry, the realist, followed by Paul, the visionary.

**Perry, the realist.** At our first interview in his office, Perry invited me to sit opposite him at his desk while he finished his current work on his computer, before turning his chair

toward me and his attention to the interview. Almost immediately, Perry emphasized three points about himself: (a) getting the job done; (b) leaving out the fluff; and (c) having a good time. He repeated those themes throughout our interviews. The third point, “having a good time” was confirmed by frequent laughing, more times than in my other interview transcripts.

Perry described himself:

I’m more of a no-nonsense guy. I like to have fun with everything, but when it comes to fluff, leave it out, “We’ve got to get the job done.” A lot of the things I deal with, you need to be that way.... Just get it done and figure it out later.

He added in a more serious tone, “I’d like to think I’m very good at knowing the situation I’m in.”

When Perry emphasized he had attended many other leadership courses, I asked why he decided to apply for this class. His response:

I was looking forward to being part of this class, because I know a lot of people who have done it, and to check it off the list, so you can move on to bigger and better things, down this certain road. That’s the way Promisetown works. You’ve got to be networked in to be able to do some stuff. That’s just reality.

He rejected other components of LGP: “I didn’t get in this leadership class with any aspirations whatsoever to try to develop my emotional side. I have one, but I’m not trying to do that.” His next comment ran counter to a core aspect of the LGP curriculum: “I don’t deal with a lot of that community activism stuff.”

Despite being clear that his purpose in participating in LGP was simply to check it off the list and move on, Perry offered a positive view of how LGP differs from his previous leadership trainings:

It’s more engaging. I get more excited about it. It gives me opportunities in the downtime to talk to other people in the class instead of just sitting there being talked at,

like in most others. You get to deal with real community leaders, not just learning *about* leadership. No matter what I do, I don't want it to be boring.

Because Perry is in sales, he goes to many conferences with motivational speakers. As he put it, LGP was more fun:

Other conferences I go to, you don't look forward to them, because they start to sound the same after a while, when you go to four or five a year. This is different, because you get to tour places and talk to different leaders. I *actually* look forward to it.

We laughed together at his sarcastic-sounding remark. He explained: "I know how to get people to laugh. The easy way to do it is to be sarcastic. I say negative things about something just to make light of it, although I'm not a negative person."

He offered another example of his sarcasm and realism, reflecting on the LGP neighborhood bus tour. He cited the example of a woman the class met who was trying seemingly single-handedly to bring back a deteriorating neighborhood. She pointed out her run-down housing development and told stories about dysfunctional families living there and her feelings about their children. She shared her hopes and dreams with the class, of rebuilding both the neighborhood structure and its families. Perry's response in our interview was a sarcastic, "Really? Some things I see as a lost cause. Tear it down! Sometimes it's better to start new."

Through all his self-ascribed sarcasm, humor, and realism, Perry spoke positively about the different kinds of people who make a community. In closing, the fun-loving Perry used the metaphor of a puzzle to describe community leadership: "You need them all. It takes all the pieces to make it work."

**Observation.** Perry had his priorities clearly in mind. He gave credit to others who were concerning themselves with various aspects of the community he identified as not being "his problem." He looked for opportunity in economic development and fundraising in support of his

favorite projects. Perry's story emphasized the private sector and economic prosperity as contributions to community good.

**Paul, the visionary.** Paul, the university student, did not hesitate to talk about his feelings and insights regarding his LGP experience. He explained he had come full circle from the beginning retreat to the end of the class. "In this class everybody has an active role in educating each other, because you can't lead people by solely looking through your own eyes. Now that it's all over, it all fits." So what were some of his feelings, thoughts, and experiences that led to his full-circle change of thinking? Paul described the process like many classmates:

At first I was anxious. I remember feeling very unsure if I was of the caliber of all the other people in the program. And then after the retreat and after our first couple of sessions, all of those feelings have subsided and I just feel like a part of the group.

However, his explanation of how he most often encounters new situations was unique:

Coming into new situations, you're just acutely aware of your differences. So being an African-American with a disability, I already kind of get looked at quite a bit. I'm used to people looking, and I've learned to turn that into an opportunity to dismantle stereotypes and all those things. In the back of my mind whenever I enter a new situation, "Am I going to have to participate in educating these people about who I am versus coming in here and actually learning?"

He explained he wanted LGP to be a different experience; he just wanted to sit back and learn.

He hoped he would not feel like he had to begin immediately, as was his custom, breaking down stereotypes about people with disabilities or African-Americans:

I didn't want to have to tell people the environment was not safe for me or to say or to tell people they have a misconception about African-Americans, that not all live in low socio-economic neighborhoods or speak with improper English and grammar. And I haven't had to address those issues in Leadership Promisetown.

I like that I've been able to participate in things and just be able to sit back and learn through this experience. Now, I welcome the opportunity to educate people. We're all able to learn from each other differently. ... Everybody has an active role in educating each other.

Explaining how the group process worked for him, Paul liked that no two conversations were alike. Compared to learning from the class presenters, he gained the most from hearing many different perspectives “from people sitting at my table and the table next to me and the table next to them.” The different perspectives of people and their uniqueness intrigued him. “I'm a visionary, so I really like to just have ideas and think about how phenomenal they're going to be. But when it comes to organizing it, making the detailed list and all of that, that's not my style.” He laughed at realizing he had been surrounding himself with friends who thought and saw the world like he did, adding his new insight, “No wonder we couldn't get anything done!”

Paul applied to his career interest in politics the LGP concept of making sure every stakeholder has a seat at the table in decision-making that affects the stakeholder's life:

I took a lot of what we talked about in making organizations successful and applied it to the political spectrum. Because in politics, we talk about Democratic and Republican, and we automatically assume that it's not going to work. But if you take away those titles and say, “All right, this is our common goal. How can we come together to get back to that common goal of prosperity for our country?” And if we learned how to do that, I think it would be pretty phenomenal.

I feel that at the end of the day, my voice is one that is trying to—this is so cheesy—spread love. I'm trying to spread love through my voice, so when I'm having these conversations about politics, it's because I want people to be informed. I want them to make informed decisions...

I really want them to love one another and understand that we are so much more alike than we think we are. I hope my voice is used to spark a new way of thinking and learning.

In closing, Paul summarized LGP:

You have a magnifying lens that teaches you how to be the best person you can be in your relationships, the best employee you can be in your workforce, the best change agent you can be in your community. I love it that LGP is nurturing the person to develop their skills, equipping them to make more powerful communities. So, if anything, Leadership Greater Promisestown itself is a community.<sup>5</sup>

**Observation.** Paul went into more detail about his conversations with classmates than any other interviewee. He described specific conversations he had with eight different classmates, but still wished he could get to know more people in his class. He recounted sharing conversations about hopes and dreams for the future, and specific conversations on immigration, poverty, race, education disparity, and law enforcement. Not only did he have conversations with Perry, as Phaedra observed, but Paul was eager to converse “about things that matter” with everyone in the class.

Paul’s story represents the American dream of a new generation gaining a college degree. It includes the challenges of gaining equal access in social and physical environments. His story speaks of equal opportunity, prosperity, mutual respect, acceptance, diversity of thought, politics and political issues, and the pursuit of the common good.

**Paul’s conversations and developing relationship with Perry.**

I’ve had the conversions with Perry. For example, I saw him at a bar a couple weeks ago, and he came up to me and he said, “I’ve just really enjoyed having you in class.” We poked fun at each other, and he was talking to my friends about me. It was shocking because I never knew he observed me that much. He said, “I saw him trying to get up from the chair, and somebody extended their hand, and he said, ‘No, I got it’ and he did it himself.”

So the Education Day, during a class discussion, I'd mentioned disparities in education based on race, and Perry came to me later and said he didn't know that existed, didn't know that children were dealing with a lot more than he had to when growing up. He didn't know that kids had to come home and take care of little kids and didn't know that kids had to come home and not have dinner on the table by 5:30 like he did.

So then we kind of broke it down and then I started talking about race, obviously, and he just said, "I don't—I've never experienced that, and so I don't know how I can effect change about something that I don't fully understand yet. This has really opened my eyes."

So for me, it was a moment of, "Thank God I hadn't gone on the defense and challenged his misconceptions." It came full circle. That occasion opened my eyes to really opening up to people. Perry's educated. Perry's a nice guy. He is 34 and didn't understand racial disparity in Promisestown. And that's no fault of his own. Now that it's all over, it all fits.

**Observation.** Perry and Paul's stories exemplify a relationship that began in the class and continued into the greater community. The "twain did meet" as members of one leadership class. Juxtaposing their profiles reveals a common bond between one who focuses only on a few pieces of the community puzzle and another who peers through a magnifying glass to see the whole community in detail. As Phaedra described, "Two people who probably would have never, ever met on the streets, but they still engage and talk about things that matter."

This story depicts developing positive relationships and new ways of thinking about people in the community who are different from oneself, which is a fundamental ideal in this study's framework of democracy education.



### **Pam, “Digging in ... digging deeper”**

Pam, age range 21-30, is Caucasian, in advertising and marketing in the business sector. She described herself as growing up in the upper middle and now being in the middle to upper middle socio-economic category. She identified herself as a liberal Democrat.

As a young professional in an advertising agency, Pam came to LGP ready to “dig in” and learn all she could about her new community. Although she lived in Promisestown as a toddler, her family moved to a tiny rural town some distance away where she grew up. After graduating from a nearby state university, Pam accepted her current position and returned to Promisestown. At her suggestion to accommodate her busy schedule, we held her interviews at her workplace between her appointments. We sat on tall stools around a small table, literally under the big spotlights in her agency’s studio.

Pam found the culture of Promisestown markedly different from that of her small town. “The exposure during the program has changed my views.” The greatest change she noted was her changing perception of children and education, which she called her most passionate issue:

I think the whole process has opened my eyes to some of the bigger problems in Promisestown, and how some of the bigger problems are hurting education. We have good teachers. But when kids have bigger problems to worry - like, are they going to be able to eat at night, do they have a roof over their head. Then how can education really do good when the kids as young as five have to go home and worry about that?

Following a visit to the Boys and Girls Club as part of her class project, Pam commented on the need for mentoring children without a strong family base. She described how using adaptive leadership she was able to “dig in” beyond the surface:

It’s something you know exists, but to actually be there and see it. I wasn’t able to dig into what problems really were and how to fix the problems. It goes back to what we’re learning in the class - about adaptive vs. technical – and now I take that concept back and try to use it every day.

This previously small town girl, who described her family as ideal, was changing her previous perceptions based on LGP's experiential learning and reflection. For example, Pam commented on the phrase "pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps:"

I have spent a lot of time since I started Leadership Greater Promisestown trying to figure out — My grandparents were well off, and they helped put my parents in a position of being well off, and they've helped put me in a position of being well off. You always hear the old saying, 'Pull yourself up by your bootstraps and make something of yourself.' How do you do that when you don't have anything supporting you? How do people pull themselves up, people who aren't as lucky as I have been in my life, to get to be as lucky as I am?

Yet another class experience challenged her perspective. The class boarded a bus and toured several troubled neighborhoods, meeting people in each neighborhood who were working to transform the community in which they lived. Pam expressed, "I was shocked at how one person can make so much of a difference with the little bit they have." She reflected on her current volunteer work as technical, "great work, great stuff that needs to be done by someone" but not making a big difference. As the class progressed, she considered dropping some of her current volunteer work to become involved in a more adaptive endeavor.

After LGP Session 6, Government Day, in which elected officials visited the class, Pam commented on the need for good quality people to run for office, citing LGP alumni who see the big picture, referring to them as process people, adaptive thinking people. When I asked the obvious follow-up question, whether she would ever consider running herself, she hastened to reply, "No, absolutely not! Too many problems to deal with!" But after a moment of reflection, she added, "Well, maybe school board. Although there are still a whole handful of issues, at least you can more easily see the big picture. Maybe school board."

Not surprisingly, when asked about the class' best practices, Pam replied, "Reflection." She described how she was taking this new skill and adaptive thinking into her professional work with her agency's clients: "If I spend just a little bit more time going deeper, asking the "Why" question, and reflecting more on what they say, I get to know somebody better, to better anticipate their needs."

Individual and group reflection to gain and share insight on learning experiences was a process continually practiced in the LGP curriculum. Often immediately after an activity or a presentation by a speaker, sometimes at the end of the day's class session, and almost always at the beginning of a new session; the director would ask class members to reflect on what they had seen, experienced, learned, and questioned. Pam described the practice of class reflection as well-suited to her style of learning:

I can't just say what I think right away when I first learn something. I go home and process it and think about it. It has to sink in. I have to have time to think about it from every angle. Then at the beginning of the next class, when you're talking about it and you hear a classmate explaining something, it reminds you of something else related back to the last class maybe you didn't realize.

Pam's digging in and digging deeper into the community and herself resulted in her changing focus. "My focus and my vision now - it's not just about one particular problem, it's about the whole picture."

**Observation.** Pam's idyllic background growing up contrasted with a broader reality she experienced in LGP. From her community volunteer work to her work with clients, she was applying the 'digging deeper' concept and seeing a much larger picture. She was even beginning to imagine herself on a local school board.

Pam's story conveys hope for more equal opportunity for people less fortunate, especially equal access to education opportunity. Her newly acquired skills, especially questioning and reflection, contribute to her thinking about desirable traits in politics and politicians. She questioned the concept of Americans being able to raise themselves up by their bootstraps, without support.

### **Princeton, “Life-changing” – “Step to democracy”**

Princeton, age under 21, is a naturalized African-American, a student planning a career in medicine. He described himself as growing up and continuing to be in the lower middle socio-economic category. He identified himself as a moderate Independent.

When Princeton talked about his LGP experience, he called it life changing. “Leadership Greater Promisestown has really impacted my world and way of thinking.” Princeton's ways of thinking were evident in our two interviews: the first in a noisy office at his urban high school; the second when I met him at the public library, where he had just checked out a huge armload of books. This newly minted American citizen, in this country in pursuit of the American dream, offered a unique perspective on civic development through Promisestown's community leadership class.

Born in Ghana, living there “for 15 good years,” Princeton came to live with his father, a naturalized American citizen, to attend school and pursue his dream of one day becoming a neurosurgeon. Princeton told how he would take each aspect of the LGP curriculum as a learning experience and apply it to his personal development: “What I learn in the class, I always try to apply it, to see how it will work. And when it works for me, it makes me to go on to do even more of what I'm learning in the class.”

From the first day of the retreat, Princeton described his new way of seeing and experiencing relationships with classmates.

It's a new experience for me. I felt welcome. I'd never seen such kind, friendly people before. I am a shy person. Even on my first day, I had, like, two or three people just coming and saying 'Hello' just letting me know I'm part of what is going to go on. I'm not a number but a participant.

This hopeful, aspiring neurosurgeon described the physical environment his first day at the class' lakeside retreat:

Even for the first day, being set in a place that is really cool, really calm, just talking and doing all those kind of stuff. But just living in that calm environment, like in science, we say something like; a calm environment also calms the brain and makes you even have more connections with people, and also connections with what is being taught.

He described the class diversity and the welcoming, democratic environment:

We are a diverse group of people, and we have African-Americans and this white race and I think a Hispanic lady, too. But race is not even part of the issue. Everybody makes everybody feel welcome. When somebody makes me feel welcome, it's the greatest thing that a person has done for me.

You can go into a place and people will not like you because of your color, maybe people don't like you because you are African-American or White. But I think in the leadership program, race is not an issue.

We all love each other. That is the step to democracy, being able to forget about people's color or people's diversity and just work together.

Age diversity is another aspect of the class' diversity that Princeton emphasized. Here is how he explains LGP's practice of accepting students as equal participants:

I am a high school student. We have four high school students in our class. In group discussions, they know we are high school students but get us involved in whatever we are doing, making me feel part of this, too. We learned to put our views on the table, not as young people, but as someone who also has a view, maybe the same view or maybe different than the others.

Experiencing a different way of relating with others, Princeton integrated his learning with his new perception of leadership. He described leadership as understanding people before you can help solve problems:

Like, right now I'm applying what I have learned in the class. As a leader, you make people feel comfortable by being friendly with people. You don't want them to feel uncomfortable in your presence. You don't know what issue a person is going through, so being able to communicate with him or her just by saying a simple hello and being interested in them. You can make somebody's day by just saying a simple hello. And when I use the "Why question," the conversation is coming. And that wasn't me.

In overcoming his self-described shyness, Princeton cited the "Why question" as one of the leadership skills he was incorporating into his daily life. The "why" concept was a major curricular theme in the Class of 2012, and was encouraged by the Kansas Leadership Center. As part of the adaptive leadership concept, asking "why" encourages deeper exploration by going beyond the surface of a situation. In community issues or personal problems, the simple question "Why" leads to examination of root causes instead of quick-fix solutions which either do not last or do not work. By applying this leadership concept to his conversations at school, Princeton reported that he was gaining a better understanding of the life situations of his fellow students.

Princeton was coming to understand leadership through deeper understanding of people and their situations. "Now, for me, a leader is someone who steps up when there is a challenge in a group or an organization or even at home, with family. So for me, a leader is a problem-solver." He was quick to respond when I asked how he had perceived leadership before LGP:

How I thought about leadership - Someone who everybody fears and someone who has great power and who can do things on his own and nobody talks about it. Now I see leadership as stepping up when there's a challenge, to help understand and solve problems.

While seeking a deeper understanding of problems to be solved, Princeton never wavered in his commitment to a better public education system, expressing early and often that a strong education background would enable students to be successful in whatever they choose and also to give back to society. He lamented that it would be better to help disadvantaged children overcome their challenges early and spend more money on education, as he said it, “putting people in school rather than jail.” He then offered this assessment: “Looking at our education sector, it seems we have a low standard for our students. Sometimes in life you have to push a little.” Indeed, the context of Princeton’s high school supported his assessment. A few years earlier, his school received major federal school improvement funding. Before the school’s major push toward improvement, Princeton saw high dropout rates, gangs, and criminal activity. He expressed concern about his fellow students choosing high-risk health behaviors.

After almost three years in high school, this newcomer to Promisestown experienced a new environment in the community leadership class, learning in a broader cultural, historical, and political context. He discussed the value of learning Promisestown’s history by visiting historic places like the state capitol and the railroad station, which has been turned into a museum:

It’s a very historic community, but not many people know about it. To be successful in life, you need to know your past. You need to know what others did to get you more motivated to go on. So for me, it will really help people, not just students, even adults who don’t know their community, to know what they have and the history behind this community.

Princeton also emphasized the many public and political issues raised in the class curriculum. He valued the many different leaders who made presentations and expressed their concerns. He grinned insightfully in referring to a presentation that touched his personal

experience, when the Secretary of State debated the issue of immigration reform with a representative from the ACLU.

Considering different types of leaders he observed, he wondered what kind of a citizen leader he might become:

Having all these people, seeing the leadership they are in, helps you to view different kinds of leadership. For me, as a graduating high school student, looking at all those people, how they have applied leadership skills, what am I to the world when I am out of school and working?

Whatever he becomes to the world, Princeton's commitment to giving back to the community was clear:

After I finish my studies, I am definitely coming back here. This state has helped me, accepted me, so I have to be a good citizen to my state and help. Education would be my first priority, helping students in this state. What I really want to talk to others about is engaging students in learning.

Princeton capsulized his LGP experience in his description of the closing class activity:

It was sad leaving an amazing group of people. The closing activity was creative, picking a picture and trying to tell something from that picture. It was creative because you had to identify or make something symbolic from the picture. But it was just us, our class talking about our experiences, because everybody had different experiences in the program. It was hearing from other people what they have gained and telling what I had gained. It was telling you about the kind of program LGP is and telling you different stories from an amazing class.

**Observation.** This last story is perhaps the most poignant story of all, in this exploration of democracy education in a community leadership program. Unlike Alexis de Tocqueville, who came to America to observe democracy, the young man in this profile is a new, naturalized U.S. citizen, who came to America seeking educational opportunity to pursue his dream of a career in medicine. As a newcomer taking his first steps to democracy, he was not only an astute observer of the LGP curriculum but he also incorporated his learning into his everyday practice and his future commitment to “give back.” His description of the opening retreat seems appropriate for



the closing of this section: “We all love each other. That is the step to democracy, being able to forget about people’s color or people’s diversity and just work together.”

Princeton’s story is one full of democracy education. When he describes his learning experiences of diversity, equality, and mutual respect, he reports them as new, first-time experiences in his adopted country. His descriptions and appreciation for the democratic environment, democratic/civic leadership, equal education opportunity, and giving back are views native-born Americans often seem to take for granted.

A brief description of the closing class activity, to which Princeton referred, follows this section’s stories of 11 class members. The placement of this description is intentional to highlight all 37 members of the class each with their own unique stories about their leadership class experiences, or *pictures* to add to *the gallery*. Together all 37 stories would resemble a vibrant collage of the entire LGP Class of 2012.

**The closing class activity.** All 37 classmates sat in a large circle. The facilitator spread out a big pile of colorful pictures cut out from magazines. She asked class members to walk around the pile and choose a picture that reminded them of their personal leadership journey. Once back sitting in the circle, a volunteer offered an explanation of his picture. The room was very quiet as the volunteer finished and tossed a ball of yarn, holding the end piece, to another person in the circle, who told that person’s story, then tossed the yarn on to the next person somewhere in the circle. Once everyone had told a leadership story, the circle resembled a network. People were connected by their different stories in one unique experience. Visually, the yarn formed a visible vibrant network, symbolic of the individual connections and association of all within the Class of 2012.

**Class voices one year later.** The post-class Internet survey of all class members was conducted in the spring of 2013, a year after the class ended.<sup>25</sup> This question was included: “Do you think your Leadership Greater Promisestown class experience has had an impact in your leadership development? If yes, please give specific examples.”

The following statements are the open-ended responses to that question by nine of the interviewees. A comparison of data from the open-ended responses to a questionnaire, interview transcripts, and the passage of time provides *structural validity* described by Eisner in Creswell (2007) as “a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility, that allows us to feel confidence about our observations, interpretations, and conclusions” (p. 204). Two interviewees, Phillip and Pierce, did not give specific examples, with Phillip responding “yes” and Pierce responding “Don’t know.” These comments a year after the class ended showed consistency of data over time and indicate program impact with descriptions of leadership development.

Portia “Along for the ride”

Yes - The more knowledge about our community, the more that I can communicate with others. The biggest impact in myself is confidence. LGP increased my confidence in decision-making, networking, knowledge of Promisestown, and those transformation skills, which have led me to make changes.

Peyton “Pushing beyond the comfort zone”

Yes - It has shown me that each individual has the power within them to make a difference for their community and for themselves. They only need to act on it. At a minimum, I have tried to engage my daughter to be more outgoing and take some risk, get outside her comfort zone, so she may gain from it.

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<sup>25</sup> Of the 37 respondents, 35 (94.6%) answered “yes,” two (5.4%) answered “Don’t know,” and zero answered no.

Polly "Cautiously optimistic"

Yes - I was able to express myself amongst a more diverse group than what I have ever experienced before. It gave me an idea of what some of the formal and informal behaviors and environment may be in business settings and what are good ways to conduct yourself. I learned that fun is allowed amongst business as long as you are still working diligently and taking your task seriously. Fun makes work fun and not really a chore.

Parker "Connecting the dots"

Yes - It broke down some barriers with older professionals, that we are all human, and that we can't do everything, but it is easier to do big things with lots of people.

Phaedra "Preparing with ammunition"

Yes - I have more self-confidence when approaching a conflict or situation.

Perry "The realist"

Yes - Since the class I have taken on even more leadership roles in various organizations I feel passionate about.

Paul "The visionary"

Yes - LGP has taught me that it is okay for me to be a leader. Being a leader doesn't mean that I am better than anyone - it means that I am able to work with others in a way that hopefully brings about positive change.

