



Community Leader

Blandin Community Leadership Programs Newsletter

Volume 4 No. 2
Spring 2006

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 develop and sustain healthy communities.

Jim Hoolihan
President

Jim Krile
Leadership Director

Malissa Bahr
Recruitment Manager

Staff
Paula Troumbly
Becky Adams
Trisha Zimmerman
Shari Solem

Blandin Foundation
100 N. Pokegama Avenue
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
Phone: 218.326.0523
Toll Free: 877.882.2257
Fax: 218.327.1949
bfinfo@blandinfoundation.org

Online at
BlandinFoundation.org

The Greenway Area Business Association Igniting a Passion for Community

Troy (a 2004 BCLP alum) and Liza Anderson arrived in the Greenway area, a series of small towns in northeastern Minnesota bound together by a common school district, ready to embark on a business venture.

Both are graphic designers by trade and moved to the Greenway area in 1997 to open their now successful business, White Ivy Design.

When they arrived, they found an area that they believed was in need of a rebirth.

The couple opened White Ivy in the small town of Coleraine. When they tried to attract others to the town, they were met with a general belief that the proud community born from the iron mining industry was now a ghost town.

Most of the high paying iron mining jobs which created Coleraine and the other Greenway communities of Bovey, Marble and Taconite, dried up in the 1980s. But, in spite of the fact that the town had lost some of the attraction from the heydays of mining, the young couple still believed there was tremendous possibility.



Pat Kane



Troy and Liza Anderson

With just a handful of others, the Andersons began the Coleraine Business Association in January of 2002. After just a year both Troy and Liza said that they saw a need to

expand the association to the a broader community and the Greenway Area Business Association took the place of the Coleraine Business Association.

Their efforts were soon aided by the addition of Greenway area native Pat Kane, owner of the Coleraine-based Lefty's Tent and Party Rental and a 2004 BCLP alum, who brought lifelong residence and knowledge of the area communities to the table as well as leadership which has translated into a two-year presidency term with GABA.

continued on page 5

In this Issue...

The Greenway Area Business Association - Igniting a Passion for Community	1&5
Why does Leadership Matter?	2
A New Editor, a New Era for the Community Leader	2
Blandin Foundation Leadership Director Produces Handbook	2
Creating A Community Where People Matter	3&4
Blandin Foundation Vital Forest Project Honored	4
New Officers Named to Blandin Foundation's Board of Trustees	4

Blandin Foundation Leadership Director Produces Handbook

The examples are rural, but the principles are universal, said Blandin Foundation Leadership Director Jim Krile of his recently published work, "Community Leadership Handbook."

The work co-authored by Gordon Curphy and Duane R. Lund is an integral part of Krile's leadership work, which now spans more than two decades at the Blandin Foundation. It is designed to be a practical guide to dealing with challenges community leaders face, whether the setting is a farming community in the southern part of the state dealing with the constant flight of its youth to the city or an urban neighborhood contending with the arrival of ethnic neighbors.

The handbook, recently published by the Fieldstone Alliance, can trace its roots to the requests of Blandin Foundation Community Leadership alumni who wanted, according to Krile, more than just a snapshot of the BCLP programming, but a guide that could be utilized by anyone.

"You wouldn't have to go through the leadership programming to use it," said Krile.

In response to alumni requests, Krile and company began the process about two to three years ago of pulling material together. Most of that material revolves around the stories that alumni had to share.

The issues range from dealing with increasing community diversity to sustaining community volunteer efforts. The methods include

both the examples set forth in the handbook as well as supplementary materials available through both the publisher and the foundation's Web site.

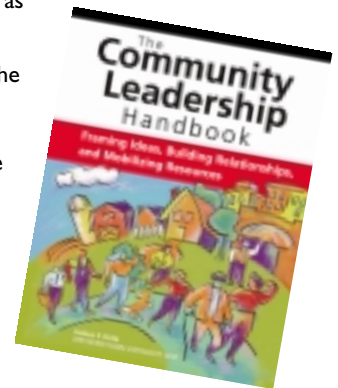
While the handbook was put together with practicality in mind, for Krile, there was certainly a fun factor.

The leadership director reports that his tenure at the Foundation and at the helm of leadership programming has been both an educational and enjoyable experience.

He said that part of the enjoyment has been watching community leaders discover their gifts as well as the gifts of others.

"We've heard great stories over the years about the challenges community leaders face," he said. "This was a chance to tap into the experiences of alumni."

The handbook is available at no charge to BCLP alumni. To order a copy, email book@blandinfoundation.org.



