

# LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

## *increases confidence* to assume leader

### **Situation:**

Community leadership has evolved in the last few decades. Community leadership is now thought of as a shared responsibility. Shared leadership recognizes the potential of all people to be leaders.

In spring of 2010, the Evanston Chamber of Commerce director met with the UW Extension community development educator to discuss starting leadership programming in Uinta County. The (UCLI) had been established by a former CDE educator in 2005 but had lapsed while the position was vacant. Extension and the Evanston chamber formed a partnership to revive the leadership institute.

Based on the principles of the Extension Volunteer Organization for Leadership, Vitality and Enterprise (EVOLVE) model, the steering committee of local leaders and interested community members met for 10 months to plan, organize, and market UCLI Class II. In keeping with the EVOLVE model, local resources and experts were utilized for speakers, funding sources, and community partners.

Three core components were included: skill-building sessions along with an individual leader-

ship skill assessment, community-based experiences (CBE), and a group project. Class II of UCLI began in September 2011 and met for one skill-building day a month. Many leadership topics were covered, including team building, communication, conflict resolution, the Social Action Process, decision making, and ethics. Participants met between monthly class days to take part in community-based experiences. The CBEs introduced participants to different sectors of the community, such as businesses, departments of county government, state agencies, board meetings, and local educational institutions. The class also participated in a leadership skills assessment day, which tested participants' leadership skills through five different simulations. Specially trained observers watched the simulations and evaluated each participant based on four leadership capabilities: sense-making, inventing, visioning, and relating.

Twenty-one participants completed the seven-month program. Following graduation, class members participated in a final group project, which was a roadway cleanup day in Evanston and the Bridger Valley.

### **Impacts:**

After each monthly session, participants completed a session evaluation to give feedback on the presentations and the ideas learned that day. A post-graduation evaluation mailed to graduates assessed the institute and the participants' overall experience. More than half of the graduates completed the final evaluation.

Based on the data, UCLI was a successful learning experience for participants.

- 75 percent rated the institute as Very Good or Excellent; the remaining 25 percent rated it as a Good experience.
- 75 percent said that participating in UCLI had improved or greatly improved their ability to build relationships and networks within the county.
- 83 percent believed that participating had improved or greatly improved their knowledge of the community.

Several participants made the connection between skill development and real-life applications.



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# roles in Uinta County

One participant in particular saw the intertwined nature of lifelong learning and community involvement. “Regardless of what you do, where you are in your life, and where you are headed with your career, you can always buildup stronger skills and learn new things. It is good to have knowledge of what there is in your community to offer you so you can be a better person in your field of work and in your community.”

UCLI increased participants’ skills, capabilities, and confidence to take on a leadership role – whether at work, school, church, home, or in the public/civic sector.

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