Pam "Digging in"

Yes - I feel like I'm a better strategic thinker. I also do a better job of trying to see the big picture and while I know every step in a process is important I also know now not to try to tackle everything and to break it into digestible parts and delegate to those who have passion and skill.

Princeton "Step to democracy"

Yes - Before I became involved with LGP, I was a very shy person. But through the program I have developed into a better person and I am able to communicate with people and also involve myself with many leadership opportunities.

In Dewey's concept, these comments suggest that lifelong learning resulted from participation in the Class of 2012. Each of the nine participants echoed themes they discussed in their interview profiles: Portia, having impact with greater confidence; Peyton, engaging his daughter in the community; Polly, communicating better in diverse groups, Phaedra, approaching conflict with more confidence; Perry, following his passion in more leadership roles; Paul, feeling equality among leaders working together; Parker, diminishing age barriers; Pam, seeing a bigger picture, thinking strategically; Princeton, overcoming shyness and leading. In conclusion, the comments demonstrate consistency and continuing leadership development resulting from the class.

## VI. Relationships: Theory, Process, and Practice

In towns it is impossible to prevent men from assembling, getting excited together and forming sudden passionate resolves. Towns are like great meetinghouses with all the inhabitants as members.

(Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835)

This chapter examines three major aspects of the LGP curriculum and their relationship to democracy education in this study's conceptual framework. In Tocqueville's terms in reference to the above quotation, the class retreat experience made it possible for the class members *to get excited together*, while they presented themselves as unique *inhabitants* of the same community, and learned class practices encouraging them to form *passionate resolves*. Based on data collected in interviews, session observations, the class notebook, and researcher experiential data<sup>26</sup> this chapter provides examples of theory, process, and practice experienced by participants that are related to this study's democracy education framework. Another aspect of the curriculum is reading material, which is minimally assigned but suggested for extracurricular reading, and is complementary to the course interactive curriculum.

### Curriculum Theory

Several curriculum theories are relevant to this study's conceptual framework of democracy education. Three are specific leadership theories. The fourth combines teaching and learning theory. The class notebook contains material about the leadership theories, handouts suitable for copying, and a bibliography (see Appendix P) of suggested reading outside of class

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<sup>26</sup> "Experiential data" (Strauss as cited in Maxwell, 2005, p. 38) relates to the personal experience and background of the researcher. For information about the researcher, see Appendix O.

and for future use by class members in their own community leadership work. All four theories intersect and intertwine within the Leadership Greater Promisestown (LGP) curriculum.

**Adaptive leadership.** The first leadership theory is Kansas Leadership Center's (KLC) adaptive leadership, which study participants often said they had incorporated in their own lives. Adaptive leadership underlies the evolving theory within KLC's purpose statement: "Kansas Leadership Center equips people with the ability to make lasting change for the common good" (Kansas Leadership Center, 2014, para. 1). The opposite approach is for short-term technical fixes. KLC envisions more citizens sharing responsibility for acting together in pursuit of the common good. KLC's theory is based on the work of Heiferz and Linsky (2002, 2004) of Harvard's Kennedy School - Center for Public Leadership. These authors conclude that organization leaders must not simply rely on "best practices" but also must develop "next practices" (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009, p. 65).

With their sights set on "next practices" in leadership education, KLC staff trains leaders in four basic actions in civic leadership: (a) diagnose situation; (b) energize others; (c) manage self; and (d) facilitate intervention. In addition to the leadership actions, KLC's trainings are based on the following leadership principles: leadership is an activity, not a position; anyone can lead, anywhere, anytime; it starts with you and must engage others; your purpose must be clear; and, it is risky. The book, *For the Common Good: Redefining Civic Leadership* (Chrislip & O'Malley, 2013), comprehensively explains in detail KLC's theory, competencies (leadership actions), and principles by telling stories of real people taking action. LGP 2012 class members emphasized adaptive leadership theory worked for them, especially in probing deeper into situations and by asking the question "Why?"

**Servant leadership.** Servant leadership theory emphasizes more inclusive, equalized communities. The model emphasizes service to fellow citizens while strengthening and engaging them also to serve. Although such leadership is an age-old concept of a person who focuses more on empowering others, rather than being self-centered, Greenleaf (1904-1990) modernized and popularized the concept, which is now a specific leadership theory carried on by The Robert R. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership. The theory is best exemplified by the following question: “Best test for servant leaders: Do those served grow as persons? Do they while being served become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely to become servant leaders themselves?” (Greenleaf, 1991, p. 15). Interview comments with class members confirmed that some of them shifted their concept of leadership from thinking of personal or organizational leadership in authoritarian, hierarchical concepts. Instead, they began to think more about their own leadership, not simply as serving others or leading an organization, but as empowering others to also serve, ultimately resulting in overall community and organization betterment.

**Twenty-first century leadership.** This broad theory conceptualizes shifting forms of leadership evolving around the turn of this century, partly due to major societal changes, such as globalization and mass communication and digital technology. The focus is on leadership skills that are inclusive; capacity building skills in collaboration and consensus-building; and decision-making processes for the common good (Clark & Heiny, n.d.). The result will be *21st Century Communities* (see Appendix K). They are communities with a high level of trust that work for each citizen – ensuring opportunity for a positive quality of life for all (Clark & Heiny, n.d.). Timeline activity, described in Chapter IV, exemplifies the value of a time-oriented theory of democracy education (Clark & Heiny, 1997).

**Teaching and learning theory.** Class members often spoke appreciatively about the teaching and learning process in LGP, citing it as different and more effective than other processes to which they were accustomed. A theory of teaching and learning is symbolized in LGP through a simple diagram called the Wisdom Cycle (see Appendix L). The theory was presented at the retreat as a foundation for class learning experience. The diagram displays a continuous cycle of change, with components of experience (activity), followed by process (sharing, comparing, reflecting), generalization (conclusions, insights), application (applying learning to specific situations), and wisdom (evaluation, accountability, celebration); then back to experience, to begin the cycle again.

Although no other adult learning theory is specifically taught in the LGP curriculum, other authors have discussed practical adult learning theory related to what is applied in LGP. Examples follow: how one author characterized adults as learners (Cross, 1981); a second author featured what the best college teachers do (Bain, 2004); and two others that have written about experiential learning theory (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

For a historical perspective on adult learning theory, Cross' (1981) book, *Adults as Learners*, offered a synthesis of various theories as the field of lifelong learning rapidly evolved in a new so-called learning society of the early 1980's. The book provides a comprehensive structure for educators of adults to think about different physical and intellectual stages of development, but does not provide much in original theory. Cross (1981) concluded, as she began the book, with the three-part call for action contained in the 1976 UNESCO General Conference report. That report is perhaps as timely today as when it was written. The three-part charge called for: (a) restructuring the existing education system, (b) developing educational potential outside the formal education system, and (c) development of self-directing learners as



active agents in their own education. Cross encouraged educators to adopt a facilitative learning approach, in which educators try to understand the individual learner and help learners take responsibility for their learning. That approach, she explained, is crucial in the culture of fast-changing information.

Cross compared pedagogy with *andragogy* and addressed the assertion of a noted adult learning theorist, Knowles,<sup>27</sup> that andragogy was distinct from pedagogical teaching of children.

Cross argued the line between the two instructional theories may not be as distinct as some scholars thought. For example, the facilitative approach would account for both the younger more fluid intelligences and the older more “crystalized intelligences” (Cross, 1981, pp. 161-163). A connection between Cross’ book and theoretical concepts of democracy education in this study is the emphasis on education opportunity for all and respect for individual differences.<sup>28</sup> What was missing in Cross’ review of lifelong learning was a link between adult learners as contributing democratic citizens who in turn could facilitate the learning of others.

Bain’s (2004) book on what characterizes the best teachers took a more inductive approach than Cross (1981). Bain first identified college teachers who were highly rated by their students and colleagues. He observed their classroom characteristics and analyzed results including what students and colleagues said about them. Then, he drew on his findings to

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<sup>27</sup> Malcolm Knowles (1913-1997), author of *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* (1978), is often referred to as the father of adult learning.

<sup>28</sup> Although there is an obvious link to democratic education theorists cited in this study’s conceptual framework, this section is specific to so-called adult learning theorists.

theorize what constitutes best teaching. As throughout the Cross (1981) book, Bain's (2004) book emphasizes respect for each unique individual learner.

Bain (2004) concurred that effective teaching makes learning relevant and engaging. However, he went beyond that by emphasizing what the students can teach the teacher and that each individual has a contribution to make and a story to tell. He determined that effective teachers are democratic in the sense they do not hold themselves above their students. They talk frequently with their students about learning in search of a better understanding. They constantly pursue wisdom and knowledge and are known for their expertise in their subject matter. Bain (2004) concluded the best teachers consider themselves, their students, and their colleagues as a community of learners. Bain's work relates to this study's theoretical concept of democratic education by concluding the best teachers engage themselves and their students in the community and respect learners as equal contributing members of the learning community.

A third experiential learning theory related to democracy education is what Kolb and Kolb (2005) call experiential learning theory (ELT). These two authors point out the obvious - democracy must be learned, while autocracy is imposed (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). They acknowledge the multitude of ways individual citizens learn. They link their theory with holistic experiential learning theory prominent in the work of John Dewey, as well as other prominent 20th century scholars: Kurt Lewin; Jean Piaget; William James; Carl Jung, Paulo Freire; and Carl Rogers (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Experiential learning stands in stark contrast to the transmission of knowledge model commonplace in current public schooling and adult education practices as described and contrasted by study interviewees (see Chapter V).

To accommodate the multiplicity of learners and ways of learning, LGP plans for a diversified, comfortable, safe learning environment. ELT similarly calls for creating hospitable

*learning spaces* for acting, reflecting, feeling, and thinking with time and space intended to facilitate conversation. The learning environment is set to encourage learners to take charge of and be responsible for their own learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, pp. 207-209). In short, LGP's curriculum corresponds to Kolbs' theory for learning-centered educational environment, instructional design, curriculum development, and lifelong learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Both ELT and the LGP curriculum correspond in theory, process, and practice with this study's conceptual framework.

To summarize, learning theory was not explicit in LGP but its curriculum reflects a fusion of the above learning theories. LGP emphasizes a lifelong learning perspective, facilitative teaching in large and small groups, and a learning community or *learning society* approach, all which were prevalent throughout LGP 2012 curriculum. Class members were invited to expand their knowledge as well as their wisdom through up-to-date information, interaction with each other, in relating their learning experiences, and in many cases relearning or changing what they thought they knew. They sought to resolve or at least understand conflicts brought out in class conversations, for example, in this study's discussions on education and immigration (see Chapter IV). Experiential learning components came together purposefully in LGP curriculum theory to integrate, expand, adapt, and apply learning by active citizens of a democratic society.

### **Curriculum Process**

A democratic teaching process, a group process with learner responsibility, and time to process learning all relate to the democracy education process in this study's framework. The following class processes were mentioned frequently in interviews with class members.

**Facilitative learning process - Individual and group responsibility for learning.**

From the beginning, the class experienced the art of facilitation modeled by the program director and her co-facilitators. That is, instead of being authoritative experts in transferring knowledge to others, facilitative leaders establish a learning environment, making it easier for individuals to learn from within themselves and from others. In addition to the normative role of the facilitators, the class was invited to establish its own rules for normative behavior. The class-derived list of norms showed their desire for a fun, albeit serious, democratic process. The list included the following rules: “Have fun!” “Participate 100%,” “Be slow to judge,” “Let people talk,” and “Listen.” Self-governing rules and a non-autocratic facilitative approach to teaching the class are two aspects supporting the process of democracy education.

**Individual, small group, large group learning process.** Whether referring to the core groups, project groups, or large group reflection, class members explained how they liked the group process. The class orientation and opening retreat initiated the class focus on individual, small group, and large group responsibility for learning. The process began with an hour-long orientation at the local civic theatre, when class members met for the first time and LGP volunteer committee members enthusiastically welcomed the new class. The chairs were arranged in a circle and each class member was invited to introduce himself or herself. Although nervousness of people in a new situation was easy to observe with eyes casting about the room and at the floor and with crackling laughs, several class members confirmed later they were nervous but how they appreciated the orientation. They acknowledged it helped overcome feelings of insecurity setting the stage for learning and working together with people they did not know in a two-day class retreat. In other words, even in an hour’s time the simple practice of people of diverse ages and stages in life introducing themselves equally, helped establish a norm

of equality, respectfulness, and interest in the other. Just days later, the opening retreat furthered the process of establishing respect and equality among class members. At the retreat's lakeside setting, blue-jean-garbed classmates began the process of building their own class community.

The use of a small group/large group learning process throughout LGP demonstrates participatory democracy education. Throughout the sessions, classrooms most often were arranged with tables of six for small group engagement. Additional space was allotted for whole group learning. The facilitator often would change the small group composition by spontaneous seating, counting off, special interest or project groups, or the more intimate core groups.

Permanent small class groups were formed with each member belonging to two distinct groups. The first permanent grouping, the community project group, was based on interest and leadership vision (see Vision Statement, Appendix M). The second grouping, the core group mixed participants by diversity in age, ethnicity, career, geography, and their preferred approach to working and learning.<sup>29</sup> Core groups are best explained by a quotation, which was hung on the wall at the retreat:

A core group is an informal group of individuals who share common concerns and work together over time. They are few in number and trust each other. They care about the community, want to improve it, and provide a source of support. (Checkoway, 1996, p. 14).

The quotation is significant in relation to this study's problem statement. That is, it refers to small groups of people who share common concerns about the community. The groups become a structure for the community-builders and holders of their trust in the process and in each other.

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<sup>29</sup> A quick working/thinking/learning preference activity, which is used for this purpose, is discussed later in this section.

**Time for reflection.** In a continual process throughout the LGP curriculum, individual class members were encouraged to reflect on their learning whether in sessions following guest presentations, specific large and small group activities, and individually between sessions. Whether formal or informal, the time was opportunity for conversation, which when used effectively facilitates building trust, establishing positive relationships, and discovering how to transform the community together (Wheatley, 2012). Throughout LGP 2012, there was time for insightful individual and group reflection on learning in the beginning, during, and at the end of class sessions. Although many class members like the open reflection time in the large group, at least two deviant voices would have preferred less time for reflection and a faster curriculum pace. Nonetheless, the impact of the reflection process sometimes surfaced during large group reflection as the following observation illustrates.

Pauletta's story surfaced after the local university president spoke to the class about adaptive leadership and assessing the reality of the times. He cited societal trends coinciding with the transition from the days following World War II when university education was funded as a public good, marked by the passage of the GI Bill, to today when it has become a private benefit. Pauletta questioned him, "Why has this happened?" The president responded that people were not engaging in conversation or public debate and now were waking up to the reality of what was lost. Later, in the time designated for reflection, Pauletta related the president's story to her own story of waking up to reality. She said she had always gone along with "If they say it, it must be true." She went on to explain that she and her co-workers in a mortgage investment company were going merrily along, never asking "why" their company seemed to be enjoying so much success compared to peer companies. That was until the company was bought by a national bank amidst the 2008 mortgage crisis when borrowers faced unprecedented

foreclosures and many lost their homes. I wrote in my notes after listening to and observing Pauletta, “I thought I could almost see change before my eyes.” In the time allotted for reflection, Pauletta was using the newly taught adaptive leadership skill of asking “why” instead of her previous mode of accepting superficial reality.

Although valuable for many like Pauletta, the value in taking time for reflection may have been lost for those who considered the pace of it too slow. Still, there is general agreement timeout for reflection from faster-paced learning is a critical part of the learning process. As related to democracy education, time for reflection encourages that all voices be heard, including listening to one’s own inner voice. It creates opportunity for understanding of individual viewpoints and various applications of what was learned, while maintaining respect for individual learners. Dewey (1916), in *Democracy and Education* could have been writing about learning through reflection in what he calls normal conversation. As Dewey (1916) explained:

It is the nature of an experience to have implications, which go far beyond what is first consciously noted in it. Bringing these connections or implications to consciousness enhances the meaning of the experience. Any experience, however trivial in its first appearance, is capable of assuming an indefinite richness of experience by extending its range of perceived connections. Normal communication with others is the readiest way of effecting this development, for it links up the net results of the experience of the group or even the race with the immediate experience of an individual. By normal communication is meant that in which there is a joint interest, a common interest, so that one is eager to give and the other to take. It contrasts with telling or stating things simply for the sake of impressing them upon another. (p. 217)

Dewey’s quotation provides the connection to the LGP curriculum practice of listening skills in the next section.

### **Curriculum Practices**

The democracy education practices summarized below are threaded throughout the LGP curriculum and reflected in interviews with class members. Each exercise emphasizes the teaching, learning, and skill involved.

**Listening.** In theory, process, or practice, listening is considered an essential communication skill in the conceptual framework of effective democracy education in this study (Dewey, 1916; Gibbs & Ushijima, 2008; Gutmann, 1987). Emphasis on the importance of listening as a practice was evident throughout this study, from the class self-governing rules to comments by interviewees that class members were listening as equals. An active listening exercise on a topic of timely interest to the class increased practice in the skill. In triads, one class member at a time, in timed intervals, began the conversation; the second listened by using listening skills to communicate back what he or she heard the first class member communicating; the third observed and then gave feedback on the listening behavior. Active listening skills listed in the 2012 class notebook for Class Session 5 are encouraging the speaker, validating what the speaker is communicating, restating for confirmation, reflecting feeling, clarifying, centering on most important concerns, and giving full attention with eye contact and body language. A quotation in the class notebook served as a reminder:

Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand ... It makes people happy and free when they are listened to.<sup>30</sup>

Further significance of the importance of listening skills in this study is demonstrated in response to an open-ended question on the pre-class Internet questionnaire, “What skills do you think are most important to the practice of democracy?” Ten class members cited “listening” specifically. Others used words related to active listening skills, including empathy,

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<sup>30</sup> This quotation is often attributed to co-founder of the Menninger Clinic, Dr. Karl Menninger (1893-1990), a native of Promisestown. However, in his book *Love Against Hate* (1942), Dr. Menninger was actually citing Miss Brenda Ueland, *Ladies Home Journal*, November, 1941, adding the quotation was not but “perhaps it should have been” (p. 275) in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* or the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.



understanding, social skills, compassion, patience, unprejudiced, comprehension of another's point of view, and not to be close-minded (Pre-class questionnaire, February, 2012). Listening was emphasized in this study's framework as well as listed by class members as a critical skill in the practice of democracy. The practice of listening in the 2012 LGP class curriculum was not over emphasized.

**Visioning.** Visioning the future is key to community betterment and to democracy education. A pre-class visioning exercise (see Appendix M) set the practice in motion by asking each new member to write what issue or cause they cared about deeply, what vision they saw for their cause, and why they cared. This activity became a foundation for conversation at the retreat and a basis for forming community project groups.

**History timeline.** Timeline (Clark & Heiny, n.d.), which is described in Chapter IV) initiated a connection between the history of the community and later class learning related to community development. The activity presented the opportunity for class members to see the unique history of the community drawn on stretched-out newsprint. Class members related their own unique history to events in time and to each other. As the class continued, members connected the community's history to what they were seeing and discussing. For example, the town's significance in the nation's history was in the forefront in a visit to the railroad museum and in touring the ethnic neighborhood originally settled by immigrant railroad workers. The thread of history related to community development, past, present, and future, contributed to class awareness of the broad physical and social environment in democracy education.

**Learning preferences activity.** A quick and simple learning/thinking/working preferences activity is used in the LGP curriculum for a democratic purpose. That is, the activity helps the class focus on the uniqueness of each individual as a capable leader, with no right or

wrong traits, and as an equal contributing member of the community. This activity is used as a way to generate self-reflection and discussion and to help class members think about multifarious learning preferences. This particular activity and others similar to it are most often called learning styles, which necessitates a disclaimer because learning styles in general have strong critics (Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer, & Bjork, 2009; Riener & Willingham, 2010). While claiming learning styles are a myth and do not exist (Riener & Willingham 2010), these authors acknowledge there is evidence that people differ in aptitudes for different kinds of thinking and for processing different types of information (Pashler et al., 2009). In LGP, the activity is used with an explanation that all individual leaders and learners have available to them many ways of leading and learning. At the same time, the activity supports acknowledgement and respect for diversity within the class and the community.

The instructions for the activity explain this is a descriptive tool useful for helping groups work together by describing different ways people handle and process information. It works this way: Each participant ranks listed learning/thinking/working traits listed on a page of columns and numbers; resulting numbers are scored on a second page or scoring guide; the next step is identifying where the person's score is placed in an egg-shaped figure along an axis so that no two are alike but preferences are noted. The axis and egg figure revolves around thinking and working and learning preferences in terms of (a) concrete experience, (b) reflective observation, (c) abstract conceptualization, and (d) active experimentation. Various terms in the egg figure describe different learning preferences and behaviors.

The result with group reflection allows people to see how their uniqueness relates to others' uniqueness in terms of preferred learning preferences. At the same time, the activity helps participants think about ways to work more effectively together by acknowledging and accepting

individual differences. According to Contemporary Consultants, Inc., the exercise, based on the work of Kolb and Kolb (2005), is quick, accurate and reliable, does not isolate personality the way many other tools do, and it is free (Clark & Heiny, n.d.). The tool helps emphasize individuality and respect for diversity in thinking, working, and leadership style preferences.

**Values.** Knowing and acting ethically based on one's own moral values and at the same time respecting others' moral values is integral to the first component of this study's conceptual framework (Gutmann, 1987.) No class member specifically mentioned to me the following values activity as related to class learning. However, I am including it here because of a lingering thread introduced at the retreat.

The exercise comes from the work of Grace (2011), the Center for Ethical Leadership. The exercise encourages individual class members to determine their own hierarchy of values, beginning with a large list from which they choose or to which they add their priority values (Grace, 2011). The end result is two-fold: (a) individuals work through a rating process of their individual values until they arrive at their two top, most cherished values, then (b) the class observes how the class as a whole rated its values, which can be a foundation for community projects. The ultimate goal is to increase self-understanding and mutual respect, prompting ethical or moral values to be a consideration in individual and group decision-making that honors individuality, diversity, and commonality of community values.

Since participating in the LGP Class of 2012, several class members have changed jobs or career directions to be more in line with their priority values. Perseus is the prime example. He spoke publicly at a meeting of Chamber of Commerce members and wrote in his post-class questionnaire about being prompted by his class experience to change from a job in the business sector to lead a non-profit organization more aligned with his passion for the community.

Although not a within the scope of this study, examining the relationship between class experience and career or life transformation could be the subject of research in the future.

## **VII. Emerging Themes and Aesthetic Whole**

This chapter addresses emerging themes and forming the aesthetic whole. Discovering emerging themes followed data collection as the initial effort to “bring interpretive insight, analytic scrutiny, and aesthetic order to the collection of data” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 185). In this study, that meant discovering patterns throughout the data and then laying out the patterns to see how the whole picture came into view. Once patterns and then themes began to emerge, LGP 2012 study participants were invited to confirm that they recognized the various themes and considered them important. Eventually, in the research process I endeavored to illustrate patterns, themes, and interpretations that would resonate with the distinct perspectives of study participants and make sense to readers (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

### **Emerging Themes**

Major themes emerged throughout the narrative in interviews and in observations of the LGP 2012 class. To determine initial themes, I created a matrix of the content and major points made by each of the eleven interviewees in their transcribed interviews. I then reviewed all field notes of class observation to cross check with the interview themes. The matrix helped to prepare for final participant interviews as well as to conceptualize the emerging, composite picture of the class.

After creating an initial list of emerging class themes, I convened focus groups of interviewees to assist in finalizing the class themes. Three focus groups of interviewees were invited to meet one time several weeks after the May graduation. At the beginning of the focus

group sessions, I shared with each individual his or her own interview transcripts to verify content and to reaffirm permission to use personal data. Then, to help determine the themes that emerged throughout their LGP experience, I facilitated brainstorming lists of themes, followed by confirmation or disputes about what the themes were and what they meant. I also asked their thoughts on how to organize the themes into major headings and to prioritize them. The second and third groups built on the earlier lists. All along, I reminded group members of my responsibility as researcher to take their input and combine it with other data in the final analysis and research report about their class.