A New Editor, a New Era for the Community Leader

Beth Bily, a 2004 BCLP alum, has been named the new editor for the "Community Leader" newsletter.

She comes to the Blandin Foundation leadership team with a number of years of experience in the field of writing and community leadership.

She has served as the editor of the Grand Rapids Herald-Review, a community newspaper in northern Minnesota, for the past three and one-half years. Prior to that, she worked for the newspaper as a staff writer. She also is an alumnus of both the Community Leadership core program and the Editors and Publishers Leadership Program, devoted to the leadership role newspapers play in the communities they serve.

The new editor, seeks to enhance the content of the "Community Leader" by providing stories that will help alumni of the BCLP program with their own efforts in the communities they serve. It is a vision strongly shared by Blandin Foundation Leadership management.

Bily is a 1989 graduate of Ball State University located in Muncie Indiana with a degree in political science. She has been married for the past 14 years to husband, David. The couple has twin daughters Katie and Alli, who are nine.

Why does leadership matter?

Living in the information age has many positives, but there are negatives as well.

Through the Internet, television, newspapers, magazines and a variety of other publication, we are constantly bombarded with images, information and tidbits that compete for our time.

Four times each year, the "Community Leader," the newsletter devoted to Blandin Foundation leadership programming alumni, arrives in your mailbox.

We know all too well that it is another publication which is competing for your valuable time. That said, we have a strong commitment to making it worth your while.

We want to know what matters most in the communities that you serve. We want to be relevant. We want to tell your stories in a way that others may learn from your experiences.

Those of us in the community leadership business know that leadership is hard. It means putting yourself out there each and every day, taking risks, asking the hard questions and sometimes even being the lone voice of dissention.

We want this newsletter to be a publication which affirms the efforts you make for your community. We want to laud your successes as well as help others learn from that which was not successful.

We want the Community Leader to be a valuable and supportive resource for those who give so much of themselves to make their communities a better place to live, work and play.

Those with story ideas, thoughts or insights to share are encouraged to e-mail to jfkrile@blandinfoundation.org.



Creating a Community Where People Matter: Troy Domine, Montgomery

Troy Domine, a 1999 Blandin Community Leadership Program alumnus from Montgomery, has an impressive resume of leadership accomplishments. His efforts are firmly planted in a strong desire to live in a place where community and people matter.

His leadership roles range

from being a founding member of the Czech Area Development Committee, which focuses on projects benefiting the Montgomery, Lonsdale and New Prague area to working as a representative of “Mobilize Montgomery,” a project which worked to develop an expo for area business and non-profits.

Domine also has been actively involved with efforts to provide fundamentals of business operation training and exploring how communities can better work with Mankato State University to provide greater access to higher education as well as chairing a citizen’s committee which helped pass a bond to build a new school for the communities of Montgomery and Lonsdale.

He has been a driving force in a community listening process which has been an integral part of developing long-range strategic planning for Montgomery.

And, as if his leadership initiative efforts were not enough, he and his wife, Diane, run a dance studio and are raising five young children.

What makes a citizen-leader do all this?

The answer can be found in Domine’s own deep roots in rural community.

He grew up on a farm in southwest Minnesota and knew early on that he wanted his own children to have the experience of living close to the land and in a tightly woven community. It was a goal that he shared with his wife, Diane, a native of Egan.

That deep affection for rural Minnesota is far more than some sort of sentimental nostalgia for the “good old days.” And, he knows for rural communities to thrive, they need “to create opportunities for people, quality of life, accessible leadership and an innovative spirit to get the job done.”

He matches his conviction with his own record of engagement in local and regional issues.

In addition to running his own business, Domine is the community development director for Montgomery, serving on

the Economic Development Committee, the local Chamber of Commerce, the festival board and the new business development committee. He also provides project management for initiatives such as the recently completed renovation of an old bank as Montgomery’s new library.

While the variety and volume of his work might drive some to distraction, Domine seems to draw energy from it. He likes seeing the results of his efforts, and more significantly, the opportunity to get to know people. The work also allows him to see the interconnections of what he does so he is not dashing from task to task, but weaving together the variety of activities that make a town a community.

The tasks he undertakes are daunting and made more difficult by constant pressures for growth.

“One of the questions I come back to quite often is: “How do we retain a sense of community with the push for development from the Twin Cities?”” said Domine.

The answer, he believes, lies maintaining a balance between the “inner core” of community life and identity and the need to grow and develop.

The “inner core” for Domine is about the quality of relationships people have with one another - a value that cannot be squandered in a rush to attract “big box” business.

