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Our thoughts and prayers are with Don Barga

Community Leader

Volume 1 No.2

Fall 2003

Reservation Community Leadership Program -Strengthening community one leader at a time

Ramona Bailey didn't think twice when she was invited to apply for the Reservation Community Leadership Program last fall.

An enrolled member of the Red Lake Band, Ramona was seeking ways to be more effective with the Red Lake Drug Task Force, a group she helped organize after the tragic death of her uncle – the result of a robbery related to crack cocaine.

Because of the program, Ramona now understands "when to step back and take care of herself and when she can plow ahead." She said she is more comfortable speaking up in meetings and helping others focus on solutions instead of problems.

Community Involvement

Community involvement like Ramona's is exactly what the reservation community program planners desired.

"The program allows participants to look at their own strengths and weaknesses, and develop the leadership skills that we all have but perhaps aren't aware of," said Dr. Kathleen Annette, Blandin Foundation Trustee, and enrolled member of the White Earth Band. "It was our hope that the program would help us develop our vision of healthy reservation community and the leadership skills that would allow us to work together to get there."

The Program Takes Shape

Dr. Annette was instrumental in bringing together the representatives from Minnesota's reservation communities in 2001 to participate in the Learning Circle, an informal group that shares their knowledge and experience, that set the program in motion.

Linda Aitken, Tribal Liaison to the Minnesota Department of Transportation and enrolled member of the Leech Lake Tribe, participated in both the Learning Circle and the first program.

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The Fond du Lac Ojibway School Drummers and Dance Group performing a drum ceremony during the Fall 2003 Reservation Community Leadership retreat.

Traditional American Indian Leadership

- ❖ All leadership possess spiritual significance.
- ❖ Leaders demonstrate generosity and kindness, and honor all living things.
- ❖ Elders cultivate the leadership of future generations.
- ❖ Leaders are humble servants to the community. Individuals did not seek leadership, they emerged from their contributions to the community.
- ❖ No one person is always a leader and many are leaders at different times.
- ❖ Leaders lead by example rather than by authority or command.

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Community Leader is a quarterly exchange for news, learning and connection published by the Blandin Foundation leadership programs for those engaged in the effort to build economically viable communities where the benefits are widely shared.

Gene Radecki, Interim President
Kathryn Jensen, Senior Vice President
Jim Krile, BCLP Director

Editors
Patrick Marx
Becky LaPlant

Blandin Foundation
100 N Pokegama Avenue
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
Phone: 218-326-0523
Toll Free: 877-882-2257
Fax: 218-327-8744
Email: blandinfoundation.org

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Leadership: You have to do it yourself, but you can't do it alone.

Foundation News and Update



Gene Radecki is Interim Foundation President

Gene Radecki was named interim president of the Foundation in August following the retirement of Paul M. Olson, who was president for 25 years.

Radecki, a Foundation board member since 2001 and who served as the Foundation's chief financial officer from 1996 until

Gene Radecki

his retirement, will serve until the board selects a new president.

"Leadership development programs play a vital role in the Foundation's *Community Economic Advantage* strategy," Radecki said.

The Foundation launched its new strategy in January, which concentrates the Foundation's several leadership programs, grant making and public policy initiatives on rural Minnesota community economic viability where the benefits are widely shared.

Board Launches Search for President

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"Being a part of that first group is very special to me," said Aitken. "While Indian communities are part of the larger community, they have issues such as separate governments that the BCLP program could not address. Putting focus on the Indian community is why the Reservation Community program was developed."

Addressing Community Needs

Since that first retreat, two more programs have been offered, each slightly modified to better address the needs and honor the traditions of the reservation communities they served.

Tony Fairbanks, program recruitment manager, has been instrumental in building program awareness. Fairbanks invited Rick Smith to attend the 2002 program.

Smith lives in two worlds: one as the director of the American Indian Resource Center at the University of Minnesota Duluth, the other as an enrolled member of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. In both worlds, Smith says the safety and well-being of youth is a major issue so he was thinking about ways he could give back in

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"Leadership development programs play a vital role in the Foundation's *Community Economic Advantage* strategy," Radecki said.

Foundation Challenged in Court

In September a Minneapolis law firm filed papers in Ramsey County District Court disputing the distribution of grants to the Grand Rapids area. On October 29th Judge Margaret Marrinan held a hearing and thereafter scheduled mediation for December 5 in her chambers.

The Blandin Residuary Trust and Blandin Foundation are responding to objections in court and said in a recent news release: "We believe the objections are in error. Similar objections were addressed by the Ramsey County District Court in 2000, which determined that the Trustees and the Foundation were carrying out Mr. Blandin's wishes and meeting the needs of the Grand Rapids area."

For updated information please visit the Foundation's website www.blandinfoundation.org.

the area of youth leadership as he walked into the conference room at Ruttgers.

As a direct result of the training, Smith and fellow '02 program participant Bill May (Red Lake Tribe) worked together to secure scholarships for Indian youth to attend UMD summer basketball camps.

"While Indian communities are part of the larger community, they have issues such as separate governments that the BCLP program could not address." Linda Aitken

Smith is now recruiting American Indian youth for the Boy Scouts, and is active with the American Indian Scouting Association.