Focus group results supported the original interview matrix for the most part. One exception: *family* emerged as a possible theme in the interview matrix, but it did not show as a theme in the focus groups. The word family was deleted from the initial list, as it seemed more of a personal value than a class theme. Focus Group 2 challenged me to include a theme it identified as *change skills*, which I thought lacked clarity. Days later, I realized *transformation skills - self and community* captured more precisely what the group meant. When I checked with the originator of the term, he agreed *transformation* was precisely what he and the group intended. *The Why* was another term lacking clarity as a theme until the second group said the purpose of asking why is all about deeper understanding of the *greater good of the community*. I finally and reliably could confirm a list of class themes. The overall themes of the Class of 2012 were determined as Business and economic development; Equality and inclusion of a diverse population; Pre-k through lifelong learning; Transformation skills (self and community); Voice of area youth; Adaptive (long-term) versus technical (short-term) problem-solving; Visioning: greater good of the community; and Social and business networking.

The focus groups became a culminating activity at the end of the course by (a) confirming the accuracy of the transcribed interviews, (b) eliciting the interviewees' perceptions of emerging themes, and (c) providing an opportunity to show appreciation to interviewees. At the conclusion of the focus groups, as a gesture of reciprocity I gave each participant a keychain. The keychain was imprinted with the state motto, *Ad astra per aspera*, "To the stars through difficulty," which I concluded was symbolic of past and future success in civic leadership.

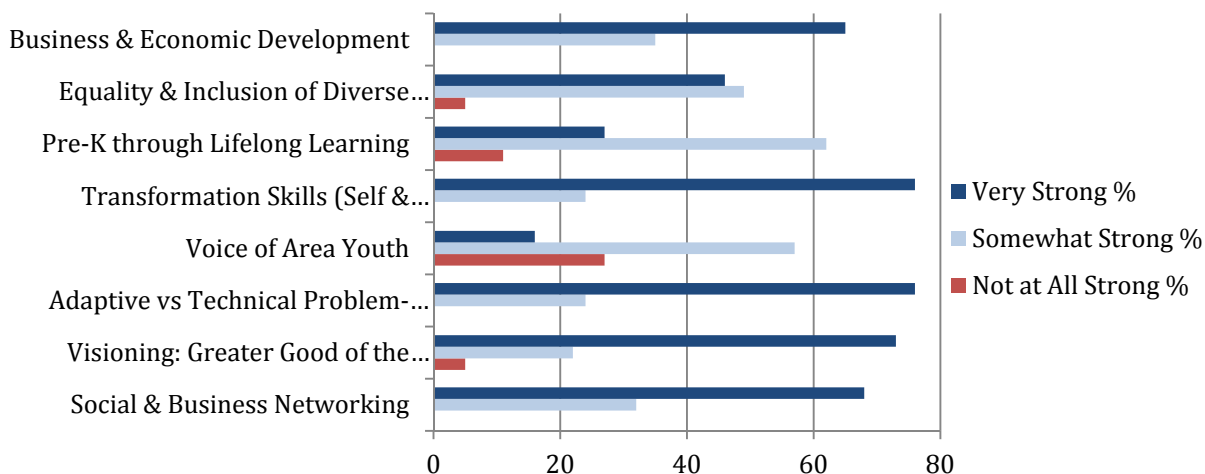
The themes developed during the interview transcript analysis, which were confirmed or modified by interviewees in focus groups, were then placed in the post-class questionnaire for rating by the whole class. Data in Table 1 show how all 37 class members rated the class themes on the post-class questionnaire.

Table 1. Summary of Themes as Rated by LGP 2012 in the Post-Course Survey

Theme	Not at All Strong	Somewhat Strong	Very Strong
Business & Economic Development		35.1% (13)	64.9% (24)
Equality and Inclusion of a Diverse Population	5.4% (02)	48.6% (18)	45.9% (17)
Pre-K through Lifelong Learning	10.8% (04)	62.2% (23)	27.0% (10)
Transformation Skills (Self & Community)		24.3% (09)	75.7% (28)
Voice of Area Youth	27.0% (10)	56.8% (21)	16.2% (06)
Adaptive (Long-Term) vs. Technical (Short-Term) Problem-Solving		24.3% (09)	75.7% (28)
Visioning: Greater Good of the Community	5.4% (02)	21.6% (08)	73.0% (27)
Social & Business Networking		32.4% (12)	67.6% (25)

Figure 8 below shows a visual comparison of how the participants rated the identified themes.

Figure 8: Class Themes and Prevalence Among Post Class Participants



As shown in Table 1 and Figure 8, adaptive versus technical problem solving, transformation skills, serving the greater good, social and business networking, and business and economic development were the highest ranked themes. While the theme of voice of area youth had more responses, 27%, of “not at all strong”, participants rated even that one “very strong” or “somewhat strong” at 73%.

The questionnaire also asked participants to report whether they wished the themes were stronger or weaker. Table 2 summarizes participant responses to that question.

Table 2. Class Themes and Participants’ Wishes for them to be Stronger or Weaker

Theme	Stronger	Weaker	N/A
Business & Economic Development	27% (10)	3% (01)	70% (26)
Equality and Inclusion of a Diverse Population	43% (16)		57% (21)
Pre-K through Lifelong Learning	41% (15)	8% (03)	51% (19)
Transformation Skills (Self & Community)	32% (12)	3% (01)	65% (24)

Table 2. Class Themes and Participants' Wishes for them to be Stronger or Weaker

*continued*

Theme	Stronger	Weaker	N/A
Voice of Area Youth	27% (10)	5% (02)	68% (25)
Adaptive (Long-Term) vs. Technical (Short-Term) Problem-Solving	8% (03)	27% (10)	65% (24)
Visioning: Greater Good of the Community	30% (11)		70% (26)
Social & Business Networking	27% (10)	3% (01)	70% (26)

Figure 9 graphically displays the data from Table 2.

Figure 9: Participants' Wishes for Class Themes to be Stronger or Weaker

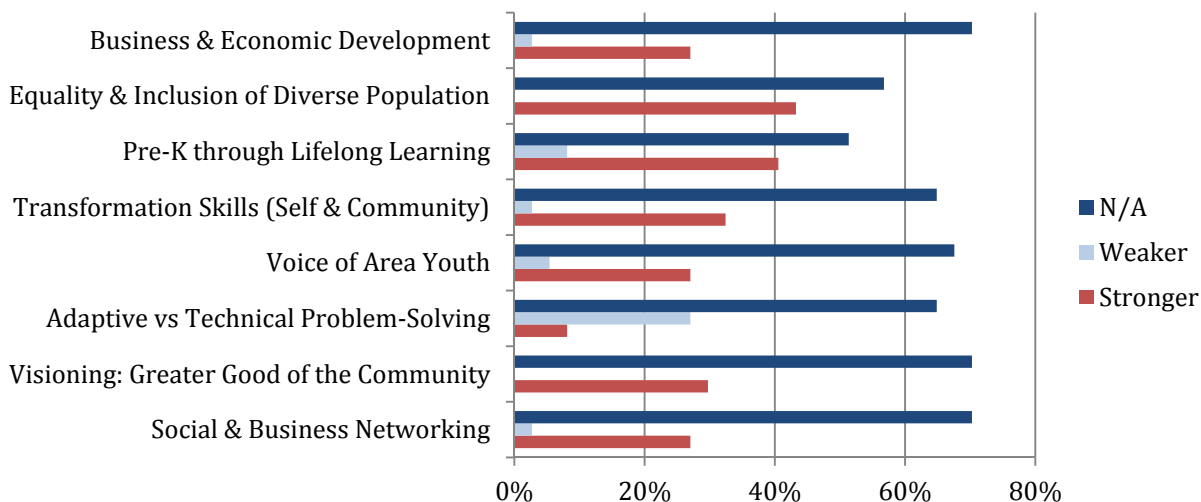


Figure 9 shows that the majority of participants responded “N/A” to the question about whether the themes should have been stronger or weaker, which indicates satisfaction with the themes' ratings. The data indicate the Class of 2012 was mostly satisfied with the strength of their class themes, with some apparently wishing all had been stronger. Ten classmates wished voice of area youth had been a stronger theme. An interesting finding was that the theme pre-K through



lifelong learning had a highest selection rate by class members who wished it were stronger (N = 15, 41%) but also had the highest number who wished it were weaker (N = 3, 8%). Another interesting finding was that although three participants wished every theme had been stronger, not one participant wished the themes of equality and inclusion of a diverse population and visioning the greater good of the community had been weaker, which resonates with this study's conceptual framework of democracy education.

Five participants added comments about the class themes:

- I think more effort to understand commonalities and differences is needed.
- I wish, for those of us who know very little about the legislative and city government process, that we had more info on how to get involved ... how to find out when issues that are important to you are on the city or state agenda, and what to do when you want to speak for or in opposition, etc.
- There's a reason that youth, inclusion, and life-long learning are 'Up and coming' in Promisestown in comparison to other communities. We should work to figure out why that is.
- I thought everything was about where it was needed ... 'really enjoyed how they were continually weaved in our discussions throughout the process.
- One said simply, "Well-organized."

The next chapter, Chapter VIII, contains descriptions of how alumni responded on the alumni questionnaire to the same list of class themes. The review and evaluation of class themes serves as a connection of the Class of 2012 to all previous classes while offering the program sponsor relevant information for future program planning.

### **Aesthetic Whole**

The surface of American society is covered with a layer of democratic paint.

(Tocqueville, 1835, *Democracy in America*)

Democracy education per se was not included in LGP class curriculum. The word democracy was not obvious in the class curriculum. Yet, it seems plausible Tocqueville would have imagined that an American community leadership program would be “covered with a layer of democratic paint.” At one point, a class member spoke out loud saying, “*This* is democracy!” after a tour of the newly renovated state Capitol. With the word democracy barely mentioned throughout the course, the question “How does the LGP curriculum relate to the study’s conceptual framework of democracy education?” is a core research question in this study.

Once all the data were gathered and the profiles completed, I first approached the question from the participants’ perspective, “emic.” I then applied the study’s conceptual framework with researcher interpretation and perspective, “etic” (Creswell, 2007, p. 72; Maxwell, 2005, pp. 97-98; Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 101). To summarize: the presence of democracy education in theory, process, and practice was reflected in (a) interviewees’ descriptions of a decision-making process that respected the multitude of voices; (b) individual feelings of equality and acceptance; (c) individual and group dedication to the common good; and (d) descriptions of effective leaders as listeners and problem-solvers.

The first aspect, democratic theory, emerged within the major class theme of adaptive leadership for the common good. The theme was based on the curriculum’s inclusion of adaptive leadership capacity-building for personal transformation and decision-making to impact community good (Chrislip & O’Malley, 2013). The second aspect, democratic learning process, was prominent in the large and small groups curriculum, described by the class using terms of all voices respected, collaboration, community building, inclusiveness, confidence building, listening, and reflection (Dewey, 1916; Gibbs & Ushijima, 2008; Gutmann, 1987). The third aspect, democracy education practice, exemplified by experiential learning in broader physical

and social environments in schools, families, and the community (Dewey, 1916), was obvious in community projects and in the number of ways interviewees described application in their personal lives. All three components came together to demonstrate an integrated curriculum building upon and supportive of the conceptual framework of democracy education.

Table 3 presents a summary of democracy education as experienced by eleven representative members of the Class of 2012. The pseudo name of the interviewee is in the first column. The second column summarizes points interviewees (emic) made during their interviews related to concepts in democracy education. The third column is the researcher interpretation (etic) of the interviewees' points in broad concepts of democracy education.

Table 3. Summary and Conceptual Interpretation of Interviewees' Comments

Interviewee	Summary Comments	Conceptual Interpretation
Portia	Wanting everyone to participate, non-argumentative way, or possibly a questioning way, best practice community project	Democratic decision-making, inclusive, interactive respectful group process, community practice/action.
Phillip	Feel as though I'm their equal, everyone has a chance to speak, in student council now I'm motivated to make sure I hear every opinion, leadership without a title	Equality, democratic small group process, democratic learning practice – public school, every opinion counts
Peyton	Adaptive vs. technical discussion, hardest part to apply learning, involving daughter in something bigger	Common good democratic practice in broad physical and social environment - family and community
Polly	Somewhat liberated, more diverse experiences, move forward as a whole, a society, a nation	Using one's own voice, valuing diversity, seeking greater good in broad social and physical environments

Table 3. Summary and Conceptual Interpretation of Interviewees' Comments *continued*

Interviewee	Summary Comments	Conceptual Interpretation
Phaedra	Public library, public vs. private schools, financial literacy, breaking the cycle of poverty	Common good, equal access in physical and social environments, opportunity for prosperity
Perry	Economic development, politics, fund raising	Prosperity, politics
Paul	Acceptance, individuality, diversity of thought and relationships, politics, political issues, common good, prosperity, education opportunity	American dream - first generation with college degree, respect, all voices, common good, politics, prosperity
Parker	Community collaboration examples, children's' museum, national company building new plant	Collaboration/cooperation, greater community, economic development
Pam	'Boot straps,' need for quality candidates, children without support, giving back	Education opportunity, equal opportunity, candidates/elections, community-building
Princeton	Step to democracy, love each other, problem-solving, equal-education opportunity, the American dream	Equality-respect, social/physical environment, democratic leadership, democratic learning practice

Table 3 identifies class experiences and interpretations that were analyzed in terms of democratic concepts described by class members. The next step in the analysis was to summarize the class experience into broader groups of democratic concepts and then correlate them with this study's conceptual framework of theory, process, and practice of democracy education. Table 4 correlates actual learning experience described by class members with the study's conceptual framework.

Table 4. Conceptual Framework Related to Class Experience

Class Experience in Democratic Education Concepts Described by Class Members	Conceptual Framework
<p><b>Equal opportunity -</b> Feelings of equality, equal access, equal opportunity, focus on public good, common good, greater good, prosperity; pursuit of political ideals and the American dream</p>	<p><b>Theory –</b> Respect for individuals as equals, deliberative decision-making for the common good</p>
<p><b>Inclusiveness -</b> Collaboration, cooperation, respectful expression of individual voice, decision-making that values/respects/includes all voices, community–building</p>	<p><b>Process –</b> Encouragement that all voices be heard and that all be engaged in community-building</p>
<p><b>Real life application -</b> Experiential practice in community projects and organizations, at school, with family, in politics, leading regardless of title</p>	<p><b>Practice –</b> Lifelong experiential learning in broad physical and social environments</p>

Throughout the course, class members expressed a new sense of equality and inclusiveness and a new awareness of what could be done to better the community. They described developing transformation skills and a focus on community good in broader social and physical environments.

Consistent with Dewey (1916), the LGP classroom is the community, with multifaceted sights and sounds, a diversity of people and emotions, and community actions permeating the sessions. All during the course, participants had conversations seeking understanding of each other and of the common good - no matter how creatively or divisively that good was perceived.

The next two chapters will address (a) the uniqueness and similarity of LGP 2012 in comparison to earlier alumni classes and their perceptions about their LGP experiences, and (b) the overall perceived impact of LGP alumni over the history of the program.

### **VIII. Descriptions and Comparisons: Class of 2012 and Alumni 1984 -2011**

Separate online surveys of the LGP Class of 2012 and alumni from earlier classes were conducted in the spring of 2013 to further explore the impact of LGP. Results provided the opportunity for descriptions and comparisons of the Class of 2012 with a combined sample of previous LGP classes (1984-2011). In addition, comparing results of the post-class survey of the Class of 2012 with the results of the pre-class survey shows how members of the Class of 2012 had changed one year after the course ended.

The LGP director determined the lists of alumni, provided an introduction to the survey, and generated the link to Survey Gizmo.<sup>31</sup> Of those who completed the course, 100% of the Class of 2012 completed the post-class questionnaire (N =37).<sup>32</sup> The number of alumni questionnaires returned from all previous classes was 195 of the 492 alumni who were sent the link to the questionnaire, a response rate of 40%. Ten alumni began the questionnaire and answered the first section of the questionnaire that asked about program impact but did not complete the entire questionnaire, making the completion rate 38% (N = 185). Thus, some figures showing data in this chapter are based on 185 responses, not 195. Due to the list updating process of the Chamber at that time, it is unknown within the 492 alumni addresses on the Chamber list how many e-mails were outdated, returned, or marked undeliverable, which may have affected the return rate.

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<sup>31</sup> Survey Gizmo is an online survey software company that I employed to assist in this study

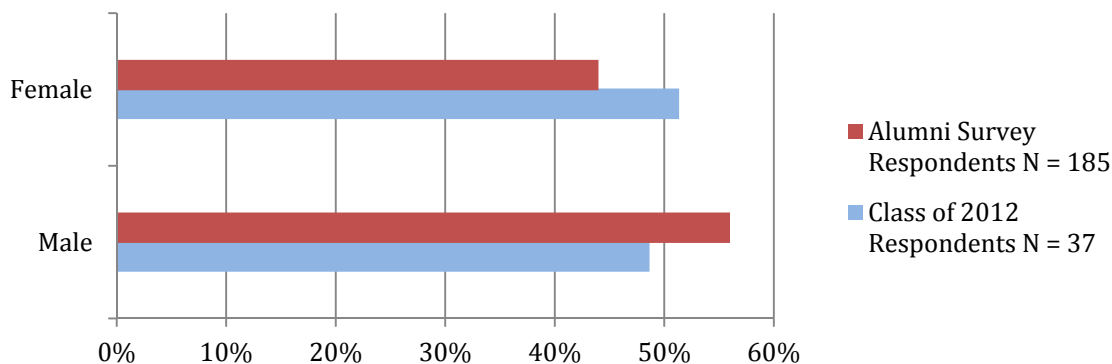
<sup>32</sup> One member had dropped out early in the course due to illness.

The Chamber of Commerce mailing list for the survey included all alumni who were residing in the Promisestown area at the time of the survey. This purposeful sample presented a maximum variation sample based on the survey's purpose, which was to document variations among respondents and responses, identify important common patterns, and establish comparisons (Creswell, 2007). "While such comparisons are less common in qualitative than in quantitative studies, comparative designs are often used in multi-case qualitative studies, as well as in mixed-method research" (Maxwell & Loomis, 2002, as cited in Maxwell, 2005, p. 90). Together, the combination or mixed sampling meets multiple interests of participants, researcher, and the program's sponsor. The following data show how the Class of 2012 compared with all alumni in a variety of indicators.

### Demographics

Demographic comparisons of gender, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status between the Class of 2012 and the alumni follow. Figure 10 shows gender comparisons.

Figure 10: Gender Comparison for Class of 2012 and Alumni



The Class of 2012 had a distribution of 49% male and 51% female participants, while the alumni group was comprised of 44% male and 56% female participants. The comparison shows a relative balance between male and female in both groups.

Figure 11 shows the summary data for the age comparisons with both the Class of 2012 and the alumni group identifying with a varied age range in both groups.

Figure 11: Age Comparison for Class of 2012 and Alumni

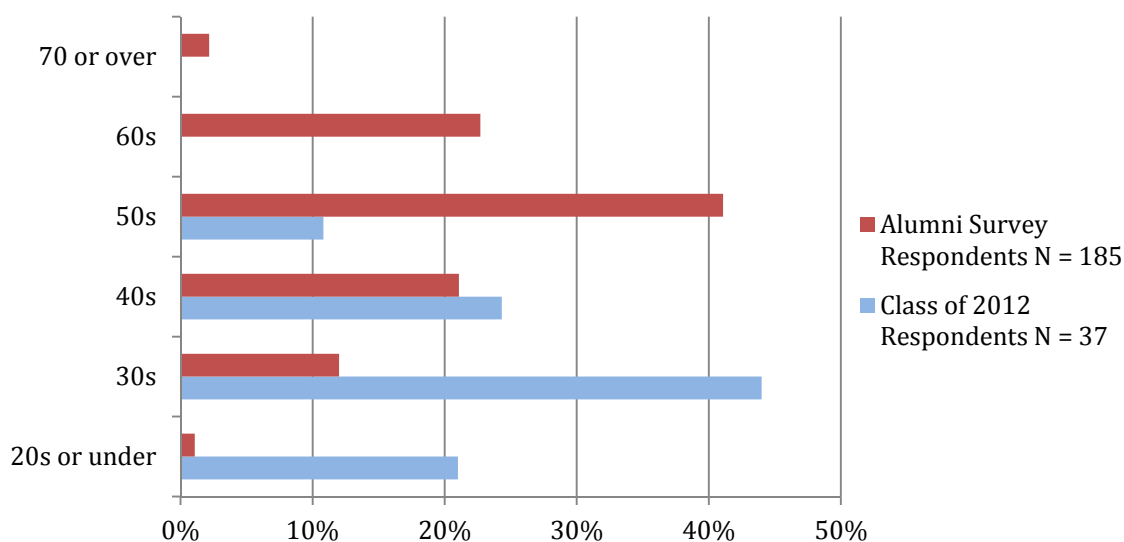
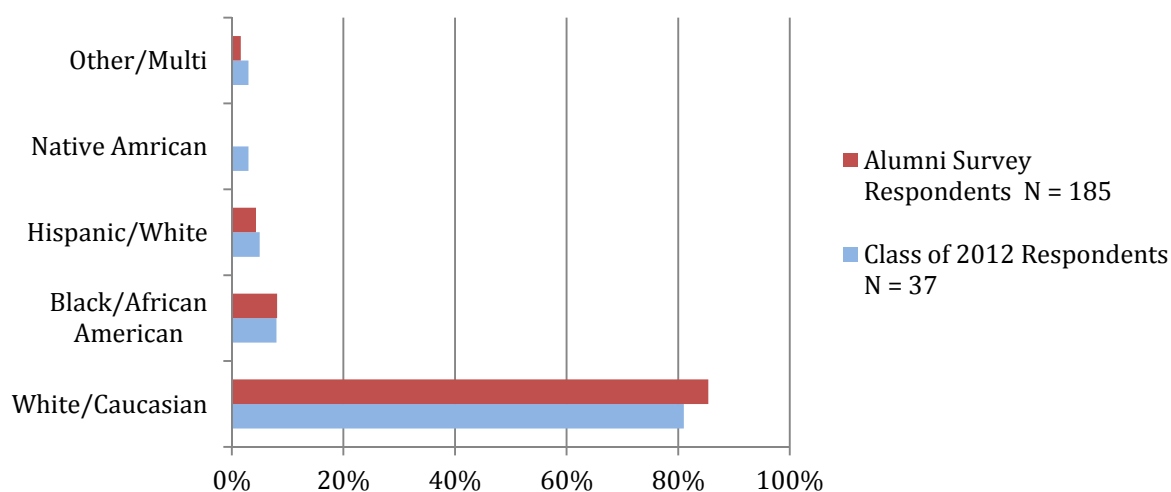


Figure 11 shows younger categories prevalent in the more recent class while older categories are more prevalent in the earlier classes, which is not surprising given the difference in time their classes were held. The majority of alumni respondents was in the 50s age group while the majority of the Class of 2012 participants was in the 30s age group. Only two of the alumni group reported being in the 20s or under age group while none of the Class of 2012 participants reported being in the 60s or 70+ age groups.

Ethnicities represented in the Class of 2012 were compared to those represented in the alumni group. Figure 12 shows a summary of the ethnic composition of the groups.



