

Chamber working to train tomorrow's leaders

What is leadership? What makes a leader? Those questions were being explored this past weekend by members of the 2010 Leadership North Las Vegas Class.

Participants gathered recently on Mount Charleston to open the second class of the chamber's leadership program. These were individuals from various industries, some public sector mixed with private sector. The majority of participants probably had not met each other before being asked to share personal aspects of their lives. The caveat -- they were not permitted to share what they did for a living or their profession. Many people would think this would be easy. It's not. The participants discovered the difficulty of not threading their professional lives into conversations. The purpose was to discover the key components of their identity. They also learned how to effectively listen, something most of us need help on. They learned about their communications styles -- were they introverts or extroverts, thinkers or feelers? Most important, they learned how they interact with others and how others interact with them.

Large groups became small groups; small groups assimilated back into large groups. Watching the group dynamic as a bystander was a great exercise in itself. Here were virtual strangers being asked to talk about what makes them tick -- all without talking about what they did for a living. I even found myself asking, "How would I address this exercise?" We become so entrenched in our jobs that if not careful, those jobs become who we are. The chamber spends time and resources to hold a nine-month Leadership North Las Vegas Program for many reasons. One of the most important is that the future of our communities depends on just such training. We need leaders who can create a vision and carry out a mission. We need leaders to step up and serve on the numerous nonprofit and civic boards. We need business-friendly leaders to step up and run for elected offices. We also want those leaders to learn about their communities, their histories and challenges.

The Leadership North Las Vegas program teaches participants about the North Las Vegas community and about issues affecting the entire Las Vegas Valley. In the coming months, class members will learn about volunteerism and giving back; they will examine the education system and what is working and what is not; they will experience the public safety and court system; and they will learn what is involved with government infrastructure, planning, and redevelopment.

Over the nine-month period, Leadership North Las Vegas will expose participants to extensive leadership development that will include negotiations and communications training. We believe this sets the Leadership North Las Vegas Program apart from the rest.



Sharon Powers



Each class also selects a project that can be a one-time process or create something that creates legacy. Last year's inaugural leadership class chose to work on the Chamber Foundation's upcoming "Grape Escape" Wine Soiree scheduled for Oct. 1 at Marché Bacchus. Net proceeds from this event will be used to help fund the support for our at-risk schools in Clark County.

Tickets are still available and can be purchased at www.northlasvegashamber.com. Support the Leadership North Las Vegas class project and help support the Chamber Foundation's at-risk school program.

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