The stakeholders analysis is particularly useful to Smith, "There are times when you need other people to get things done. They may be adversaries, but you need them to help keep you in balance."

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October 19, 2003

Glen Thuringer (BCLP '99, CALP '03) and Wayne Freese (CALP '03) were featured in the *StarTribune* in October as part of a Worthington group seeking to purchase Prairie Expo Center that has been shuttered for two years.

Thuringer and Freese are participants in the Foundation's Community Advantage Leadership Program (CALP), which was launched in April to work with the Worthington area to identify and mobilize local community assets.

"Through the CALP process we identified the Prairie Expo as our number one asset," said Freese, "Mayor Alan Oberloh, who was also in CALP, asked me to consider the purchase. Because of the support and encouragement we received we're revitalizing this important asset."

According to the *StarTribune*, Prairie Expo, "which sits along Interstate Hwy. 90, opened in September 2000 with educational and rural displays...was supposed to point tourists toward attractions all over the region."

"Instead of promoting tourism, Prairie Expo will become a centerpiece of the city's taxpaying, agriculture-oriented biotech industry," the *StarTribune* report.

Prairie Holding Group Inc., of which Freese is CEO, is working with officials to buy the buildings and property for several companies that offer animal vaccines and diagnostic services (Newport Laboratories) pork production services (Propig.com), nutrition, commodities procurement and sales, and software that will meet "country of origin" labeling requirements.

Freese told the *StarTribune* that 150 employees are now in five different buildings. Prairie Expo, he said, has good acreage, parking and a campus environment.

"It's a big building. It wasn't designed for an office complex," Freese told the *StarTribune*, "but I love it...it was architecturally designed for agriculture."

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November 11, 2003
Editorial

The following editorial reminds rural community leaders about the challenges we face.

"It can be no surprise that Minnesota's rural areas are not prospering nearly to the degree that the Twin Cities are. Still, the size of the economic gulf between city and country at the end of 2000, as measured by the Ne-

braska-based Center for Rural Affairs, is jaw dropping.

"The bad news is all over the upper Great Plains with Minnesota's western counties being much more akin to those states economically than the rest of the state...The disease can still be cured, the Center asserts, but not with a continuation of the same 'indifferent and ineffectual' federal and state policies for the region.

"Leaders from throughout the rural Great Plains should come together in a united appeal for a national effort to repopulate and reinvigorate their region. They should see allies among the crowded coastal states, and they dare not tarry. If they do, in another generation there may be little left in the nation's midsection to revive."

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RED WING REPUBLICAN
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Your online connection to Red Wing, Minnesota

August 14, 2003
Editorial

"One of the most tangible impacts of the Blandin Foundation has come from its community leadership program. Participants can attest to the formula, which is a win-win for individuals and their communities. People of all walks of life are brought together to focus on the key assets that comprise a healthy community...Red Wing has reaped the rewards through its two leadership classes. Through the relationships developed, facilitators and staff from Blandin also have come to Red Wing to lead other efforts such as the Economic Summit a few years ago. The recently completed education retreat – with follow up work – likely would not have occurred without Red Wing's connection to Blandin...The success of the programs verifies that Blandin has become one of the premier foundations working with and through communities to improve quality of life for all."

Community Close-up

Edge of the Wilderness BCLP alums unite and disperse for economic impact

By Patricia Feld— '02 BCLP Alum

All of us BCLP alums are in rural communities, so we know what most urbanites don't – that "rural" is different in different places. Our rural is not a community with a silo every ten square miles and an enormous consolidated school district, nor a bustling town like Ely, the gateway to the BWCA that many people envision when they hear "edge of the wilderness".

Our citizens work in and around modern, sparsely populated, isolated groups of tiny communities, in the third largest geographical county in Minnesota.

Got the picture?

Tiny towns, very spread out, most people living far away from next door neighbors.

Before our September 2002 BCLP training, we worked in our separate little places to strengthen businesses, teach, provide services like health care, religious institutions, and governance, enhance cultural and recreational opportunities, and maintain our beautiful setting.

Not any more!

The vision of who we are and what "our community" is, is much larger. BCLP brought us together, set our sights to the larger healthy community, and provided a network of support we couldn't have believed possible. We have met monthly, except in the summer, to find out about and help with each others' projects, discuss low-income housing, hear from our state senator, and reenergize. We unite.

Then we disperse.

Here are a few things we've done since our training:

- An Edge business leader decided to go to Moorhead for a state government symposium called "Positively

Minnesota Manufacturing: Making it Great" "I felt I had to be involved, because it would help the whole area. I don't think I would have gone before the BCLP training." She met and discussed crucial state and manufacturing with Governor Pawlenty.

- A town council member went to Washington, DC, for the National Association of Towns and Townships, met and talked to our Senators to promote rural initiatives.

"BCLP brought us together, set our sights to the larger, healthy community, and provided a network of support we couldn't have believed possible."