Figure 12: Ethnicity Comparison for Class of 2012 and Alumni

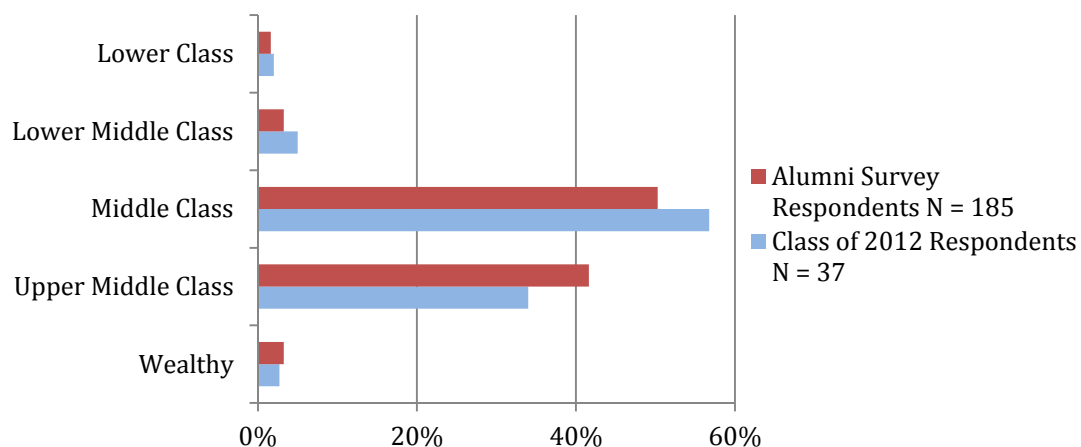


The ethnicity comparison in Figure 12 shows both groups approximated the 84.5% for the 2012 White population of Promisettown reported by the U.S. Census Bureau (U. S. Census Bureau, n.d.). The alumni group was 85% White and 15% non-White. The Class of 2012 reported 81% White and 19% non-White. Hispanic or Latino representation, which according to the U.S. Census is approximately 16% in Promisettown, was less than 6% in both groups. In the Class of 2012 there were two participants, 5%, reporting dual ethnicity of Hispanic/White. One other identified with Multi-ethnic and one identified as Native American. Although the numbers are small, Figure 12 indicates slightly higher minority participation in the recent class compared to the alumni representation. Overall, the ethnic comparison is favorable between the two LGP groups, and is comparable with the percentage White (84.5%) of the population of Promisettown (U. S. Census Bureau, n.d.).

Socioeconomic status was the final demographic comparison made between the two groups. Figure 13 shows that 57% of participants in the Class of 2012 identified themselves as

middle class compared to 50% of the alumni. The Class of 2012 also reported slightly higher percentages in the extreme categories of lower middle and lower classes combined was 8%, three members, while the alumni group reported 5%. The Class of 2012 reported lower percentages in the upper ranges (39% for upper middle and wealthy) than the alumni group (45% for upper middle and wealthy).

Figure 13: Socio-Economic Status of Class of 2012 and Alumni



The higher wealth reported by the alumni group could be explained by the older age group being more established compared to larger student and young professional representation in the Class of 2012. Once again, although the numbers are small in LGP 2012, the socioeconomic diversity is comparable between the two groups.

### Political Orientation and Affiliation Comparisons

In addition to demographic characteristics, comparisons between the groups were made regarding political orientation and political affiliation. Figure 14 shows comparisons between the Class of 2012 and the alumni group in political orientation.

Figure 14: Political Orientation of Class of 2012 and Alumni

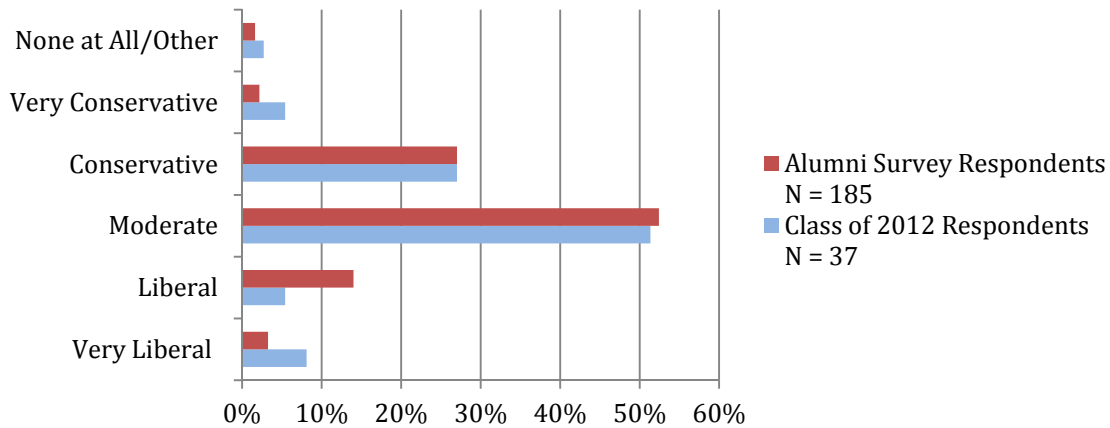
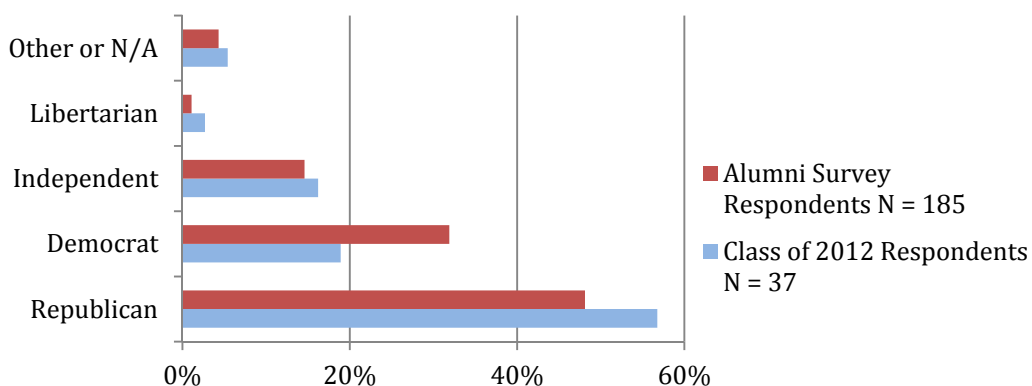


Figure 14 shows the similarity between the groups. The majority of both groups (51% Class of 2012 and 52% alumni) identified as moderate in their political orientation. Twenty-seven percent of both groups reported being conservative. Five percent, just two members, of the Class of 2012 compared to 15% of alumni identified themselves as liberal. Although the numbers are small, Figure 14 shows differences between the groups in the extreme orientations. In the Class of 2012, 5%, two class members, identified themselves as very conservative compared to 2%, just four, of the alumni. In the Class of 2012, 8%, three class members, identified themselves as very liberal compared to 3%, just six of the alumni.

Figure 15 shows identification with political party with similarities and differences in the two groups.

Figure 15: Political Party Affiliation Comparison of Class of 2012 and Alumni



As shown in Figure 15, in both groups identification with Republicans is higher than identification with Democrats. The percentage of the Class of 2012 who identified with Republicans was 57%, compared to 48% of the alumni group. The percentage of the Class of 2012 who identified with Democrats was 19%, compared to 32% of the alumni group. The Independent category was selected by 16% of the Class of 2012 and by 15% of alumni. One member of the Class of 2012 identified as Libertarian while two alumni selected that category. The “Other or N/A” category was selected by 5%, two members, of the Class of 2102 and 4%, or eight, of the alumni group.

As noted above, particularly when very small numbers were reported,<sup>33</sup> the significances of differences in the percentages may be exaggerated for the Class of 2012. Overall, the data show the Class of 2012 is similar to the alumni group in demographics and political orientation/affiliation.

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<sup>33</sup> Each of the 37 responses by the Class of 2012 was 2.7% of the total responses.

## Civic Engagement Attitudes and Beliefs

Class of 2012 participants and alumni survey respondents also provided information about attitudes and beliefs relating to civic engagement and activities considered to reflect civic engagement. The Class of 2012 participants answered questions about civic engagement prior to taking the class on the pre-course questionnaire. They answered the same questions in the post-course questionnaire, making it possible to determine whether their reported civic engagement changed in the year following the course. The alumni questionnaire included the same questions relating to civic engagement. Responses from the three questionnaires were compared to identify similarities and differences in how the participants perceived how they experienced civic engagement.

The civic engagement questions asked participants to respond either *strongly agree*; *agree*; *neither agree or disagree*; *disagree*; or *strongly disagree* with the following statements: (a) I have a strong attachment to my local community; (b) I know what can be done to meet the needs of my community; and (c) I feel I have the ability to make a difference in my community. The statements reflect attitudes and beliefs about civic engagement. Figure 16 shows the data for the statement about attachment to the community.

Figure 16: I Have a Strong Attachment to My Local Community

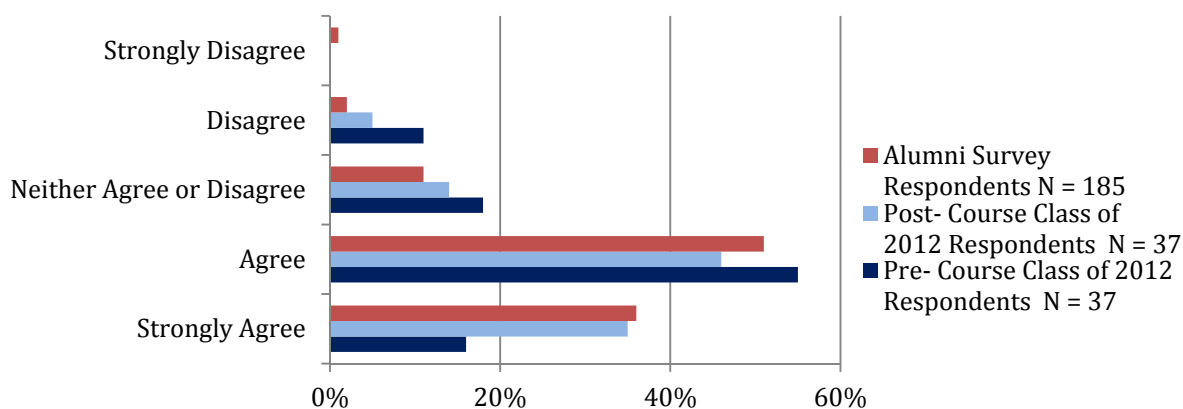


Figure 16 shows that the *strongly agree* category increased from 16% pre-course to 35% post-course, which suggests that the participants felt a stronger attachment after taking the course.

The *disagree* category responses decreased from 11% to 5%. Alumni responses of *strongly agree* (36%) were consistent with the Class of 2012 participants' *strongly agree* responses. The alumni responses differed from the Class of 2012 on the *disagree* category (2%).

Figure 17 shows the data for the statement relating to knowing what can be done to meet the community's needs.

Figure 17: I Know What Can Be Done to Meet the Needs of My Community

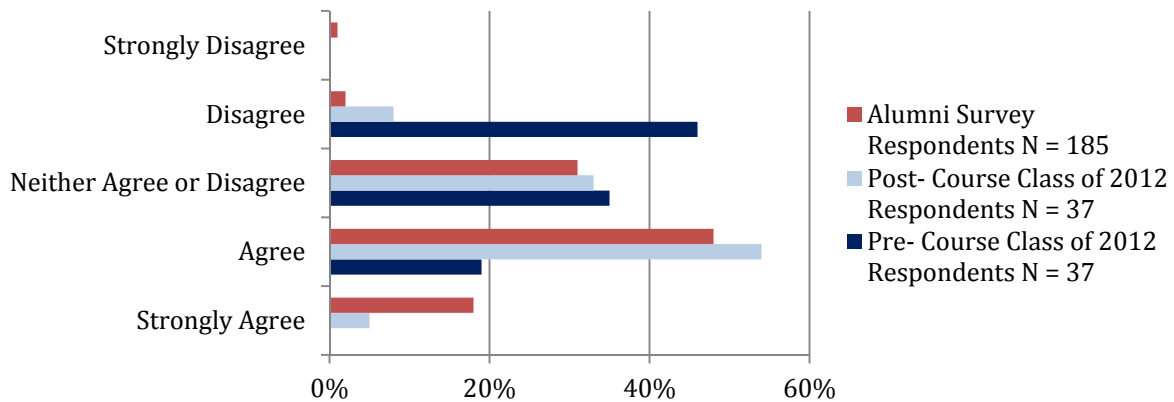


Figure 17 shows a difference from pre-course to post-course questionnaire responses of the Class of 2012. Pre-course responses for the group revealed only 19% indicated *agree* and none selected *strongly agree* for believing they knew what needed to be done to meet the needs of the community. However on the post-course questionnaire, 54% of the Class of 2012 indicated *agree* and 5% selected *strongly agree*. Only 8% of the Class of 2012 selected *disagree* on the post-course questionnaire while 46% chose the category on the pre-class questionnaire. Alumni *strongly agree* (17%) or *agree* (48%), with a total agreement about knowing what needs to be done at 65%.

Figure 18 shows the data for the statement related to the ability to make a difference in the community.

Figure 18: I Feel I Have the Ability to Make a Difference in My Community

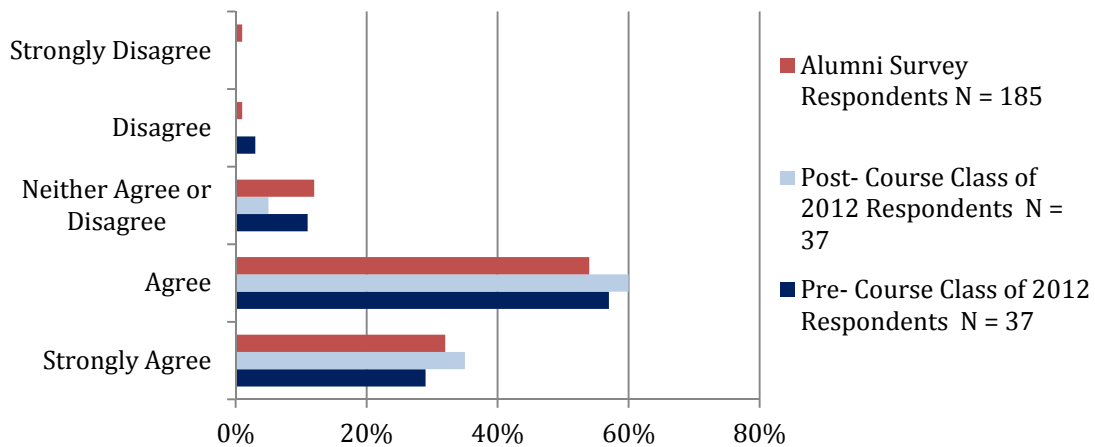


Figure 18 shows that the majority of both groups indicated a belief that they could make a difference in the community. The Class of 2012 responses revealed a pre-course to post-course difference in the categories selected. Pre-course, 11%, four class members *neither agreed nor disagreed* and one person *disagreed* for a total of 14%. Post-course, no member of the Class of 2012 disagreed with the statement and only two people, 5%, were neutral. When the categories *agree* and *strongly agree* are combined, the alumni responses indicated 86% agreement and the Class of 2012 indicated 95% agreement that the participants have the ability to make a change in the community.

Overall, the alumni questionnaire responses and the Class of 2012 post-course responses indicated that civic engagement attitudes and beliefs are strong. One reasonably could expect strong attachment to the community of individuals who apply to the program. If an objective of the program is to prepare leaders to be better able to meet the needs of the community, then

Figure 18 shows a positive change post-class in the belief by alumni that they know what needs to be done to meet community needs.

Questions in the surveys requested information about civic engagement activities. The questions gave examples of activities related to civic engagement and asked participants to indicate *yes* or *no* whether they engaged in the activity. This section provides a picture of LGP alumni and Class of 2012 participants' actual civic engagement. Community activity was one criterion for selection for the program. Thus, the Class of 2012 participants' responses on pre-course and post-course questionnaires measured whether participants participated in civic engagement activities more after completing the course than before.

Leadership role in civic groups was the first area of civic engagement explored through the surveys. Participants were asked whether they had served during the past six months in a leadership role in a civic service club, non-profit group, or faith-based organization. Figure 19 shows the data obtained from the participants' responses.

Figure 19: Did You Play a Leadership Role With the Organization or Activity in Which You Were Involved in the Last 6 Months?

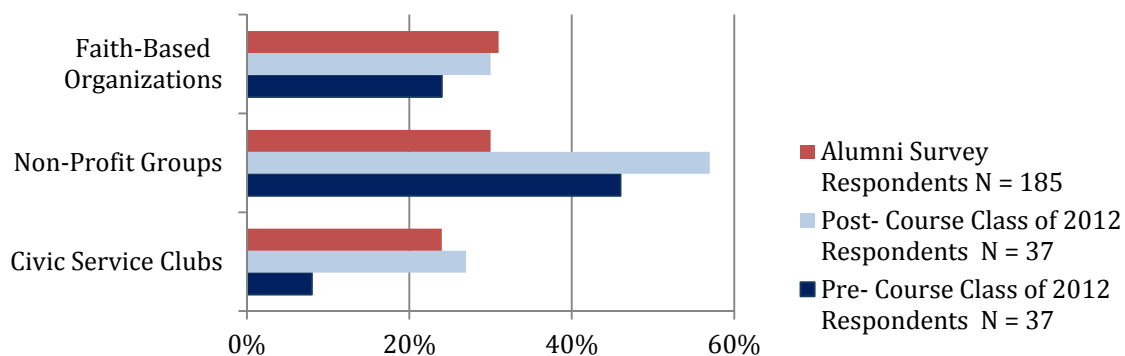
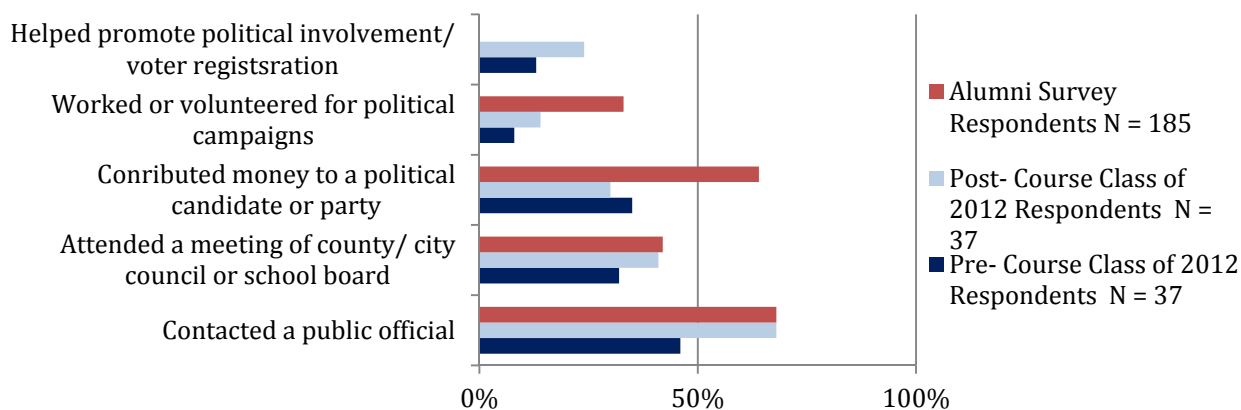




Figure 19 shows participants assumed additional leadership roles in civic service clubs (8% pre to 27% post), non-profit groups (46% pre to 57% post), and faith-based organizations (24% pre to 30% post) since beginning the class. Alumni survey responses were similar to the Class of 2012 post responses in civic service clubs (27% Class of 2012 to 24% alumni) and faith-based organizations (30% Class of 2012 to 31% alumni). The Class of 2012 reported more participation in non-profit groups (57%) than did the alumni group (30%).

Political activities in which the participants had been involved within the last six months was the next area explored. Figure 20 shows a summary of the political activities reported by the participants.

Figure 20: Activities in Which You Were Involved in the Last 6 Months



*Note:* The statement about promoting political involvement/voter registration was not included in the alumni questionnaire so no comparison is available.

In Figure 20 data for the Class of 2012 participants show an increase from pre-course survey to post-course survey in (a) contacted a public figure (46% pre to 68% post); (b) attended a meeting of county/city council or school board (32% pre to 41% post); (c) worked or volunteered for political campaigns (8% pre to 14% post); and (d) helped promote political involvement/voter

registration (13% pre to 24% post). Contributed money to a political campaign was the only category that decreased (35% pre to 30% post) for the Class of 2012 participants.

A comparison of Class of 2012 post-class responses to alumni responses indicated similarities in the contacted a public official category (68% Class of 2012 and 68% alumni) and the attended a meeting of county/city council or school board category (41% Class of 2012 and 42% alumni). Differences were noted in (a) contributed money to a political candidate or party (30% Class of 2012 and 64% alumni); (b) worked or volunteered for political campaigns (14% Class of 2012 and 33% alumni). Thus, the data show that both groups had been recently involved in civic engagement activities related to politics.

The last area of investigation related to being informed about civic events. Figure 21 shows how often participants reported reading a local newspaper either online or in print, watching televised news, reading national and/or world news in print or online, and discussing politics and social issues with family or friends.

Figure 21: Participation in Activities Every Day or Several Times a Week

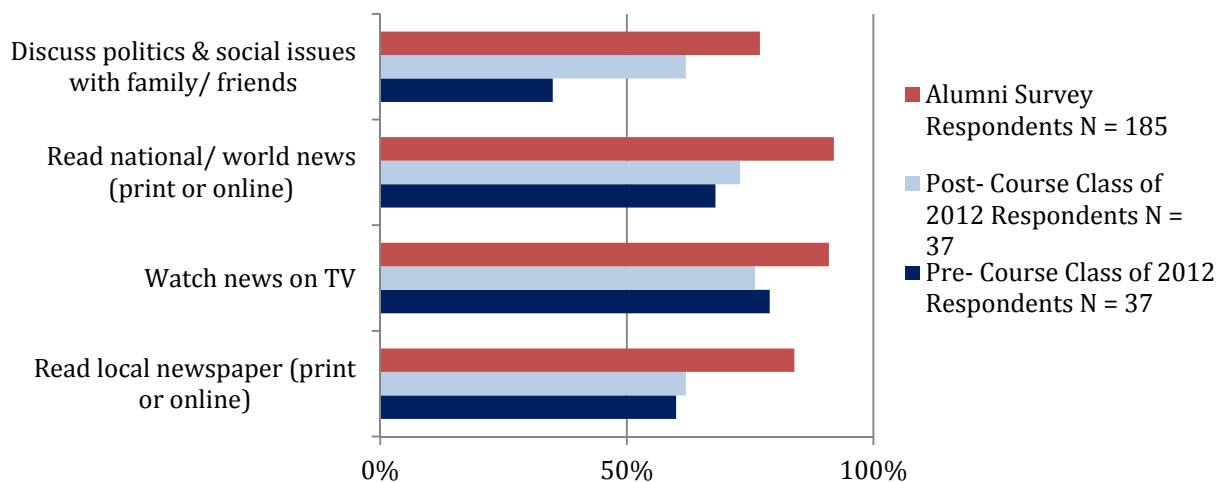


Figure 21 shows that Class of 2012 participant responses changed minimally from pre-course survey to post-course survey in the areas of (a) read local newspaper (60% pre to 62% post); (b) watch news on TV (79% pre to 76% post); and (c) read national/world news (68% pre to 73% post). A greater difference was noted for the Class of 2012 participants in the discuss politics and social issues with family/friends category (35% pre to 62% post). Compared to the Class of 2012 post-course survey, the alumni respondents reported higher engagement in each of the areas: (a) read local newspaper (62% Class of 2012 to 84% alumni); (b) watch news on TV (76% Class of 2012 to 91% alumni); (c) read national/world news (73% Class of 2012 to 92% alumni); and discuss politics and social issues with family/friends (62% Class of 2012 to 77% alumni).