“What we have working for us, I think, is that the community recognizes that it can control its growth,” he said. “We are not desperate. We have a plan that helps us be in control of what happens and not simply embrace every development proposal that comes our way.”
~ Troy Domine

“What we have working for us, I think, is that the community recognizes that it can control its growth,” he said. “We are not desperate. We have a plan that helps us be in control of what happens and not simply embrace every development proposal that comes our way.”

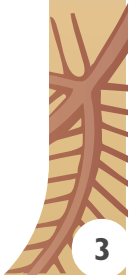
Like others who have been through BCLP, the program did not make Domine a community leader - he already was. It did, however, enhance his commitment.

Through BCLP, he was better able to understand himself through the eyes of others in the program. It also was important in helping him develop an understanding of how leadership works and increasing the leveraging ability within any community by understanding one’s own style as well as the styles of others. The impact of BCLP was evident in Domine’s decision to join the community’s managerial staff. Another alum chose to serve as mayor and yet another is currently serving on the city council.

Community leadership has had its satisfying moments for Domine - particularly the work he has done with the “Mobilize Montgomery” effort.

The initiative is now in its 13th year and the last six have encouraged much talk about what is really important.

continued on page 4



Creating a Community Where People Matter continued.

“This isn’t always pleasant, because some of what we have to hear is controversial because it is important to some people” observed Domine. “But, we have to listen for the sake of the common good.”

The numerous conversations of “Mobilize Montgomery” eventually produced a strategic plan to redevelop the downtown, including the addition of a new grocery store, bank and most recently, a new library.

The promise in the future for Montgomery and surrounding communities were not the alone the results of Domine’s efforts and he is the first to point that out. It has been a widely shared effort of cooperation and affection for what community can be.

For Domine, leadership is all about the process of bringing together the tools, talent and people that are out there. Leaders, he also noted, must have the longevity to see their visions become reality.

While he admits annoyance with the “snipers in the bushes” he recognizes the importance of bringing voices to the table that differ from his own. It is through that process that community vision becomes clear.

While an important source of Domine’s commitment to rural Minnesota stems from his own experience, he draws particular satisfaction from the fact that his vision is shared by others.

More and more high school seniors and college freshman, he said, are talking about how they will “find their way home” to Montgomery.

“They see the dynamic leadership at work in this town and actually feel the positivity,” he said.

Blandin Foundation Vital Forest Project Honored



Bernadine Joselyn

The Blandin Foundation was recently acknowledged by the national Council on Foundations for its own leadership efforts.

The Foundation’s Vital Forests/Vital Communities initiative has been named as recipient of the Paul Ylvisaker Public Policy Engagement Award winner. The Ylvisaker award recognizes a foundation which “demonstrates

excellence in affecting public policy by using creative and effective strategies,” according to a COF news release.

The recognition of the Vital Forests/Vital Communities initiative was based upon efforts toward third-party certification of private forestland and its partnership with other organizations, primarily the Nature Conservancy, to utilize conservation easements to protect large scale forestland.

“This award honors our commitment to the Grand Rapids area, our region and state. It is a well-earned tribute to the foundation’s board, which had the insight to engage in public policy and to the foundation’s staff, especially Bernadine Joselyn, director of public policy, who took the reins and developed the Vital Forests/Vital Communities initiative,” said Blandin Foundation President Jim Hoolihan. “Most of all, however, we are in debt to the many stakeholders, whose dedication to sustaining our forests and renewing local economies makes the difference.”

New Officers Named to Blandin Foundation’s Board of Trustees



Mike Johnson

Mike Johnson, provost of Itasca Community College located in Grand Rapids and a 2004 BCLP alum, was appointed the new board of trustees’ vice-chairman at the March meeting of the board. Also appointed to an office was Gene Radecki, a retired executive of Blandin Paper Company and 2003 interim president of the foundation. Radecki will serve as secretary of the board.

George Thompson, the foundation’s chairman of the board, said the two will greatly add to the foundation’s leadership team.

“Mike is exceptionally active and visible in the Grand Rapids area; Gene is one of the Foundation’s most thoughtful board members,” he said.



Gene Radecki

The Greenway Area Business Association continued.

According to Kane, who became involved in the organization after his wife, Kristi, attended a meeting and volunteered him to work, the missing link in the GABA effort was focusing on common ties.

The group, according to Kane, was largely focused on the single community of Coleraine. He, with the help of others, quickly worked to expand membership, create a workable mission statement and hone in on a focal point which brought all the communities together - the local school district which serves all the Greenway area communities. The group, in fact, worked diligently to help pass a school referendum in 2004.