- A local arts advocate also went to Washington, DC, to research funding for the Edge Center for the Arts, the two million dollar project that breaks ground in the Spring of 2004.
- There is a new framing gallery business, a new liquor store, and a new owner of an expanded restaurant.
- One of us leads the new hospital expansion.
- One writes grants to increase programming at a community center and another helps the electric cooperative provide help to new businesses.

The connectedness of the 24 of us helping each other on our individual projects is WAY too complicated to describe. We unite to support and help each other, and then we disperse to work independently for the good of the whole Edge community.

We feel like we have leadership colleagues, and that gives us strength. And that builds a healthy Edge of the Wilderness community.



Patty Feld standing left, and fellow '02 BCLP alums Kathleen Munson kneeling left, Heidi Korstad standing right, and Joan Lester kneeling right have been putting their collective energy into the Edge Center for the Arts. Ground-breaking is scheduled for the Spring of 2004.

Alums in Action

Barcus to join Blandin Foundation Board



Marian Barcus (BCLP '01), mayor of Cohasset and an Itasca County Health and Human Services manager, has been appointed to the Blandin Foundation Board of Trustees.

Mayor Barcus assumes her responsibilities in January 2004, and will serve one, four-year term to which she can be re-elected.

Barcus was elected Cohasset mayor in 2001, having served on the Cohasset City Council from 1998 through 2001 and on the Cohasset Public Utilities Commission from 1995 through 1997.

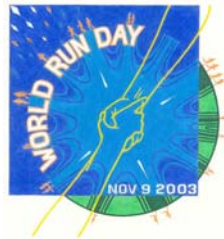
In addition to holding public office, she has served on the Itasca Development Corporation Board of Directors, including one year as chair. In December 2002, she became part of the management team that oversees Family and Children Services, Development Disabilities, and Financial Assistance. Barcus joined Itasca County Health and Human Services in 1992.

Eddy runs World Run Day

Erin Eddy (BCLP '03) said coordinating the World Run Day half-marathon brought her half-way to her goal of creating an international marathon for Bemidji.

"I must THANK the Blandin Foundation many times over for sharing with me all the community leadership skills needed to launch this event...there is no way I would have taken this on with only a month to organize, had I not felt so confident about my social capital in this area."

In addition to the half-marathon, the event featured 10K and 5K runs. Proceeds went to the Bemidji Area United Way.



If you're an Alum in Action we'd love to hear from you. Send your news to:

billaplant@blandinfoundation.org

Brod named Legislator of the year

Representative Laura Brod (R-New Prague, BCLP '96), was named the Republican Freshman Legislator of the Year by Politics in Minnesota, the state's leading bi-partisan political magazine.

"She has a great record," the report noted. "By our reckoning, Brod was able, as a freshman, to get four of the items she authored into law, a good accomplishment for a senior legislator let alone a first-
term.



Laura Brod

"She has deep roots in her community and an ability to work well with her colleagues," the report continued.

Brod served on the New Prague City Council for four years and was on the city's Economic Development Authority and Utility Commission. She is a member of the House Commerce, Jobs and Economic Development, Local Governments and Metropolitan Affairs, and Tax committees. Brod owns a real estate appraisal business.

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Strengthening Minnesota Communities

Blandin Community Leadership Program director Jim Krile hopes the program will continue to mature and become stronger. He hopes it will serve to deepen the understanding of reservation life and contemporary Indian culture to "help all Minnesota communities be better at weaving the tapestry that makes us all one people, one Minnesota community."

"Every time there's another leadership program we have that many more people working towards the betterment of the reservation communities." Says Linda Aitken, "We will get there – it's an excellent program that I wish everyone could attend – the sooner the better."

For more information about the Blandin Reservation Community Leadership Programs contact [need contact info here]

Don Bargaen



...friend, mentor, leader

...bearer of gifts:

strength,
vulnerability,
laughter,
tears,
wisdom,

and just the right amount of foolishness.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Your BCLP family

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BCLP Recruitment

Recruitment for the BCLP fall 2003 retreat season has come to a close. This fall we served six remarkable community cohorts:

- ❖ Austin, Minnesota
- ❖ Bemidji, Minnesota
- ❖ Aitkin, Minnesota
- ❖ Reservation Community Leadership Program: Fond du Lac, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, Red Lake & White Earth
- ❖ Quad Cities Area: Eveleth, Gilbert, Mt. Iron, & Virginia
- ❖ Breckenridge, Minnesota partnered with Wapeton, North Dakota

The programs' success is not just the hard work and dedication of the participants during the retreat, but also all the community leaders who worked hard to get them there.

A huge "thank you" to all folks who took time out of their busy schedules to participate in BCLP, and to all the community leaders who helped the recruitment process.

The Blandin Community Leadership Pro-

gram is currently recruiting participants from the following communities:

- ❖ Central Range Communities: Balkan Township, Buhl, Chisholm, & Hibbing
- ❖ Backus, Pequot Lakes, & Pine River
- ❖ Northfield, Minnesota
- ❖ Grand Rapids, Minnesota
- ❖ Redwood Falls, Minnesota

I encourage you to connect with friends and family in these areas and encourage them to apply.



BCLP applications can be obtained by contacting Malissa Bahr at 218.327.8715 or 877.882.2257