This chapter reported data obtained from three questionnaires. The first questionnaire was administered to the Class of 2012 participants at the beginning of the LPG course and the second questionnaire was administered to the same group after the course the following year. The third questionnaire was completed by a group of alumni from LPG classes from 1984 to 2011. The chapter included descriptions and comparisons in demographics, political orientation and affiliation, civic engagement attitude and beliefs, and actual civic engagement activities. The three-questionnaire analysis shows how the Class of 2012 changed from pre- to post-course and how the Class of 2012 compares with all previous classes. Data indicate that, although unique in people, time, and specific curriculum, the Class of 2012 resembled a typical LPG class.

## PART THREE: IMPACT

### IX. All Alumni 1984-2012 – Impact Results

The genius of democracies is seen not only in the great number of new words introduced but even more in the new ideas they express.

(Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835)

Previous chapters described theory, process, and practice of Leadership Greater Promisetown (LGP) within a framework of democracy education. Civic engagement attitudes, beliefs, and activities of LGP alumni also were described and compared. This chapter focuses on the program's impact over time as perceived and reported by alumni. The data analyzed in this chapter are from responses in this study's Internet questionnaires to specific questions about LGP's impact on leadership development, workplace/career, and community. Results are reported in numerical tabulations comparing responses to closed-ended questions and an inductive analysis of all alumni responses to open-ended questions. The final analysis reports alumni suggestions for greater community impact.

#### **Impact Comparison: Class of 2012 and Previous Classes**

Closed-ended responses (*yes, no, or don't know*) about impact are reported below in three areas: (a) leadership development, (b) workplace/career, and (c) the community. Table 5 and Figure 22 show a large majority of all LGP respondents, in both groups, answered yes to the three impact questions. Table 5 also shows the comparison of alumni and Class of 2012 affirmative responses to each of the three impact comparison questions in order of highest to lowest percentage of affirmative responses.

Table 5. Comparison of Alumni and Class of 2012 Affirmative Responses to the Three Impact Questions

Question	Alumni	Post-Class of 2012
Do you think your LGP class experience has had an impact in your leadership development?	93%	95%
Do you think LGP has had an impact in the greater community?	89%	81%
Do you think LGP has had an impact in your workplace/career?	81%	76%

*Note: Alumni N = 195 Post-Class of 2012 N = 37*

Figure 22 shows a graphic display of the data reported in Table 5.

Figure 22: Impact: Affirmative responses for Post-Class of 2012 and Alumni 1984-2011

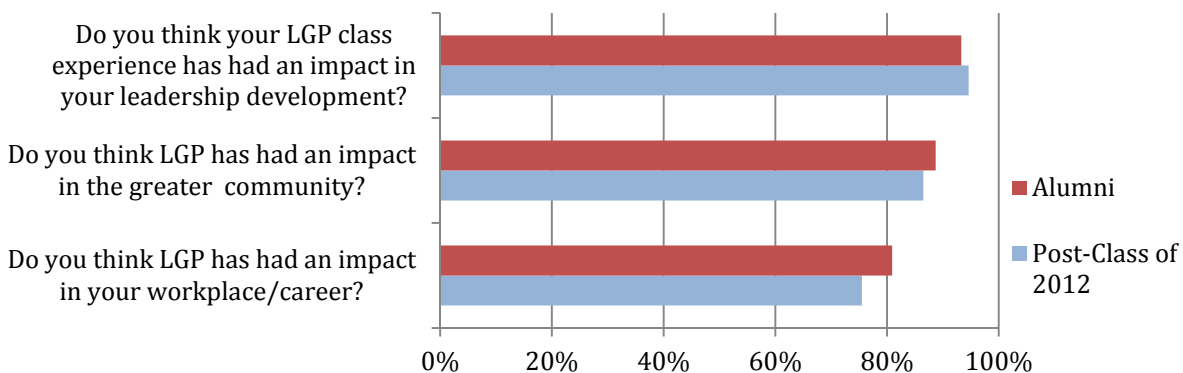


Figure 22 shows comparable results between the two LGP groups, within a range of 75% to 95% affirmative across categories. The highest affirmative response was to the question “Do you think your LGP class experience has had an impact in your leadership development?” The 95% affirmative response to that question for LGP 2012 was slightly higher than the 93% affirmative response for all previous classes. When asked, “Do you think LGP has had an impact in your workplace/career?” the response was 75% affirmative for the Class of 2012 and 81% for all previous classes. When asked, “Do you think LGP has had an impact in the greater

community?” the affirmative response was 86% for the Class of 2012 and 89% for all previous classes. All three questions yielded a high affirmative response from both groups.

### **Thematic Categories Describing Program Impact**

An inductive method of analysis was used to explore program impact, in contrast to the deductive method applied in earlier chapters in which categories were stipulated according to an existing conceptual framework of democracy education. The inductive analysis became an immersion process, with color-coding of the data and creation of column matrices to identify prominent themes, recurring ideas, language, and patterns that would link what respondents were saying in relation to the study’s purpose, LGP program curriculum, and context. The inductive process became, as Marshall and Rossman (2006) described it, “the most intellectually challenging phase of the data analysis and one that can integrate the entire endeavor” (pp. 158-159). This phase of the analysis proved to be, as Marshall and Rossman (2006) also indicated, “the most difficult, complex, ambiguous, creative, and fun” (p. 158) aspect of this study. As new thematic categories of meaning began to emerge, the inductive analytical process contributed a larger view of the impact of LGP.

The sample used for evaluating open-ended responses to the questions about impact combined all alumni with LGP 2012, which was 195 alumni plus 37 LGP 2012 for a total sample of 232 respondents. Combining respondents made sense because LGP 2012 class members had graduated and become alumni a year before the survey. Additionally, Figure 23 graphically displays the similarities between the Class of 2012 and all previous classes with regard to perceptions about the impact of LGP on the participants. Further, the questions about impact were identical on both survey questionnaires and both surveys were conducted within a two-week timespan.

Coding, counting, categorizing, and analyzing open-ended responses became a tedious and complex process (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In all, the 232 respondents gave 524 open-ended responses to the three specific impact questions. When respondents offered multiple examples within their responses, each was counted as a separate indicator of impact, which expanded the number to 723 distinguishable indicators. For example, a response of “LGP gave me confidence to run for elected office” shows three indicators, confidence, career change, and civic engagement.

Indicators were then color coded by descriptive categories and matrices were developed. Multiple themes and patterns began to surface in an analyst-constructed typology (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The process evolved into data groupings that did not necessarily use the exact words or phrases that were used explicitly by participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). For illustration, early emerging thematic categories were multiple sector perspective; appreciation for diversity - respect/tolerance for divergent opinions; positive energy - positive image; knowledge and appreciation of community history; new resources; community projects; transmission of skills, tools, concepts; transformation - personal, job, community; and expanded relationships, business and social - networking. The variety demonstrates how the data brought forth multiple, complex, intricate themes.

In the next stage, a “logical reasoning strategy” was applied to classify themes that crossed with one another in order to generate new insights and typology for further exploration of the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 159). In further examination, the number of cross-categories evolved into five categories that were “internally consistent but distinct from one another” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 159). Identifying new thematic categories necessitated a return to the raw data to re-code all data for an overall analysis of program impact by applying

a consistent set of themes. Table 6 shows number of indicators associated with the five themes underlying LGP's impact in categories of *interpersonal relationships, including networking; civic engagement; new skills, knowledge, concepts; community awareness/appreciation; and intrapersonal, including self-confidence.*

Table 6. Number of Responses Associated with the Indicators in Each Impact Category – All Respondents

Impact Categories	Number of Indicators
Interpersonal relationships, including networking	182
Civic engagement	163
New skills, knowledge, concepts	139
Community awareness/appreciation	128
Intrapersonal, including self-confidence	111

Note: Total number of indicators = 723

Figure 23 shows a graphic summary of indicators in each category that resulted from all respondents.

Figure 23: Summary of Indicators in Each Impact Category – All Respondents

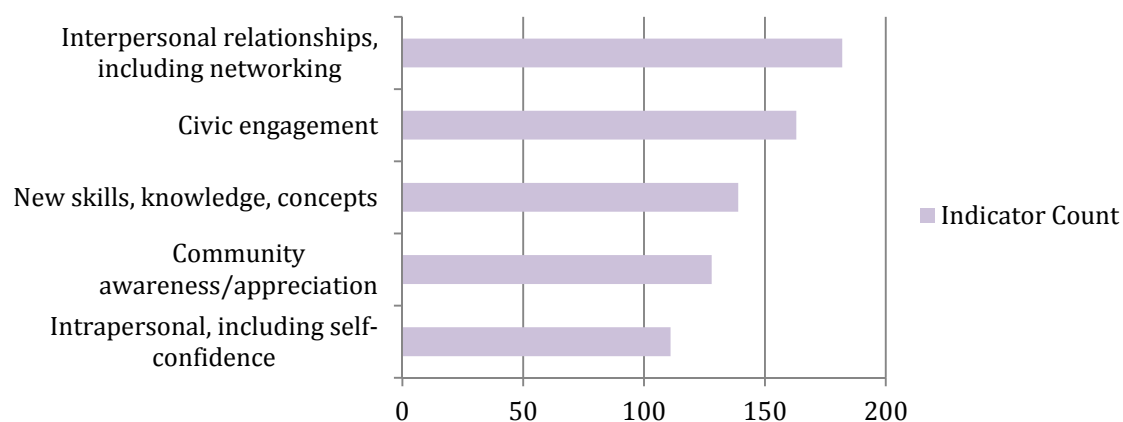




Figure 23 shows that the five thematic categories were fairly well-balanced. Although indicators of impact evolved into a different order for each of the three impact questions, the strongest theme of impact across all three questions was interpersonal relationships/networking, signaling the highest area of program impact. In fact, the exact word network appeared 69 times whether used as a noun, adjective, or verb. Civic engagement was the second strongest thematic category of impact. Notably, the remaining three categories, although strong, were based more what was learned, while the top two categories were based more on what was actually done.

### **Impact: Leadership Development, Workplace/Career, Community**

Following are summaries of the responses to the three individual impact questions. The summaries show results of re-coding all open-ended responses in the five thematic categories that emerged in the logical reasoning strategy. Examples of representative statements in respondents' own words are provided after the summaries. With respect for the deviant or minority view, divergent views are included.

*Minority or deviant voice.* Although the majority of open-ended responses were affirmative, the minority perspective is valuable information. The large number of affirmative responses calls into question whether participants who responded affirmatively to the survey were simply an enthusiastic cohort, and whether the program is impacting the broader universe in the same way as the respondents report. Access to a broad mailing list of LGP graduates over time provided a convenience sample and made it possible to compare one class to many. However, survey results are dependent on the choice of those who respond and “cannot assure without further evidence that the sample represents a broader universe” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 126). Some survey participants who responded no or don't know volunteered responses

that are included in the total number of responses. Those responses provide the minority or deviant voice that is critical to this study.

Of the 232 respondents, six reported no impact on their leadership development, 20 reported they perceived no impact in their workplace or career, and five perceived no impact in the community resulting from LGP. There were nine “don’t know” responses for leadership development, 26 for workplace/career, and 22 for community. A few respondents explained that they were “not sure,” it was “too early to tell,” or they were “not in the workforce to be able to make a judgment.” Important to note is that respondents were invited to describe the impact if they thought there was an impact, but comments were not solicited for any responses of no impact. However, an effort intentionally was made to identify the deviant voice among the responses.

### **Impact on Leadership Development**

From the questionnaire: “If you think your LGP class experience has had an impact in your leadership development, please describe with specific examples.”

Impact of LGP on leadership development was described by 197 of 232 or 85% of alumni respondents. Deviant voices in response to this question were nearly non-existent. One recent graduate said, “It’s hard to say just yet whether my LGP experience has had an impact on my leadership development.” Another said, “Nothing specific, but training continued to offer reminders about what good leadership looks and feels like.”

The strongest thematic category cited for impact on leadership development was increased community awareness/appreciation (74 indicators), which was described as realizing a broader community view, common vision, greater good, available resources, and appreciation for the community’s history. It was followed closely by interpersonal relationships (73 indicators) – reaching across community sectors in business, non-profit, social, and government sectors.

Another strong theme was gaining new leadership knowledge and skills (69 indicators) including collaboration, active listening, respecting divergent thinking, inclusive decision-making, and diagnosing the situation. Civic engagement (58 indicators) was described as increased involvement in non-profit, religious, and governmental organizations, with many reporting more active leadership roles. Intrapersonal impact (52 indicators) was described with words and phrases such as increased self-esteem, self-confidence, or self-awareness; feelings of acceptance and support; greater comfort with diverse populations; and increased pride, initiative, perspective, insight, understanding, and passion. One alumnus reported the impact was “making leadership more enjoyable and satisfying.” Several reported being motivated to make life changes to follow their passions or enable greater community involvement or to seek new roles in leadership. Representative comments follow.

- It gave me the feeling that civic leadership was achievable and I have participated in a number of roles since then: planning commission, school board, etc.
- I learned things about my community that I hadn't known in my previous 29 years growing up here. I learned about what it takes to make a community grow...leaders, collaboration and hard work from many areas and groups of people.
- Established a core network of community members that I would not have otherwise come into contact with that is still in place to this day.
- Helped me re-evaluate where I wanted to put my time and resources. I've been able to be a more effective board member or volunteer and it has even helped in my role as a "boss."
- It has given me a different perspective and helped me look at the impact my decisions and the decisions of my company have on the community.
- Gave me the confidence to get involved in politics.
- I am much more confident in myself as far as taking on new leadership roles, and being able to recognize and understand varying viewpoints. I feel I have something of value to offer.

- It helped me to feel more comfortable discussing real life community issues with others.
- My LGP experience helped me to "unlearn" certain habits and learn things that would enable me to be successful.
- LGP helped me understand and learn more about my community, which caused me to want to get more involved.
- LGP provided me with numerous professional contacts that I still use today for advice.
- The LGP session provided tools and insight into leadership qualities. My outlook to community has also been impacted to include a reality that we are here to make good things happen for other people.
- LGP lit a fire in me to learn more about leadership and to truly use the concepts in every situation not just ones where I am in a position of authority.
- LGP made me more acutely aware of resources in our community and how people put them to use to affect community betterment for the greater good.
- Helped me understand the power of collaboration.

Although each comment is unique to reflect the uniqueness of individual LGP participants, overall themes of increased community awareness and building relationships with people stand out. What also stand out are the descriptions of self-awareness and personal growth that graduates describe that resulted in impact on their community leadership development.

### **Impact on Workplace/Career**

From the questionnaire: "If you think LGP has had an impact in your workplace/career, please describe with specific examples."

Impact of LGP in workplace/career was described by 141 of 232 or 61% of alumni respondents. Compared to the other two areas of impact, the response rate to this open-ended question was smaller. Ten of the 141 responded with "see above," "same as above," or "see previous comment." One reported "Limited impact, only a conversation starter." Overall, the

most prevalent thematic category of impact in workplace/career was in interpersonal relationships (52 indicators) with examples of gaining new clients, business development, and new social networks for both personal and professional support, including awareness and use of additional professional resources; and improved relationship with people at work, both bosses and co-workers – including working with people with diverse backgrounds. Next was learning and applying new skills, knowledge, concepts (46 indicators) with frequent mention of listening and facilitation skills to conduct meetings and handle difficult situations. Many took on increased responsibility or new positions at work. Other categories included intrapersonal impact (33 indicators) through increased self-esteem and confidence; personal recognition, prestige, added credential; and increased pride in the workplace. Some alumni told how the LGP experience led them to a decision to change career directions completely. Civic engagement activities supported by their workplace or conducted by their workplace (23 indicators) and increased community awareness/appreciation (19 indicators) impacted decisions and relationships between workplace and community.

In summary, comments reflected new perceptions of workplace and career in relation to the broader community, as graduates became involved in new business relationships, with non-profit boards, and some volunteered for LGP committees. Representative responses follow.

- The networking provided key contacts and mutual respect.
- It has made me stop and think about what is really best for the greater community. It is not always about making a profit but doing the right thing at the right time.
- I think the way I deal with my staff, my business presence in the community, and how I interact with patients has definitely benefitted from my participation.
- I have recently been promoted to a position where I supervise 21 employees through a difficult transition in our office. I think I am a better leader during meetings and more confident in my decision-making.

- It has impacted how I relate to co-workers and partners at the firm. The largest being I'm usually able to recognize my triggers and deal with situations in a more positive way.
- New connections have been created, which have resulted in collaborations on a new program development grant; created new donor relationships through a class member's personal interest in our mission.
- It has made me more community aware and connected to a wide variety of professionals/individuals. As one whose job is to attract talent and be well networked in the community, it has been invaluable. I am also a better leader w/in my own company and take on new challenges I may have not wanted to pursue in the past.
- It gave me the confidence to start my own business.
- It just gave me a different perspective on the people in my community and what issues they face and that translates into my employees and co-workers.
- I problem solve for a living and I'm continually thinking about the adaptive vs. technical theory we discussed.
- LGP has taught me how to handle tense relationships in a professional setting. Working in the world of politics, nothing is ever calm. I often think of the skills learned about shared visions when interacting with political leaders who share different views than myself.
- Helped me launch my second career.
- The ability to achieve a common vision and to pursue collaborative effort to achieve that vision are skills reinforced in LGP.

Although diverse in description of impact in career or workplace, comments reflect a new respect, awareness, and understanding of other people who are part of the community - in and out of the immediate work situation. Not only do the comments show greater appreciation for others, but also they describe increased skills to manage people and situations with a greater sense of community. As a result of the class and self-reflection, some decide to change career directions.

## Impact on Greater Community

From the questionnaire: “If you think LGP has had an impact on the greater community, please describe with specific examples.”

Impact of LGP in the community was described by 186 of the 232 or 80% of alumni respondents. The largest category of responses was civic engagement (80 indicators), describing alumni involvement in community projects, involvement on and support of nonprofit boards, the ongoing community visioning process, and decisions by graduates to run for office.

Interpersonal relationships (50 indicators) were cited either as a collective resource of like-minded people or as an expanded network of resources in community betterment. Community awareness/appreciation (35 indicators) included knowing more about the community’s resources and its history, which was perceived as resulting in enthusiasm and energy that spread outward from the class and from graduates to others in the community. Other categories were new skills and knowledge (24 indicators), especially skills in problem-solving and building community collaborations, and intrapersonal impact (22 indicators) based on gaining new insights, energy, and confidence to impact the community. One person noted, “It’s a ripple effect of good that is untraceable.” Some comments were neutral or expressed “do not know.” Three said they hoped so. Three others expressed frustration with lack of impact:

- I am frustrated with the overall impact on the community that I would like to see, but that may just be my impatience. I think we have the capacity to make a significant improvement in Promisestown.
- I don't see LGP graduates leveraging their relationships as I expected to; either within their graduating class or in the community.
- Back in the 90’s, one LGP class held summits. There were some really good ideas generated but it seemed that is as far as it went. Today, in 2013, there are still meetings talking about the same ideas and issues and still no action after all these years.

In summary, responses pointed out the impact of multiple sector involvement and multiple age involvement, diversity of ideas, and success of community projects. Representative comments follow.

- All in all - it allows those with passion to connect and act.
- Instilled a great sense of history and pride in our community that was passed on to others outside our class - something Promisestown desperately needs!
- Community visioning – how corporate vision fits within community vision.
- All the collective wisdom and brain trust of LGP alumni is working to make good things happen in the community. The downtown renovation and the success of NOTO (a north town Arts District) are good examples of something on the horizon and something recent.
- Within our class we have seen two small businesses start, continued support of local non-profits, ex. Helping Hands Humane Society.
- It has served to connect influential individuals to one another, to community initiatives, and to working for the “greater good.”
- LGP’s role in the success of The Great Overland Station is a good example.
- Increased awareness of a “we” mentality.
- I am pleased to see alumni working together and making changes for the good!
- Projects done by LGP classes for the betterment of the community. Networking by LGP alums leveraged rather than duplicated efforts.
- LGP has weaved its way into all sectors of the community and most leaders in the community can tie back to LGP.
- It has created a “brotherhood” among leaders in our community that helps to be a more cohesive group in leading our community.

Specific examples of organizations or community projects and varied civic engagement activities are described as community impact. Overall, the strength and potential of the LGP network is perceived as having a positive impact on the community. Perhaps more than other



areas of impact, many comments lack specific descriptions and some reflect frustration with lack of impact.

### **Alumni Suggestions for Greater Community Impact**

From the questionnaire: “What suggestions do you have on how LGP might have greater impact in the community?”

When asked for suggestions for greater community impact, 148 LGP alumni of the 232 survey participants responded with a variety of ideas. A new thematic analysis was applied and a matrix developed as emerging thematic categories began to evolve and distinguishable indicators for impact were identified and coded. Table 7 and Figure 25 show the resulting six major thematic categories according to number of indicators within each category.

Table 7. Summary of Indicators for Thematic Categories of Suggestions for Greater Impact

Thematic Category	Number of Indicators
Organize/strengthen/empower alumni network	53
Increase public knowledge/awareness of LGP	23
Expand participation in numbers and in diversity	19
Expand political involvement	12
Strengthen nonprofit board connection	10
Maintain, sustain, keep program going	9

Figure 24 shows a graphic summary of the thematic categories of suggestions for greater impact.

Figure 24: Summary of Thematic Categories of Suggestions for Greater Impact – All Respondents

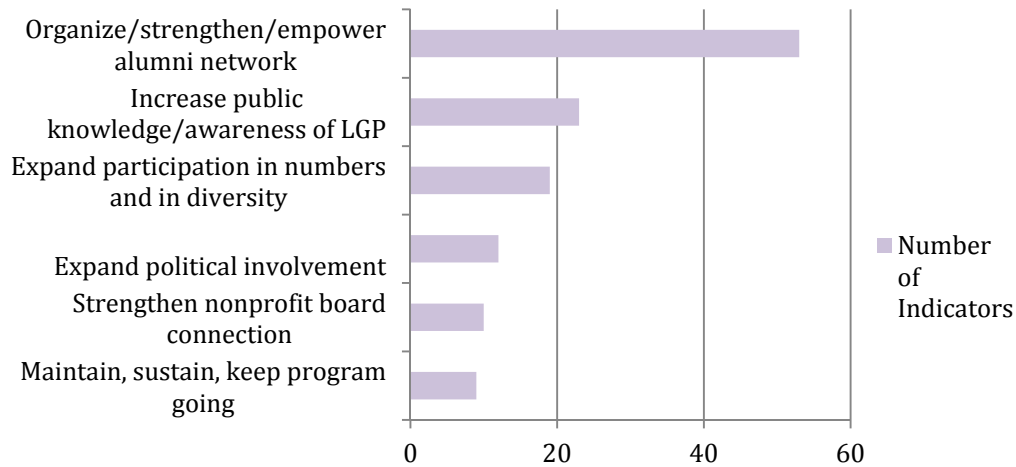


Table 8 shows examples given by the respondents for each of the thematic category of suggestions for greater impact listed from highest to lowest numbers of indicators.

Table 8. Examples for the Thematic Categories of Suggestions for Greater Impact.

Thematic Category	Examples of Suggestions for Greater Impact
Organize, strengthen, and empower the existing LGP alumni network	Alumni association; seminars, forums; tackle a big issue for the long term greater impact; annual social event; annual fundraiser; refresher course; community problem-solving; think tank of alums on community issues
Increase public knowledge/awareness of LGP	Increased media coverage; advertisements; YouTube scenes from classes; telling success stories inside and outside of the LGP network
Expand participation in numbers and in diversity	Expand across socio-economic, career sectors; more students, i.e. more scholarships; alternate scheduling; more youth and seniors
Expand political involvement	Establishing common ground; exposure to elected officials in class curriculum and alumni relations; voter registration; and maintain link with elected officials
Strengthen nonprofit board connection	Expand nonprofit board curriculum and alumni relations
Maintain, sustain, and keep program going	No examples needed

Of the 148 responses, there were 11 responses of “none” or “don’t know.” Others commented they couldn’t think of any suggestions other than to keep going as it is. Examples included “I think the impact, short and long term, is moving just fine” and “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it!” One commented the program would continue to evolve as it has in the past. One person suggested changing the basic class format: “With the same process in place for the past 30 years, a new way of doing business should be considered. Fresh ideas are needed.”