"We tried to bring all the pieces of the puzzle together - all the stakeholders in the community," said Kane.

While many community revitalization efforts gain good participation at the outset and numbers dwindle as time goes on, the Greenway Area Business Association manages to grow, gain momentum and keep enthusiasm alive amongst its membership. Today the group has 60 members and attracts about 25 to 30 individuals each month to its meetings.

So what's their secret?

Goals, passion and success stories - say those who keep the dream of rebirth for Greenway area communities alive.

GABA efforts have greatly been aided, said insiders through the development of a mission statement with which everyone could agree. That mission statement is simply: "Proactively taking part in the rebirth and development for Greenway area communities."

"Once we saw what it was that we wanted to do, it was just a matter of getting people together," said Liza Anderson.

Five committees formed by the association address various needs within the Greenway communities. Individuals who volunteer time are allowed to choose from among the educational liaison committee, community economic development, beautification, marketing/membership and fundraising.

"People are doing what they want to be doing," said Troy Anderson of the division of labor among the five committees. "It's about plugging people in where their passion is."

And, having short-term attainable goals where success can easily be measured also has been key.

The fundraising committee, for example, has launched and maintained "A Night on the Town." While it is the major fundraising event for the business association it also focuses on fun, great food and great entertainment.

"We wanted the communities to embrace GABA - we felt this was the way we wanted it to go," said Kane, adding that "A Night on the Town," is far more than the usual annual awards ceremony.

GABA has worked and obtained grant funding to enhance a highway corridor which connects the communities, restored a local park, supported a local housing study and brought regional Habitat for Humanity housing to Coleraine a year ahead of schedule.

The group also has been instrumental in bringing lost festivals back to life, such as the Coleraine "Fish-A-Rama" which has been revamped to be more than an event for those who like to fish, but a community and family gathering point with a little something for everyone.

What makes this story significant to community leaders?

Many community leaders have had the experience of having a great idea that gathered support and enthusiasm at the outset, but quickly fizzled when participation and volunteer efforts waned.

The Greenway Business Association is a story of leadership success that has gained momentum through letting community members come to the table and share their gifts in areas for which they have passion.

Their success hopefully can provide inspiration for leaders elsewhere.

Reestablishing community events has had positive benefits on several fronts - revitalizing community spirit as well as creating a great deal of name recognition for GABA and awareness of what they are trying to do.

Troy Anderson and Kane also attended the Blandin Community Leadership Program in the fall of 2004. The two said that the training through BCLP not only helped them define their leadership roles but connected them with others in leadership positions throughout the area.

"It allowed us to get acquainted with some key community people," said Troy Anderson.

"We have a much better resource bank of Itasca County people who want to see a dream come to life."

As the group gained community momentum - others, including some of their fellow BCLP alumni, began to notice and support their efforts. They now work side-by-side with Itasca Development Corporation, a regional economic development organization.

Recent financial support came from an economic development grant, which provided funding for a paid community liaison GABA position rather than trying to run the organization exclusively on volunteer efforts. The paid position was filled by Gary Forsberg, a seasonal resident of the area and retired 3M executive who Kane said became interested because he wanted to give back his business knowledge to others.

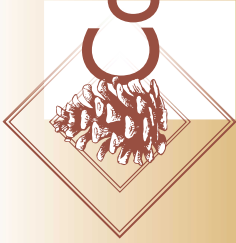
The paid position, said Kane, will help bring GABA efforts into focus.

"When the troops of our membership hit the pavement, they have direction," said Kane.

Volume 4 No. 2 Spring 2006

Community Leader

Blandin Community Leadership Programs Newsletter



BLANDIN FOUNDATION™

Blandin Foundation
100 N. Pokegama Avenue
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Address Service Requested

NonProfit ORG
U.S. Postage
PAID
Grand Rapids, MN
PERMIT No. 168

The Community Leadership Handbook By Jim Krile, Gordy Curphy, and Duane Lund

All BCLP alums are eligible to get a complimentary copy of the Community Leadership Handbook. The leadership tools found in this book, which range from Community Problem Analysis to Building Effective Community Teams, are based on the materials used in the Blandin Foundation's leadership programs. The community examples used come from the real-life leadership experiences of BCLP participants.

If you have not already ordered a copy but would like to receive one, please email us at book@blandinfoundation.org. Please make sure you give us your most current home mailing address. Additional copies of the handbook can be purchased from the publisher Fieldstone Alliance at www.fieldstonealliance.org (1-800-274-6024).