Representative responses:

- The more people you bring through, the better this community is going to be.
- Maybe go more with the computer age ... start a LGP twitter, more news feeds, and work more in the communities that need the support (schools, businesses, etc.)
- Seek out more women and minorities. Offer as many scholarships as possible.
- Try to get younger and more diverse individuals involved, not more at the rank and file level. Good ideas can come from the bottom up.
- Take the core concepts out into the community. Have mini-educational sessions within the neighborhoods or by some other means to engage and educate more people – especially those working at the neighborhood level and middle and high school students.
- Continue to develop, nurture, and sustain the connectivity of the old and the new LGP groups. That synergy has potential for even bigger and better things for our community.
- Advertise the program more!
- Keep doing what you are doing. I know it is a huge undertaking but the more people you bring through the better this community is going to be.
- Maybe offer a fall and spring class
- I loved the group project - but I think it's important to make sure that what you do has results to show the impact!

Overall, responses to this question were concentrated in one area: “Organize, strengthen, and empower the existing LGP alumni network.” Other comments included keeping the program the same, while some suggested a younger focus both by involving more young people and by becoming more engaged in new technology.

### **Summary of Impact**

Results show LGP alumni perceive a positive impact of LGP in their own leadership development, their workplace and career, and in the community. The inductive analysis evolved into five thematic categories: interpersonal relationships; civic engagement; new skills, knowledge, concepts; increased community awareness and appreciation; and intrapersonal, impact. Alumni expressed ideas for greater impact, which mostly were suggestions to the sponsor to continue, increase, or expand LGP programming. Over a third of the alumni suggested organization of the alumni, who themselves could do more toward community betterment. In summary, alumni seemed to be saying that because they think their experience had and continues to have a positive impact throughout the community, so then continuing and expanding LGP would have greater community impact.

## **PART FOUR: CONCLUSION**

### **X. Conclusion: Summary of Study and Results**

Trust in civic leadership in Promisestown, U.S.A. may be increasing among some residents as a result of its community leadership program (CLP). This study described the impact of the program, pseudo-named Leadership Greater Promisestown (LGP), in leadership, community development, and democracy education. This concluding chapter summarizes previous chapters, addresses the research questions, identifies study implications and limitations, and suggests directions for future research and practice in civic leadership education.

First, the study described one annual class, the Class of 2012, through 80 hours of class observation in a two-day retreat and seven sessions, a series of individual interviews with 11 of the 37 class members, and pre- and post-class questionnaires completed by all class members. The narrative explored the program's context, process, application, and impact while also investigating the program's relationship to a conceptual framework of democracy education. Second, Internet questionnaire results were analyzed to compare and contrast the Class of 2012 with previous class graduates (1984-2011) to ascertain whether LGP 2012 was a typical LGP class. Responses to open-ended questions in the Internet questionnaires then were analyzed to understand further and describe LGP's long-term impact. The return rate of Internet questionnaires for both study groups combined was 44%.

#### **Summary of Research, Demographics, and Literature Review**

**Research.** Analysis of data collected from interviews and Internet survey questionnaires submitted by the LGP Class of 2012 and previous program graduates indicated LGP's positive impact on civic engagement, leadership development, workplace, and the community. The

study's conclusions implicitly pointed to LGP's impact on the identified problem: lack of trust in civic leadership to meet community challenges.

The study sample included all 37 members of the Class of 2012 and 195 alumni from previous classes (1984-2011) who still resided in the area and for whom LGP had e-mail addresses (n=492). The return rate was 40% for alumni responses to the three questions about LGP's impact. The completion rate was 38% for alumni responses to demographic and civic engagement data. The return and completion rates both were 100% for the Class of 2012. Thus, the overall return rate for the combined groups was 44% and the overall completion rate was 42%. Data indicated that, although unique in people, time, and specific curriculum, LGP 2012 resembled a typical LGP class with only slight differences.

**Demographics.** Data were collected and analyzed for demographic characteristics, socio-economic status, political orientation, and party affiliation for both groups of study participants. Two slight differences were noted. First, the more recent class had a younger age range, from under 20 years of age through the 50's age category, while the alumni group ranged from the 20's age category through the 70 or over age category. Second, slightly higher wealth was reported by the alumni group, which could be explained because the older age group was more established in careers compared to larger student and young professional representation in the Class of 2012. Both groups had representation in income categories of lower class/poor and wealthy, while the largest category for both was at least 50% middle class. The second largest income category for both groups was upper middle class. The bell-shaped curve in income representation was clearly evident but tilted toward upper middle class in both groups.

Although the groups were similar in political orientation and party affiliation, two differences were notable. One difference between the two groups, with the caveat that the

numbers were small, was that LGP 2012 had a higher percentage of identification with the extreme categories of very liberal or very conservative political orientation compared to the less extreme orientation of previous classes. Both groups reported more affiliation with Republicans than with Democrats, which reflected the state's majority party. With the caveat that the numbers were small, the alumni respondents showed a higher percentage of affiliation with Democrats compared to LGP 2012.<sup>34</sup> Overall, the two groups were similar.

**Literature review.** In 2012, the year of the study, CLPs represented the most common approach to strengthening civic leadership (Easterling, 2012). However, there was little CLP research in the literature. The existing research typically evaluated outcome, not impact, and was done most often at the end of the class by class participants. That is, participants themselves evaluated general components of what was taught in community leadership classes (Anglin, et al., 2013; Bisel, et al., 2007; Reinelt, et al., 2002; Wituk, et al., 2003; Wituk et al., 2005). Scholars reporting perceived value and popularity of CLPs emphasized the need for research on actual impact (Azzam & Riggio, 2003; Galloway, 1997; Port, 2011). General public perception of CLPs was another strategy for evaluation, although the evaluation still was not an assessment of community impact (Kansas Leadership Center, 2011). An exception was Leadership Greater Hartford's impact study conducted by graduate students in the Department of Public Policy at the University of Connecticut (2012). The Hartford study reported impact in actual civic engagement activities and in the continuation of long-term community projects initiated by the

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<sup>34</sup> This prompts a question whether Democrats might be more positive in responding to the survey.

CLP. More recent research sought to document the impact of adaptive leadership training on community change (Chrislip et al., 2013). Although past studies examined various outcomes relating to class curriculum knowledge, skills, feelings, and community service, and later studies investigated actual impact; this study combines all of these aspects and others in one comprehensive study, with multiple methods, samples, and multiple impact components.

### **Study Question One: Democracy Education**

The first study question was "How does the LGP curriculum relate to the study's conceptual framework of democracy education?" The response to the question was described more fully in Chapters VI and VII. The study's conceptual framework provided the structure for data analysis. Data collection methods were class observation, interviews, and Internet pre- and post-class questionnaires. The implication of the analysis is that LGP 2012, in the words of Tocqueville (1835), was "covered with a layer of democratic paint."

Data analysis confirmed that all three of the study's framework components of democratic education, theory, process, and practice, came together to demonstrate an integrated curriculum supportive of democracy education. For example, democratic education theory was evident in participant descriptions of learning experiences in terms of equality, equal opportunity and access, the common good (Gutmann, 1987), and the pursuit of the American dream. Democratic education process was described in terms of inclusiveness, collaboration, cooperation, listening respectfully, group decision-making, and building the classroom community (Gibbs & Ushijima, 2008). Democratic education practice was described in actual community experience (Dewey, 1938) in developing class projects and in curriculum practice at work, at school, with family, and in political involvement. The conceptual framework of



democratic education theory, process, and practice was confirmed by participant descriptions of their learning and actual experiences in the class and the greater community.

Consistency in the acquired learning was evident one year after the class ended in the post-class questionnaire completed by 100% of the class. Civic engagement attitudes, beliefs, and activities were strengthened when compared to the pre-class survey data. If, as the data suggest, LGP 2012 graduates continue to apply their class learning in the practice of democracy education in their own family, school, workplace, and volunteer and political environments, then Leadership Greater Promisestown will have accomplished its mission, “to challenge and motivate traditional and non-traditional leaders, so that they are better prepared to strengthen and transform the community.”

### **Study Question Two: Program Impact**

The second study question was “How does LGP impact the development of citizen leaders and their civic engagement, their workplace/career, and the common good of the community?” Multi-faceted comprehensive research produced conclusions about LGP’s impact, based on data self-reported by graduates and analysis and interpretation of the data, as described in Chapter IX. Consistent with Dewey’s (1916) concept of lifelong learning, learning not only was experienced during the class but also continued to evolve and be practiced with continuing impact reported long after the class ended. The in-depth analysis of responses to this question helped to explain the program’s possible influence in countering an overall lack of trust within the Promisestown community, which was the problem investigated by this study.

A large majority of all LGP respondents, in both study groups, answered “yes” to the three impact questions. *Yes* responses ranged from 75% to 95% across all three areas of impact: leadership development; workplace/career; and the common good of the community. Graduates

reported feeling more confident and taking on more leadership responsibility. The graduates developed new perceptions of their workplace and career in relation to the broader community and reported a variety of projects and activities they believed contributed to the community good. Results of numerical comparison in several areas of civic engagement are summarized in more detail in the next subsection. Summaries of overall impact with implications for contributing to community trust and alumni suggestions for greater impact complete the summary of responses to the study question about LGP's impact.

**Impact on civic engagement: Pre- and post-class comparison of LGP 2012 and with alumni (1984-2011).** The Class of 2012 participants showed an increase from pre-course to post-course questionnaires in civic engagement attitudes, beliefs, and practice. Further data comparisons between the post-class and the alumni group reflected long-term civic engagement of alumni. The two groups had similar demographics and post-class civic engagement, supporting the conclusion that the Class of 2012 was a typical LGP class with respect to civic engagement. Specific results follow.

***Beliefs and attitudes.*** LGP 2012 data showed increases from the pre-class to the post-class questionnaires one year later in participants feeling a stronger attachment to the community, knowing what can be done to meet the needs of the community, and feeling they have the ability to make a difference in the community. The post-class results were comparable to the alumni civic engagement attitudes and beliefs.

***Leadership roles.*** LGP 2012 data showed increases from the pre-class to the post-class questionnaires in leadership roles in community organizations or activities. In the post-class questionnaire, the leadership roles reported by LGP 2012 graduates in faith-based organizations and in civic service clubs increased to a level comparable to that reported by alumni generally.

Notably, the Class of 2012 was more involved than previous alumni in leadership positions in nonprofit organizations, including employment, both before and after the class.

*Political activities.* LGP 2012 data showed increases from the pre-class to the post-class questionnaires in political activities within the previous six months, with one exception, which was contributing money to a candidate or party. Increases to levels comparable to the alumni group were shown in contacting a public figure, attending a meeting of county/city council or school board, working or volunteering for political campaigns, and helping promote political involvement/voter registration. Data showed previous alumni more often contributed money to a political candidate or party than graduates of LGP 2012, who actually showed a decrease in contributions. The difference might be due to small numbers in LGP 2012 and because the older alumni group was more established in the community and likely had higher income.

*Informed about civic events.* LGP 2012 data showed minimal change from pre-class to post-class questionnaires in how members became informed about civic events. The previous alumni group indicated significantly higher participation in all listed activities: “read national/world news in print or online,” “watch news on television,” “read local newspaper,” and “discuss politics and social issues with family and friends.” Only in “discussing politics and social issues ...” did LGP 2012 show a significant increase from pre- to post-class.

In summary, civic engagement data gathered from LGP 2012 pre- and post-class questionnaires showed increases in civic engagement attitudes, beliefs, and activities following the LGP experience. The majority of the increases resulted in levels of engagement approximating the levels of engagement of previous alumni. Possible factors explaining the few dissimilarities were the small number in some categories in the LGP 2012 group and the age group differences and established place of previous alumni in the community. Another possible

explanation may be the difference in political context, with later years reflecting an ideological context more extreme than in the previous time.

A consideration for future study is to compare and assess results according to the selection of class applicants. Applicants who competed and won a place in the class were likely to be inclined toward civic engagement and civically involved before the program. It would be informative to compare their survey results with those of graduates who were selected and sponsored by their employers and guaranteed a place in the class but who may or may not have been civically engaged before the class. The implication is that the results might be different for sponsored compared to competitive class participants.

While the study results show significant impact and substantial similarities in the impact reported by LGP 2012 and the alumni group, the alumni survey was not based on a random sample. Alumni who were more positive about the program may have been more likely to fill out the questionnaire. Non-responders, whether predisposed toward civic engagement and active before the class or at the time of the survey, may not have viewed the program as having much impact. The alumni response rate is a limitation for this study, which suggests a need for further research on the topic. However, the limitation does not discount the responses of 100% of LGP 2012 and 38% of alumni (1984-2011) who reported their demographics, civic activities, and beliefs about LGP's impact.

**Overall program impact all alumni (1984-2012).** Overall program impact was based on analysis of responses by the LGP alumni (1984-2012) who answered identical questions about LGP's impact. Respondents who answered "yes" to the questions about LGP's impact on their personal leadership development, their workplace/career, and the community were asked to provide specific examples and descriptions. Because the post-class questionnaire was

administered one year after the class ended, the Class of 2012 was combined with alumni (1984-2011) to become a single alumni group (1984-2012). After results first were compiled and analyzed for each impact question, all open-ended responses then were combined and analyzed to discover overall program impact.

Descriptors and indicators of impact fell into five major categories of impact. There was a different order of the five for each of the three impact questions, although the strongest theme across all three areas of impact was interpersonal relationships/networking. Following interpersonal, in order of overall impact, were civic engagement, expanded knowledge, skills, and concepts, community awareness with appreciation, and intrapersonal awareness and development, which included descriptors of feelings of equality and acceptance and increased passion, self-esteem, and self-confidence.

**Implication: LGP has an impact on trust in Promisestown.** As described earlier, this study's identified problem was lack of trust. The issue of trust in civic leadership was heard throughout public meetings as part of a large-scale community visioning process, in which 5,000 area residents volunteered time and effort (Heartland Visioning, 2008). Descriptions and examples of LGP's impact show a possible relationship to building trust. Analysis and interpretation of the data revealed a pattern linking LGP perceived impact to building trust in some, if not all, the study's thematic categories of impact. For example, increased interpersonal relationships may build trust in others and among others. Increased intrapersonal development in self-esteem, self-confidence, and insight may build trust in oneself. Learning and applying new concepts and skills may build trust in new ways of thinking and acting for greater impact. New or stronger civic engagement may build trust in the process of civic engagement. Increased community awareness and appreciation may build trust in community goodness past, present,

and future. Table 9 shows in chart form the possible link between areas of impact and building trust.

Table 9. Connection Between Impact Areas and Trust

Impact Area	Area of Trust
Interpersonal relationships, including networking (182)	Trust in others
Civic engagement (163)	Trust in the process
New knowledge, skills, and concepts (139)	Trust in lifelong learning
Community awareness/appreciation (128)	Trust in community good
Intrapersonal, including self-confidence (111)	Trust in oneself

*Note: Numbers in parentheses are the number of indicators associated with each major category of impact.*

The major implication of this study identified by this analysis is LGP's effect in increasing trust in Promisestown, at least among LGP graduates who participated in the study. The study results suggest there is an underlying relationship to building trust. Figure 25 shows the connections, which suggest the interrelatedness and integration of all impact components of the study.

Figure 25. Implications for Program Impact on Trust

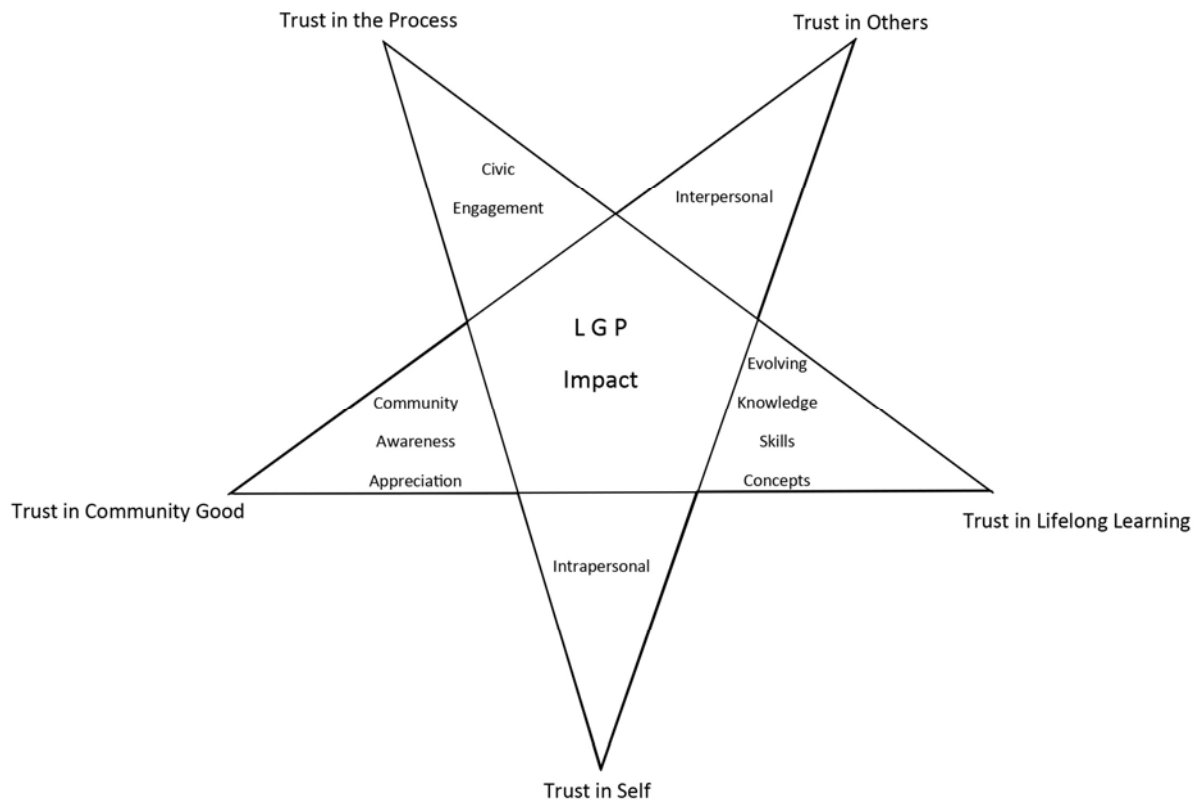


Figure 25 diagrams five ways LGP may contribute to increasing trust in civic leadership in relation to the perceived impact of the program. LGP's impact can be described in terms of trust in others; trust in the process of civic engagement; trust in lifelong learning by acquiring new skills, concepts, and knowledge; trust or at least greater appreciation of community goodness; and trust in oneself as a civic leader.

**Alumni suggestions for greater impact.** More than half of alumni respondents offered specific suggestions about how LGP might have greater community impact, which in turn may contribute to increased community trust. Six categories of suggestions for greater impact emerged. The categories, in order, were (a) organize, strengthen, and empower the alumni network; (b) increase public knowledge and awareness of LGP; (c) expand participation in

numbers and in diversity; (d) expand political involvement; (e) strengthen the nonprofit community network; and (f) maintain and sustain the program and keep it going. Although several respondents said they had no suggestions, one did suggest that after 30 years, it may be time to consider a new organization structure.

Most suggestions for greater community impact involved various ways LGP could do more to empower the alumni network. Aside from forming an alumni association, which presumably would help implement many suggestions, most respondents recommended the LGP program could have greater impact if the sponsor would expand the program in ways in which it already has impact. The implication is that alumni in this study not only reported their belief in LGP's impact in the community but also thought that community impact could be greater with greater community awareness, expanded participation by more and diverse community members, and more involvement in both the political and nonprofit sectors. On the other hand, one voice was explicit, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Considering the descriptions of impact throughout this study and the survey respondents' recommendations, one recommendation to the sponsoring organization is to appoint an impact committee to examine this study's results and make recommendations for greater impact of LGP in the community. Greater impact may help build greater civic trust.

### **Study Question Three: Promising Practices**

The third study question was "What does the study suggest about promising practices in community leadership education?" The results of this study suggest curriculum practices in CLP that lead to greater community trust. Analysis within a democracy education framework and analysis of program impact both point to an integrated set of curriculum components that focus on increased awareness, knowledge, and civic action. The components interact with each other



and each may have any number of associated activities.<sup>35</sup> The underlying implications of the identified promising practices are as fundamental as the promise of democracy.

**Awareness of community.** Curriculum practice in community awareness may involve increasing trust in the potential for greater community good. An introductory interactive History Timeline activity (Clark & Heiny, 1997) may lay a foundation and provide a link to understanding the past, present, and future potential of the community and its inhabitants. Interactive community tours and class presentations with civic leaders who are willing to discuss underlying strengths and challenges can convey truth, credibility, and trust in community efforts toward progress, in such areas as public education and libraries, safety and law enforcement, government and politics, recreation including the public zoo, and economic development. Adaptive vs. technical leadership theory<sup>36</sup> (Chrislip & O'Malley, 2013) that includes using the simple question "Why?" may help to deepen understanding and help build trust, especially when combined with a Vision Process activity (Clark & Heiny, n.d.) toward achieving a collective vision for the greater good of the community. The key to building trust through community awareness activities seems to be conveying a truth that is not easily within the public view.

**Awareness of self as a citizen.** Curriculum practices in self-awareness may involve building trust in oneself as a more confident, capable, and unique citizen leader and equal member of the community. An opening class retreat in which participants established self-

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<sup>35</sup> The activities in the following subsections are general suggestions. Most are described elsewhere in this dissertation. Others can be found in *Handbook for Facilitation*. Clark & Heiny, (n.d.).

<sup>36</sup> Long-term change compared to short-term fixes.

governing class norms, are given equal time for individual introductions and freedom of expression, and engage in trust-building activities<sup>37</sup> may contribute to individual self-respect and sense of equality within the group. One class activity to increase self-awareness is a modified learning preference activity that suggests the uniqueness of individuals and varied preferences for learning and leadership modalities.<sup>38</sup> Another is a life values activity (Grace, 2011) that may assist citizen leaders to connect their inner passion with more fulfilling civic action. Curriculum that results in increased self-awareness, confidence, and self-esteem seems not only to build trust in individual class members and in their ability to lead but also to increase identification with the similarities and differences of others as members of a common community.

**Awareness of others as citizens.** Curriculum practices that focus on awareness of others as equal and unique citizens may provide the opportunity to build new relationships and reciprocal trust among citizen leaders. Attention to diversity in class selection and appreciation for life experiences set the stage for building greater awareness of others. Experiential learning methods include large and small core group interaction, with openness to others in group reflection time. The results of this study emphasize listening as a class norm, as a skill-based learning activity, and in the practice of civic engagement. As Dr. Karl Menninger (1941) observed, “When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand ... It makes people happy and free when they are listened to” (p. 275). Reciprocal listening among people may contribute to unfolding, expansion, happiness, and freedom as citizens to work together with greater civic trust among fellow citizens.

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<sup>37</sup> Experienced leaders from the Boy Scouts of America conduct these activities for LGP.

<sup>38</sup> This type of activity may not be valid for use for other purposes.

**Encouragement of lifelong learning and civic engagement.** Curriculum practices that build upon one's awareness, knowledge, skills, and concepts with application in real-life situations may encourage greater trust in the process of lifelong learning, foster political conversations with others, and influence lifelong civic engagement. Through curriculum practices in actual civic engagement, including a "making a difference" activity at the retreat, development and implementation of class projects, and reflection on curriculum practice, the class may both encourage and expect lifelong learning and ongoing civic engagement.

### **Limitations of Study**

Four limitations have been identified for this study. First, in retrospect, an effort should have been made to encourage non-respondents to participate in the alumni survey after the initial response. Although 100% of the Class of 2012 participated in the entire study, only 40% of alumni prior to 2012 responded voluntarily and only 38% completed this study's entire questionnaire. The alumni volunteers could represent a more positive cohort than all alumni (1984-2011).

A second limitation was that the study included only one CLP and only one independently operating chamber of commerce that was the program sponsor. This limits the scope and transferability of the results. This single study limitation is inherent in qualitative case studies (Creswell, 2013).

A third limitation relates to the researcher's involvement in two ways. First, the researcher's previous involvement as a participant in an earlier CLP class and continuing connections to the program may have caused her to have preconceived ideas about the program's effectiveness. Second, the researcher's involvement with participants in the study may have influenced responses, especially due to study's emphasis on and close involvement with the

Class of 2012. However, the study was designed to minimize this limitation. Steps to minimize the researcher's influence included the mixed methods research design, anonymous analysis of Internet questionnaires, and affirming interview content and checking back with study participants.

A fourth limitation is related to the lack of literature on the topic. Limited scholarly research has been published on CLPs within the field of leadership education. The next section contains recommendations for future research to address the dearth of literature on the topic.

### **Recommendations for Future Study**

The following recommendations for future research are based on this study's findings and identified limitations. The first recommendation is for a follow-up study involving program graduates who did not respond to this study's questionnaire to determine whether they have different views of LGP's impact.

The second recommendation is to conduct research about other CLP programs, to compare and contrast components and impact of CLPs. Special attention should be given to the question of a sponsoring organization's purpose for sponsoring the CLP, whether primarily in pursuit of the common good of the community or in pursuit of conflicting self-interest goals such as the economic development goals of a chamber of commerce. This research, including recent, unpublished, and ongoing studies, would address the limitation of this study being a single-program study.

The third recommendation is for research to address how civic trust is or can be defined. The study could explore current, historical, and philosophical perspectives on community trust. The findings of this research might be helpful to CLP curriculum development.

The fourth recommendation is for research to explore further the concept of youth integration in multigenerational community leadership education as a complement to high school civics education. This type of research might provide information that would be helpful to high school civics curriculum developers as well as to CLP curriculum providers. The research might also provide information about how high schools and local civic organizations could become effective partners in educating the community's youth in democratic civic leadership.

The fifth recommendation is for research related to the impact of the LGP curriculum with candidates who are "sponsored" by their employers. The research might provide information about how and why business sponsorship may affect the candidate's participation. It also could help interpret actual meaning of the LGP sponsor's goal to advance the general welfare and quality of life to benefit the citizens and the community.

The final two recommendations are (a) to analyze the program's impact on graduates, who were, are, or become elected officials and on how they conduct the people's business; and (b) to analyze official voting records to determine frequency of voting by CLP participants before, after, and long after the class, as a reliable, complementary indicator of civic engagement.

### **Social Fabric of Trust**

Civic community is marked by a social fabric of trust and cooperation and reliance upon the activities of the public-spirited citizenry.

Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835

This dissertation ends as it began with a quotation by Alexis de Tocqueville from 19th century America. The quotation suggests a link to community leadership education in 21<sup>st</sup> century Promisestown with a reference to a "civic community" marked by a social fabric of

“trust.” This study’s problem statement cited a lack of trust in civic leadership as a problem in Promisestown and the study concluded that trust is increased as a result of LGP’s impact, at least upon program participants. From Tocqueville’s observation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to present day America, trust appears to be an inherent characteristic woven within the promise of democracy and within Leadership Greater Promisestown.

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## Appendices

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## Appendix A

### Promisettown's History

On December 5, 1854, nine men made the wintry trek from the tent city of Lawrence to a small log cabin on the banks of the Kansas River. Huddled in the cold before a smoky fire, this group of men founded a town that became the capital of the 34th state in the union and would play a significant role in American history.

The city of Topeka was incorporated on February 14, 1857. Cyrus K. Holliday is widely regarded as the "father" of Topeka and served as the city's first mayor. He later drafted the charter for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railway, known today as the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway.

#### "Bleeding Kansas"

Bitter abolitionist and pro-slavery conflict during the 1850s served as a prelude to the Civil War and gave rise to the term "Bleeding Kansas." As Kansas approached statehood, Topekans such as Col. John and Mary Jane Ritchie battled for the abolition of slavery. Ritchie's house became a meeting place for the free-state faction and a station along the Underground Railroad.

#### The State Capital

On Jan. 29, 1861, Kansas was admitted as the 34th state of the union, and Topeka was chosen as the state capital. Cyrus K. Holliday donated land for the construction of a new state capitol building, which was completed in 1903.

#### All Aboard!

In 1859, Cyrus K. Holliday created the charter for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. The Union Pacific began operating in Topeka in 1866, and Rock Island Railroad followed in 1887.

#### Educational Emphasis

The Episcopal Church established the College of the Sisters of Bethany in Topeka in 1860. Billed as the "Wellesley of the West," the college provided a rare opportunity for women to receive an excellent education.

In 1865, Lincoln College was established by the state and the General Association of Congregational Ministers and Churches of Kansas. In 1868, the college was named Washburn, and eventually became a municipal university. Washburn was largely rebuilt after a 1966 tornado destroyed much of the campus.

#### A Landmark Case

Topeka also was home of the Oliver Brown family, the namesake in *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the 1954 Supreme Court case that eliminated the "separate but equal" standard in American public schools. Unlike the elementary schools in Topeka at that time, Topeka High School had been integrated since the late 1890s.

Notable Topekans:

Gwendolyn Brooks *Pulitzer Prize-winning poet*

Arthur Capper, *Editor, Kansas governor, and U.S. senator*

Charles Curtis *Only U.S. vice president of Native American descent*

William C. and Karl Menninger *Pioneering psychiatrists*

Source: <http://www.visittopeka.com/about-topeka/topeka-history-highlights/>

## **Appendix B**

### **Chamber's Mission**

The purpose of the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce is to advance the general welfare, quality of life and prosperity of the Greater Topeka area to benefit the citizens and the community. Emphasis shall be given to the economic, civic, commercial, cultural, industrial and educational interests.

#### **Our Pledge: Staff Core Values**

The Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce/GO Topeka team of professionals embraces the following Core Values as integral to successful accomplishment of our mission.

##### **INTEGRITY**

We adhere to high moral and professional standards. We involve those impacted by decisions and provide complete, honest information that reflects multiple perspectives and is believed to be the right direction for our community.

##### **HOPE**

We are optimistic and forward thinking in communicating our vision for a better tomorrow. We exude the spirit of "We Can Do That" because we believe that nothing is impossible.

##### **EXCELLENCE**

In everything we do, say, or think, excellence is in the forefront and will never be sacrificed. We do everything better than it was done previously, continually improving.

##### **INNOVATION**

We have the courage to pursue different approaches and new ideas and seek higher expectations for the community, our organization and ourselves.

##### **TEAMWORK**

We provide the highest level of service to each other, our customers and our community.

##### **TRUST**

We gain and sustain trust by taking responsibility for our actions, listening to other points of view, respecting other's views and engage in civil dialogue to achieve success. We are accountable for our commitments and obligations.

##### **QUALITY OF LIFE**

We foster, promote and participate in an exciting quality of living. We share and celebrate the excellence of our community with BLING and ZING for all ages.

## Appendix C

### About Leadership Promiseton

Leadership Greater Topeka brings together a broad cross section of both acknowledged and aspiring leaders from every corner of the community for an annual community leadership training course.

For the Greater Topeka area to grow and prosper, we need leaders from all backgrounds and vocations, who will wrestle with the challenges facing our community. The goals are to challenge and motivate traditional and non-traditional leaders by teaching 21st century leadership capacities through information, dialogue and hands-on experience so participants are better prepared to strengthen and transform our community.

In place since 1984, Leadership Greater Topeka has more than 910 alumni with nearly 70% still living and active in the Topeka area. Leadership Greater Topeka alumni are challenged to apply their talents throughout the community in volunteer, appointed and elected positions.

Nominations and applications for the program are accepted each fall with the new class announced prior to year end. The course is offered beginning in late January and runs until mid-May with a two-day retreat and eight day-long sessions, primarily on Fridays.

The sessions cover key community concerns in the areas of quality of life, government, crime, business and economic development, community services, education, health care and the media. Woven throughout the program are concepts of:

#### Adaptive/Technical Leadership Skills

21st Century Leadership Skills: learning styles, change, collaboration, consensus, facilitation, visioning and steps to a learning community.

Servant Leadership: the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead... to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are served.

2014 Tuition is \$875.00; Scholarships are available for those who may see the tuition as a deterrent to applying.

From: <http://topekachamber.org/about-the-chamber/lgt>

## **Appendix D**

### **Study Introduction and Consent Statement**

Approved by the Human Subjects Committee University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus (HSCL). Approval expires one year from 1/13/2012. HSCL #19801 Revised 1/10/12

**Name of the Study:** Democracy Amidst a Kanas Community Leadership Program

**INTRODUCTION:** The Department of Education Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this unit, the services it may provide to you, or the University of Kansas.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:** To explore motivating factors for civic engagement and the impact of a community leadership program on participants' civic and political engagement.

**PROCEDURES:** You will be asked to complete an online pre-program survey of about 20 minutes duration and a follow up survey approximately 6 months after the program ends. In addition, participation includes class observation and interviews of some participants and alumnae. Interviews will be scheduled at participant's convenience in the location of their choice, e.g. office, school, library, etc. If you are interviewed, audio-video taped interviews will be transcribed and shared with no one other than the researcher, the professional transcriber, and the participant himself or herself. All raw data, including audio-visual recordings, will be destroyed following the completion of the project. For the duration of the study, raw data will be secured when not in use in a locked file/cabinet and protected in the locked home office of the researcher.

**RISKS:** No risks are involved.

**BENEFITS:** Although there are no direct benefits to the participants other than hopefully an interesting experience. Potential indirect benefits may be to the partnering community leadership program and to other leadership professionals interested in furthering the practice of democracy in their state and communities.

**PAYMENT TO PARTICIPANTS:** There is no pay to participants in this study.

**PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY:** Your name will not be associated in any publication or presentation with the information collected or with the research findings from this study. Instead, the researcher(s) will use a study number or a pseudonym rather than your name. In some cases due to the leadership position you hold, your story may be subject to identification. Every effort in this study is made to show the good in this program and in its participants. You can be assured that data specific to you will not be shared unless required by law or unless you give written permission.

No video/audio recordings or transcribed materials will be used for a future professional presentations without expressed written consent of the subject.

Permission granted on this date to use and disclose study information remains in effect indefinitely. By signing this form you give permission for the use and disclosure of your information, excluding your name, for purposes of this study at any time in the future."

**REFUSAL TO SIGN CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION:** You are not required to sign this Consent and Authorization form and you may refuse to do so without affecting your right to any services you are receiving or may receive from the University of Kansas or to participate in any programs or events of the University of Kansas. If you refuse to sign, you may not participate in the survey and interview aspects of this study. However, please be advised that the class as a whole will be subject to observation although no video nor audio data will be utilized.

**CANCELLING THIS CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION:** You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time. You also have the right to cancel your permission to use and disclose further information collected, in writing, at any time, by sending your written request to: Melissa P. Masoner, 950 SW Docking Rd.; Topeka, KS 66615.

If you cancel permission to use your information, the researchers will stop collecting additional. However, the research team may use and disclose information that was gathered before they received your cancellation, as described above.

**QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION:** Questions about procedures should be directed to the researcher(s) listed at the end of this consent form.

PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION: I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429, write to the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7568, or email [irb@ku.edu](mailto:irb@ku.edu).

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## Appendix E

### Internet Information Statement

#### Information Statement Internet Survey

The Department of Education Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

We are conducting this study to better understand "Democracy Amidst a Community Leadership Program." This will involve your completion of a survey. Your participation is expected to take less than 15 minutes to complete. The content of the survey should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everyday life.

Although participation may not benefit you directly, we believe that the information obtained from this study will help us gain a better understanding of civic engagement and the impact of Leadership Greater Topeka. Your participation is solicited, although strictly voluntary. Your name will not be associated in any way with the research findings. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission. Data will be maintained in the locked office of the researcher and destroyed when no longer useful to the research. It is possible, however, with Internet communications, that through intent or accident someone other than the intended recipient may see your response.

If you would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is completed, please feel free to contact us by phone or mail.

Completion of all or part of the survey indicates your willingness to take part in this study and that you are at least 18 years old. If you have any additional questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call (785) 864-7429 or write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7563, email [irb@ku.edu](mailto:irb@ku.edu).

Sincerely,

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## Appendix F

### Interview Protocol

The following was included in my original proposal approved by the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence 1-13-12 and in the proposal approved by my KU Proposal Committee 5-2-12. Although the content did not change in substance or sequence, the format of Round Three became three focus groups of interviewees rather than individual interviews. Round Four became a more comprehensive Internet survey one year after the class ended. The format for individual alumni interviews transformed into a separate Internet survey with responses from 195 program graduates.

#### Appendix 6: Interview Questions

Interview questions are based on the research design and the follow along the timeline of the 8 class sessions from February through May. Sample questions follow but are subject to revision once tested by focus group:

Round One: To learn participants early reaction to the leadership program context.

**I'm interested in your thoughts, feelings, and impression of the LGT program so far (Reminder: there are no right or wrong answers. This is not an evaluation or a test. The purpose is to gain an in-depth understanding of the program.)**

1. First, tell me what you think about the program so far? (This will invite active listening and follow-up questions.)

Tell me your thoughts on the program structure

Environment?

What did you expect it to be? How is it different?

(General democracy as phenomenon rd 1)

Save for rd 2) You recently answered an online survey recently about your civic and political engagement. So far in the program, do you think or see how the survey relates to the program structure and content so far? How so or how not?

2. From the time you decided to apply, were accepted, came to the orientation and now, would you share some of the feelings that have come along with the journey?

Have you been surprised by anything either in the program or in yourself?

3. Please give your overall impression of the program and your participation in it thus far.

What have you liked the most?

What have you liked the least?

4. Anything else you would like to add?

Round Two: To explore participants' perception relative to the process, practices, and the relationship they see developing, or not, to civic and political engagement.

**Now that you are well into the program, I would like to know how you see the process, practices, and relationships you might see developing in regards to civic and political engagement.**

1. How would you describe the group process in LGT?
2. Can you describe for me how you see people, your classmates, as they participate in the group process?

First, how do you see, would you describe the group process?

Can you make some comments on individual participants and how you see them participate in the process? Are you seeing particular "voices" emerging as the process develops? (Define voice as that authentic voice from within, etc.)

3. What about your own voice? Tell me about what you are feeling about expressing your own voice. Are you hearing or saying something different from within that might have surprised you?
4. Back to that survey, are you seeing anything specific that you can say relates to your experience and that of others in developing civic and political engagement?
5. Anything else you would like to add?

Round Three: To explore with participants post-class, early emerging themes that have come from the research so far, based on a preliminary analysis of the survey results, their own interviews, and class observations.

**Now that the class sessions are over, I'd like to learn about possible impact the program has had on your own civic and political engagement. In addition, in order to validate or dispute what I am finding I would like to ask you to explore with me themes or threads I have found in my preliminary analysis of democracy amidst the Leadership Topeka program.**

Obviously these questions will evolve as the project and my analysis evolve.

Round Four: To discover possible impact the program has on participants up to six months later. This round of questions will be after a post-survey has been conducted. Questions will follow the same format but be more focused on preliminary results.

Alumni Interviews: To explore long-term impact of the program as described by alumni.

Questions will follow the format of the participant questions but be in an extended single interview of an hour length.

**I am conducting research entitled “Democracy Amidst a Kansas Community Program” and would like your thoughts, feelings, and impressions of the impact of LGT on your civic and political engagement.**

1. First please tell me what you think about the program. (This will invite active listening and follow-up questions.)
2. Would you share some of the feelings you recall developing as you participated that may have impacted your own civic and political engagement since? [If needed to prompt, For example here are some of the feelings shared by the most recent class: to be determined]

Have you been surprised by any impact the program had on you?

3. Now that you are well beyond participation in the program, I would like to know how you see the process, practices, and relationships you might have experienced that have impacted your civic and political engagement.
4. What changes would you recommend that might have greater impact on participants civic and political engagement?
5. Finally, why would you recommend or not recommend participation in the program to others?
6. Anything else you would like to add?

## Appendix G

### Sample Questionnaire - Pre-class

Survey Participant Information:

Please estimate how many hours were you involved with the following activity in the last six months (including employment and school related activity)?

	N/A	10 hours or less	11-25 hours	26-60 hours	60+ hours
Civic service club(s) (Rotary, Lions, etc.)					
Professional society (Law, Accounting, etc.)					
Non-profit groups (Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Red Cross, etc.)					
K-12 school based (PTA, stuco, mentoring, coaching, etc.)					
Faith-based organization(s)					
Political organization(s)					
Helped promote political involvement or voter registration					
Chamber of Commerce					
Government appointee, task force committee, etc.					

Did you play a leadership role with the organization or activity in which you were involved in the last 6 months?

	Yes	No	Other 1
Civic service club(s) (Rotary, Lions, etc.)			
Professional society (Law, Accounting, etc.)			
Non-profit group(s) (Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Red Cross, etc.)			
K-12 school based (PTA, stuco, mentoring, coaching, etc.)			
Faith-based organization(s)			
Political organization(s)			
Cultural Arts			
Sports or Recreation			
K-12 School Board (PTA, stuco, etc.)			
Chamber of Commerce			

Government appointee, task force committee, etc.			
--	--	--	--

Please indicate activities in which you were involved within the last six months?

	None	10 hours or less	11-25 hours	26-60 hours	60+ hours	Yes
Worked or volunteered for political campaign						
Participated in a protest, rally or demonstration						
Helped raise money for charity						
Contacted a public official (any gov't level)						
Contacted a newspaper, magazine, radio, or TV outlet to express your political opinion						
Attended a meeting of county commissioners, town, city council or school board						
Helped promote political involvement or voter registration						

Please indicate activities in which you were involved within the last 4-year election cycle:

	Yes	No	Other 1	Other 2
Wore button, put a sticker on vehicle, or placed political sign in yard				
Contributed money to candidate, political party, or other political organization				
Donated money, clothes, or food to a community or faith-based organization				
Signed a political or social petition				
Refrained from making a purchased due to conditions in which product was produced				
Purchased a product or service because you liked the social or political value of company				
Worked or volunteered for political campaign				
Helped promote political involvement or voter registration				

How would you describe "The American Dream"?

Are you currently serving or have you served in the U.S. military (including R.O.T.C.)? Please state your gender:

Please state your age and date of birth: Please state your Race/Ethnicity:

If you answered "Other" in question 12 above, please state your Race/Ethnicity:

How would you describe the socio-economic category of the household where you grew up?

How would you describe the socio-economic category of the household in which you live now?

How would you describe the dominant political environment of the household where you grew up?

How would you describe your own personal political orientation?

How would you define the term "democracy"?

What skills do you think are most important to the practice of democracy?

Where do you get a chance to practice democracy?

Of the following, what is not included in the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution (select all that apply)?

Please select the elections in which you voted within the last 4 years (select all that apply):

Who is considered the Father of the Bill of Rights?

In what historic text does the phrase "of the people, by the people, for the people" appear?

If you know the name of your U.S. House Representative, please write the name below: If you know the name of your U.S. Senators, please type their name(s) below:

How often do you:

	Everyday	Several Times a Week	Several Times a Month	Seldom or Never
Read a local newspaper (print/online)				
Watch the news on TV				
Read notional/world news (print/online)				
Listen to the news on radio				

Read blog/website or subscribe to newsletter of political candidates				
Discuss political & Social issues with family and friends				

What are your preferred networks, websites, publications, etc. to learn about the news? How would you describe your formal schooling in civics education?

Please comment further on your schooling in civics education:

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
To solve problems, we need to change public policy					
It's hard for me to get involved in my community.					
I prefer to do community service and leave politics to others					
Young people (K-12) in greater Promiseton area have equal education opportunity					

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Public officials don't care much about what I think					
People getting together in communities can solve problems better than the government					
Most people running for political office are smart and know what they're doing					
I trust government in Washington D.C. to act in the best interest of the people					
I trust our local government					

I trust our state government to act in the best interest of all Kansans					
I trust local school boards to act in the best interest of all students					

Please indicate the importance to you personally of the following:

	Essential	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all Important
Working toward equal opportunity for all U. S. citizens.				
Being well off financially.				
Volunteering my time helping others in need.				
Having a career that focuses on serving the public good.				

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I'm confident that through political activities, I can promote equal opportunity for all citizens					
Civic leaders can have greater impact than elected officials on the public good.					
By participating in political activities, I can help people help themselves					
I'm confident I will participate in political activities in the future					
I believe if I participate in political activities, I can make a difference					

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
It's hard for groups to function effectively when they come from diverse backgrounds					
I prefer working with groups of people that are					



similar in background					
I find it difficult to relate to people outside my race and culture					
I enjoy meeting people from different backgrounds different from my own					
Cultural diversity within a group makes the group more effective					
I don't spend much time with people outside my immediate circle of friends					
I actively seek out & maintain relationships with people different than me.					

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have a strong attachment to my local community					
I often discuss and think about how larger political & social issues affect my community					
I know what can be done to meet the needs in my community					
I feel I have the ability to make a difference in my community					
I try to find time to make a positive difference in my community					

Please offer additional thoughts about this survey and/or about civic engagement in greater Promisestown today.

## Appendix H

### Alumni Questionnaire

The alumni questionnaire was similar to the sample questionnaire in Appendix G. It included the following unique question:

Please select when your leadership class took place



## Appendix I

### Schedule for the Leadership Class of 2012

RETREAT, February 9-10, 2012 .....Lakeside Lodge  
 Skills: Adaptive Leadership, COPE Team Building, Learning Styles, Promisettown History Timeline, Core Groups, Wisdom Cycle, Beliefs and Values, Community Strengths, Servant Leadership, Brainstorming, Project Discussion, Community Service Project.

SESSION #1, February 17, 2012.....21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership University Pavilion—2nd floor (Stadium)  
 Skills: Adaptive/Technical Leadership  
 Program: The Stretch to be Adaptive in a Technical World (University President), Civic Leadership Principals and Competencies, Creative Time at the University Art Lab.

SESSION #2, March 2, 2012..... All Things New Tower Restaurant, Downtown, State Capitol, Zoo at the Park, Kansas Children’s Discovery Center  
 Skill: Facilitation  
 Program: Ah Ha’s; Downtown, Capitol Tour, Parks & Recreation Merger, Behind the Scenes at the Zoo, Gathering time at the Kansas Children’s Discovery Center.

SESSION #3, March 16, 2012.....Economic Development Washburn Institute of Technology, Highland Park High School, Helping Hands Humane Society  
 Skills: Consensus and Collaboration  
 Program: Ah Ha’s; Technical College Presentation & Tour, Behind the Scenes: Recruiting Major Corporation, Tour of High School Robotics Classroom, Collaboration & Consensus Training, Gathering Time at

SESSION #4, March 30, 2012.....Education Day Capper Foundation Easter Seals, Bartlett & West  
 Skills: Ability Awareness  
 Program: Ah Ha’s; Ability Awareness, Overview of the Status of Education in Kansas, How to Deliver K-12 Education, How the Community be Involved in Education---A Call to Action, Police Ride Along Debrief, Social.

SESSION #5, APRIL 13, 2012. ....Law and Order Shawnee County Sheriff’s Training Complex at Forbes Field  
 Skills: Listening  
 Program: Ah Ha’s; Listening Training, Law Enforcement Panel, Tour of Training Complex, Safe Streets/Neighborhood Tour, Gathering Time at Blind Tiger.

SESSION #6, April 20, 2012.....Government Day Visit Topeka, Memorial Hall  
 Skills: Performing Community  
 Program: Ah Ha’s; Public Meeting Debrief, Who Does What in City & County, The Business of Tourism; State Elected Officials, Immigration, Performing Community Training, Gathering Time at Bosco’s.

SESSION #7, May 4, 2012.....Health and Society Security Benefit  
 Skills: Presentation Skills, Boardmanship, Personal Mission, Environment.  
 Program: Ah Ha’s; Project Presentations; Being Healthy—Taking Care of Self, Etiquette in Today’s Business Setting; Boardmanship; Gathering Social at Buffalo Wild Wings.

Graduation Luncheon, Friday, May 11, 2012, Ramada Convention Center, Grand Ballroom

**Other Class Activities: Attend Public Meetings, Police Ride Along, Class Project, Graduation**

## Appendix J

### Recruitment/Marketing/ Selection Strategy

**Year Around:** We take nominations year around via our website. This has really increased nominations because our alumni can provide names when they think about it; they don't have to wait for the formal "nomination time."

**Late August/Early September:** We send a letter (attached) to the key individual from each Chamber member firm inviting them to be a "sponsor" for the upcoming Leadership class. This gives them the opportunity to designate a participant. Designated sponsored participants must be a new CEO OR a senior manager new to his/her position and who is expected to participate in the community. Sponsor firms pay twice the price (fundraiser for scholarships). We will accept up to 10 sponsored candidates within our class of 36. We NEVER designate who is a sponsored candidate and who isn't.

#### **Early September:**

*For general participants:* We send letters to many individuals and groups asking them to make nominations (sample letters attached). These groups include all LGT alumni, Chamber members, pastors of all churches, all elected officials and leaders of civic and neighborhood groups. We accept nominations year around via our website. We generally get 250-300 nominations.

*For high school students:* We've included 1-2 high school students in each of our classes for the past 10 years. I work with the schools (principals/counselors) to get applications from junior or senior students. We're also getting high school nominations from alumni and parents. We'll generally get about 20 nominations from high school and university students.

*For targeted populations (ethnic, age, occupations):* I work with alumni who represent these groups to generate nominations from their community. I'm very intentional about this because it's traditionally hard to get these populations in the class due to work schedules, fear of "joining," concern about tuition (we give scholarships!), being accepted, fitting "in," etc. Sometimes I've even gone to employers and "paved the way" to get this ethnic, age and occupation diversity. I make no promises about acceptance! I also ask the nominators to help their nominees complete the application.

*Other marketing:* We send media releases to the local media, have an article in our Chamber print and on-line newsletters, and remind alumni to encourage people to complete the application. About every-other year, our local television station will have 1-2 alumni do a 10-second "plug" for the program and they air it as a PSA. We know from past evaluations and surveys that our applicants learn about the program via their employer and/or a friend (often an alumnus). We also know that people who don't know an alum or don't know about the program.

*Leadership Greater Topeka---Recruitment, Marketing, Selection Process-page 2 of 2*

**Early September:** We send each nominee a program brochure and an application, which needs to be completed by early October. We generally get about 75-80 applications by the

deadline, plus applications from the 10 sponsored candidates. We send a postcard to the nominators reminding them to encourage their nominee to complete the application.

**Late October/Early November:** Teams of alumni (2-3 people) conduct "conversations" (interviews) with **all** applicants (including the sponsored candidates). I try to have one member of the selection committee on each team so the teams' thoughts can be represented during the selection committee meeting. The teams of alumni do NOT have the application so they are not influenced by the written word, but rather are rating the applicant on rather he/she is truly committed to community, to being there, and would have the skills to integrate with the balance of the class members. They comment and rate the candidates on a score sheet (attached).

**Mid November:** All the applications, conversation score sheet and a demographic sheet are sent to the members of the selection committee (about 20 members that include alumni and Chamber chair and chair-elect and a Chamber board member (generally also an alum). They review all the data and submit their "top 20" choices to me PRIOR to the selection committee.

**Late November/Early December: Selection Committee Meeting.** Votes are compiled prior to the meeting and generally we can put up the 10 sponsored names and the top 10-15 vote getters' names up without comment. ..Then we balance the class taking into consideration: diversity of professions, diversity of community activities, home zip codes, ethnic mix, age mix, male/female mix, etc. We look for a variety of leadership experience- from those seasoned volunteers to those new to the community and leadership activities. We arrive at our list of 36 that we're happy with (takes about 1.5 hours), select two alternates and determine who gets scholarships and how much. We generally give the high school students and/or Washburn students almost full scholarships (we ask them to pay at least \$50 personally) and then give the balance of what we have available to small business owners, non-profit and/or government representatives or perhaps, like last year, the president of a low income neighborhood improvement association.

Class announcement and program: We announce the class in early December and then have an orientation in mid January, the retreat in late January and the sessions in February through early May. Our graduation luncheon is mid-May.

*We strive to have a good mix of class members that represent our whole community...usual and unusual voices/*

## Appendix K

### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership

#### 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LEADERS

- ARE SERVANT LEADERS
- SERVE OUT OF PERSONAL MISSION
  - DEVELOP PEOPLE
- DEVELOP PERFORMING COMMUNITIES
  - MOVE GROUPS THROUGH CHAOS
    - ARE INCLUSIVE
  - FOSTER, SUPPORT CREATIVITY
    - USE CONSENSUS
  - BUILD COLLABORATIONS
  - LEAD TO A SHARED VISION
- FACILITATE FROM THEIR CHAIRS
  - ARE CHANGE AGENTS

“Servant leaders use their gifts and talents to create a civil, compassionate world for all.”

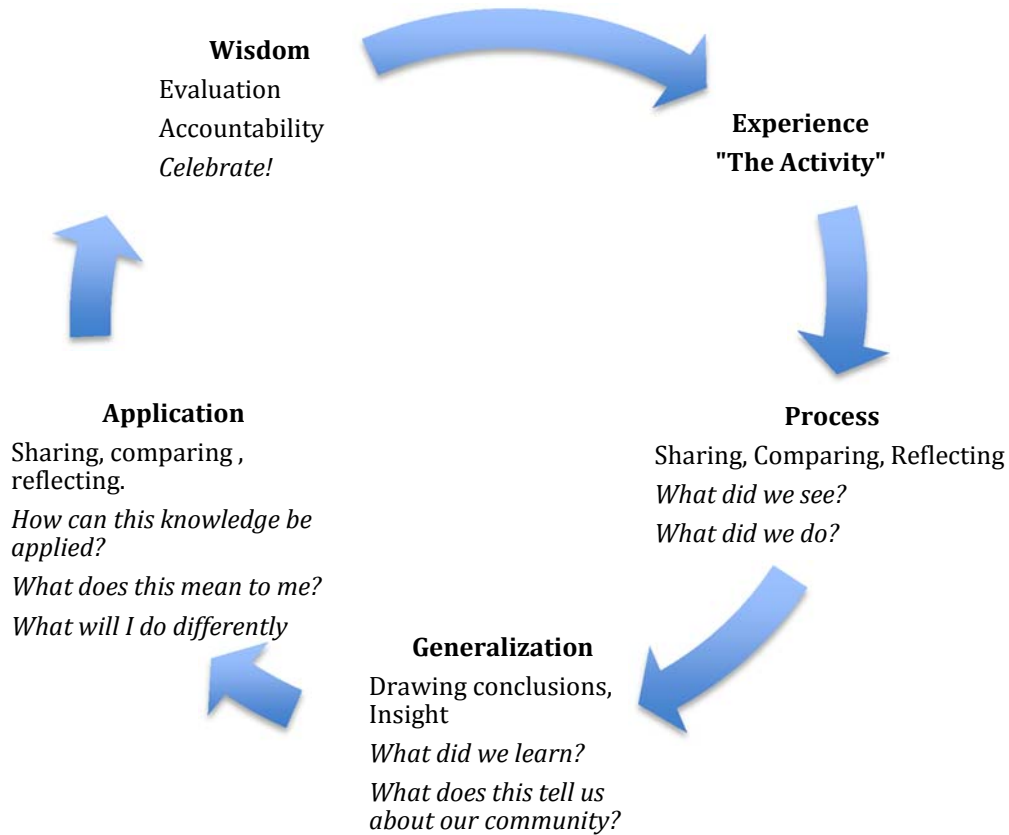
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## Appendix L

### Wisdom Cycle

“Cycle to Change”



Source: 2012 Leadership Class Notebook

## Appendix M

### Vision Statement Exercise

*A vision is not just a picture of what could be; it is an appeal to our better selves, a call to become something more.* Rosabeth Moss Kanter

Acts of leadership become possible when you have a clear, personal and passionate commitment to a vision for change in your community. If you want to make progress, you must connect deeply to the cause that drives you.

What issue or cause do you care deeply about, so deeply that you are willing to attempt to exercise leadership on its behalf, despite the inherent risks?

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What is your vision for this issue or cause?

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Why do you care about this? What values does it touch for you?

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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this completed sheet to the Chamber no later than Thursday morning, February 9 at the beginning of the retreat.



## Appendix N

### Excerpt from Article on KLC's Theory of *Adaptive Civic Leadership*

KLC Four Core Competencies of KLC's Leadership Theory from an article provided by Kansas Leadership Center, 6-27-14

#### DIAGNOSE SITUATION

- Test multiple stories/interpretations
- Push against default interpretations, which tend to be technical and individual rather than adaptive and systemic.
- Look for data regarding temperature in system and assess/diagnose the degree of disequilibrium (behavior of authority figure, routines, dysfunctional behavior, technical fixes, level of distress, values in conflict, etc.)
- Distinguish technical vs. adaptive work
- Distinguish content from process

#### MANAGE SELF

- Identify your capabilities, vulnerabilities and triggers
- Distinguish self from role
- Understand the role you play in the system
- Choose among competing values
- Do what is needed, not what is comfortable

#### FACILITATE INTERVENTION

- Capture attention
- Engage unusual voices
- Work across factions
- Raise or lower the heat; orchestrate conflict
- Give the work back
- Make conscious choices about intervention
- Create conditions for collaboration

#### ENERGIZE OTHERS

- Pace the work
- Speak to loss
- Speak from the heart
- Orient to purpose
- Empowerment (Engage others in designing intervention)
- Start where they are, not where you are

## Appendix O

### Researcher Information and Transparency

This study draws on my professional and volunteer background as an advocate for youth and community development. The research goal corresponds to my career goal to pursue knowledge relevant to citizenship education's impact on individuals, their community, and the common good of society. My formal education background includes University of Colorado BA, in Spanish and secondary education; and Wichita State University, MEd, in student personnel and guidance. My volunteer experience is extensive.

Relative to this study, my career involves various aspects of democratic community-building. Early in my career I taught conversational Spanish in community colleges with large Hispanic populations and encouraged community service and cultural exchanges as part of the learning experience. Much of my career has focused on developing nonprofit organizations that give voice to youth as citizens. Examples are developing and administering nonprofit Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs statewide, initiating a state network of communities implementing Kids Voting USA, and co-authoring a book with young students who tell the story of the Bill of Rights and Founding Father George Mason. Currently, I serve as administrator of the American Citizenship Project, which has an endowed fund within the local community foundation, and as a trustee of Promisestown's city and county public library.

I bring to the study knowledge of and experience with Leadership Greater Promisestown. I was a member of the program's Class of 1986. As an alumna, I was invited to become the lead volunteer to help facilitate class trainings and provide input into curriculum as well as participate in other aspects of the program. My co-facilitator commitment continued for eleven years, ending in 2010. While acknowledging a natural bias, I have the advantage of an inside perspective, as well as a community activist's eye toward evaluating program impact.

## Appendix P

### Suggested Reading for Leadership Class of 2012

#### **Want to read more about Servant Leadership?**

- *Servanthood: Leadership for the Third Millennium*, by Bennett J. Sims (President of the Institute for Servant Leadership), 1997. Cowley Publications, 28 Temple Place, Cambridge, MA 02111
- *The Servant as Leader*, 1991, by Robert K. Greenleaf, Published by the Robert K. Greenleaf Center, Indianapolis.
- *Leading From Within*, 1991, by Parker J. Palmer, Published by the Servant Leadership School Press, Washington, DC 20009.

#### **Want to read more about adaptive/technical leadership challenges?**

- *Leadership without Easy Answers*, 1994, by Ronald A. Heifetz, Published by the president and Fellows of Harvard College.
- *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*, 2009, by Ronald A. Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky, Published by the Harvard Business Press/Cambridge Leadership Associates.

#### **Want to read more about team building?**

- *No More Teams! Mastering the Dynamics of Creative Collaboration*, 1989, by Michael Schrage. Published by Currency Doubleday.
- *Team-Managed Facilitation*, 1993, by Dennis C. Kinlaw. Published by Pfeiffer & Company.
- *Improving Work Groups: A Practical Manual for Team Building*, 1992, by Dave Francis and Don Young. Published by Pfeiffer & Company.

#### **Want to read more about envisioning?**

- *The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations* (Rev Ed). Kouzes, J. and Posner, B., 1995. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It*, 1993. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey, New York: Simon & Shuster, 1989.

#### **Want to read more about enabling change?**

- *Communicating for Change*, 1996, by Roger D'Aprix. Published by Jossey-Bass.
- *Reframing Organizations*, 1997, by Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal. Published by Jossey-Bass.
- *Leading Change*, 1995, by James O'Toole. Published by Jossey-Bass.

## **Suggested Reading for Leadership Class of 2012 *continued***

### **Want to read more about collaboration?**

- *Leading without Power: Finding Hope in Serving Community* by Max DePree, 1997. Shepherd Foundation, 2967 Lakeshore Drive, Holland, Michigan 49424.
- *Collaborative Leadership*, 1994. David D. Chrislip and Carl E. Larson. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- *On Leadership*, 1990. John Gardner. New York: The Free Press.

### **Want to read more about coalition building?**

- *Leadership for the Common Good*, 1992, by John M. Bryson and Barbra C. Crosby, Published by Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- The Pew Partnership for Civic Change Leadership Collaboration Series, which includes *Building Collaborative Communities*, *Building Deliberative Communities*, *Building Healthy Communities*, and *Building Diverse Communities*.

### **Want to read more about facilitation?**

- *The Art of Facilitation*, 1995, by Dale Hunter, Anne Bailey and Bill Taylor. Published by Fisher Books.
- *The Zen of Groups*, 1995, by Dale Hunter, Anne Bailey and Bill Taylor. Published by Fisher Books.
- *Thinking Together*, 1992, by V.A. Howard and J. H. Barton. Published by William Morrow.

### **Want to read more about conflict resolution?**

- *Interpersonal Conflict*, 1991, by Joyce L. Hocker and William W. Wilmot. Published by William C. Brown Publishers.
- *Working Through Conflict*, 1993 by Joseph P. Folger, Marshall Scott Poole and Randall K. Stutman. Published by Harper Collins.

### **Want to read more about evaluation/reflection?**

- *On Becoming a Leader*, 1989, by Warren Bennis. Published by Addison-Wesley Publishing company.
- *The Quickening of America*, 1994, by Frances Moore Lappe' and Paul Martin DuBois. Published by Jossey-Bass.
- *Leadership in a Challenging World*, 1997, by Barbara Shipka. Published by Butterworth-Heinemann.

## Suggested Reading for Leadership Class of 2012 *continued*

### Want to read more about mentoring?

- *Leadership Skills: Developing Volunteers for Organizational Success*, 1994, by Emily Kittle Morrison. Published by Fisher Books.
- *Leading Minds*, 1995, by Howard Gardner. Published by BasicBooks.
- *Certain Trumppers*, 1994, by Garry Wills. Published by Simon & Shuster.

### Want to read more about negotiation?

- *Getting to Yes*, 1989, by Roger Fisher and William Ury. Published by Penguin Books.
- *Getting Together: Building Relationships as we Negotiate*, 1989, by Roger Fisher and Scott Brown. Published by Penguin Books.

## Children's Books with Leadership Themes

- The Mixed Up Chameleon, by Eric Carle, Support for differences; work with talents you have.
- Verdi, by Janell Cannon, Change, teach someone something...your legacy.
- My Many Colored Days, by Dr. Seuss, Difference makes us who we are, teach something different to offer individuality, bring strengths to the table.
- Oh, the Places You'll Go, By Dr. Seuss, Potential for success, persistence.
- Rosie and Michael, by Judith Viorst, Work with a team.
- A is for Salad, by Mike Lester, Creativity, flexibility, confidence
- You Are Special, by Max Lucado, Take risks, try to be example, servant leadership.
- Mulan, Sometimes you must go against popular opinion, need support, can reach above others' expectations, listening.
- Cock-A-Doodle-Moo, by Bernard Most, If you don't fulfill responsibility, nothing gets done; practice and work together.
- Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed, by MOM (Eileen Christelow), Initiative, risk, authority, modeled behavior.
- The Going to Bed Book, by Sandra Boynton, Everyone is different, differing level of commitment; you have to work together to achieve a goal.
- Rainbow Fish to the Rescue, by Marcus Pfister, Inclusivity, voice your opinions, empowerment, help others grow.
- A Bug's Life, by Justine Korman, Lead by example, support, and keep trying motivation, innovator, hero, hard work, creativity, and belief in self when no one else does.

### **Suggested Reading for Leadership Class of 2012 *continued***

- Staying at Sam's, by Jenny Hessel, Be willing to experience new things; appreciating differences; don't judge, but utilize gifts from these differences.
- The Giving Tree, By Shel Silverstein, Creativity, selflessness, ingenuity under stress, and change.
- Cook-A-Doodle-Do, By Janet Stevens & Susan Stevens Crummel, Team building, problem solving, collaboration, empowerment.
- Fish is Fish, by Leo Lioni, Courage, risk taking, vision, personal mission.
- Tops and Bottoms, by Janet Stevens, Change agent, creative problem solving, risk taking.
- Swimmy, by Leo Lioni, Team Building, problem solving, collaboration and confidence.
- Frederick, by Leo Lioni, Each one in a group has an important contribution to make. Some qualities are not apparent until needed.

Source: Leadership Thomas County, Class of 2001-2002

### **List of Recommended Books about Board Development**

- Bennis, Warren. On Becoming a Leader. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Inc., 1989.
- Bennis, Warren. Why Leaders Can't Lead. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1989.
- Bennis, Warren and Burt Nanus. Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge. New York: Harper and Row, 1985.
- Bowen, William G. Inside the Boardroom: Governance by Directors and Trustees. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1994.
- Carver, John. Boards That Make a Difference: A New Design for Leadership in Nonprofit and Public Organizations. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1990.
- Chait, Richard P., et al. Improving the Performance of Governing Boards. Phoenix, AZ: American Council on Education, Oryx Press, 1996.
- Covey, Stephen R. The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989.
- Covey, Stephen R., et al. First Things First. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994.
- Crawford, R.W. In Art We Trust. New York: FEDAPT, 1981.
- Dayton, Kenneth N. Governance Is Governance. Washington, D.C.: The Independent Sector, 1998.
- Dodson, Dorian. How to Recruit Great Board Members. Santa Fe, NM: Adolfo Street Publications, 1993.
- Drucker, Peter F. Managing the Nonprofit Organization: Principles and Practices. New York: Harper and Collins Publishers, 1990.
-

### **Suggested Reading for Leadership Class of 2012 *continued***

- Fisher, Roger and William Ury. Getting to Yes. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981.
- Fram, Eugene H. and Vicki Brown. Policy vs. Paper Clips: Selling the Corporate Model to Your Nonprofit Board. Milwaukee: Family Service America, 1988.
- Frantzreb, Arthur C. Not on This Board You Don't. Chicago: Bonus Books, 1997.
- Gardner, John W. Excellence. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1961.
- Gardner, John W. Leadership Papers. Washington, D.C.: The Independent Sector, 1986.
- Gardner, John W. Self-Renewal. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1964.
- George, G. Worth. Fearless Fund-Raising for Nonprofit Boards. Washington, DC: National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1996.
- Greenleaf, Robert K. Servant Leadership. New York: Paulist Press, 1977.
- Hardy, James M. Developing Dynamic Boards: A Proactive Approach to Building Nonprofit Boards of Directors. Erwin, TN: Essex Press, 1990.
- Hopkins, Bruce R. A Legal Guide to Starting and Managing a Nonprofit Organization. Second Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1993.
- Houle, Cyril O. Governing Boards. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1989.
- Howe, Fisher. The Board Member's Guide to Fund Raising. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1991.
- Howe, Fisher. Welcome to the Board: Your Guide to Effective Participation. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995.
- Kouzes, James M. and Barry Z. Posner. Credibility. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993.
- Kouzes, James M. and Barry Z. Posner. The Leadership Challenge. Second edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 1995.
- McGee-Cooper, Ann. Time Management for Unmanageable People. Dallas: Ann McGee-Cooper & Associates, 1983.
- Nanus, Burt. Visionary Leadership. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992.
- Nelson, Judith Grummon. A Guide to Building Your Board: Six Keys to Recruiting, Orienting, and Involving Nonprofit Board Members. Washington, DC: National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1991.
- O'Connell, Brian. The Board Member's Book. New York: The Foundation Center, 1985.
- Panas, Jerold. Boardroom Verities. Chicago: Precept Press, Inc., 1991.
-

### **Suggested Reading for Leadership Class of 2012 *continued***

- Panas, Jerold. Finders Keepers: Lessons I've Learned about Dynamic Fundraising. Chicago: Bonus Books, Inc., 1999.
- Panas, Jerold. Mega Gifts. Chicago: Pluribus Press, Inc., 1984.
- Patton, Bobby R., et al. Decision-Making Group Interaction. Third edition. New York: Longman, 1989.
- Savage, Thomas J. Seven Steps to a More Effective Board. Revised. Kansas City, MO: National Press Publications, A Division of Rockhurst College Continuing Education Center, Inc., 1994.
- Scribner, Susan. Boards from Hell. Long Beach, CA: Scribner & Associates, 1991.
- Seltzer, Michael. Securing Your Organization's Future. New York: The Foundation Center, 1987.
- Sturtevant, Wm T. The Artful Journey: Cultivating and Soliciting the Major Gift. Chicag: Bonus Books, 1997.
- Swanson, Andrew. Building a Better Board. Washington, DC: The Taft Group, 1984.
- von Oech, Roger. A Whack on the Side of the Head: How to Unlock Your Mind for Innovation. New York: Warner Books, 1983.
- von Oech, Roger. A Kick in the Seat of the Pants. New York: Harper and Row, 1986.
- Wilson, Marlene. The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs. Boulder, CO: Volunteer Management Associates, 1976.
- Wilson, Marlene. Survival Skills for Managers. Boulder, CO: Volunteer Management Associates, 1981.
- Wright, George B. Beyond Nominating: A Guide to Gaining and Sustaining Successful Not-for-Profit Boards. Portland, OR; C-3 Publications, 1996.
- Zander, Alvin. Making Boards Effective: The Dynamics of Nonprofit Governing Boards. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993

#### **More Books on Leadership Education Sector** **(Recommended by Education Panel March 26, 2010)**

- Elizabeth I CEO: Strategic Lessons from the Leader Who Built an Empire (May 2002), by Alan Axelrod, Ph.D.
- A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future (March 2006) Pink, Daniel, A. Pink
- The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need---and What We Can do About It (April 2010), by Tony Wagner
- Catching Up or Leading the Way: American Education in the Age of globalization (September 2009) by Yong Zhao



- **Suggested Reading for Leadership Class of 2012** *continued*

**New (er) Books on Leadership Topics--Change**

- Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change, Second Edition (2013) by Joseph Grenny, Kerry Patterson, David Maxfield, Ron McMillan and Ron Switzler
- Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard (2/2010) by Chip Heath and Dan Heath
- The Heart of Change: Real-Life Stories of How People Change their Organization (November 2012) by John P. Kotter and Dan S. Cohen
- Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change (September 2009) by William Bridges and Susan Bridges