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Leadership Program Outcomes Study: Essential elements of leadership trainings offered to marginalized populations

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Essential elements of leadership trainings offered to marginalized populations

Emily Halbur

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts in Leadership

AUGSBURG COLLEGE
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

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MASTER OF ARTS IN LEADERSHIP
AUGSBURG COLLEGE
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL


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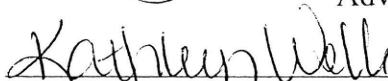
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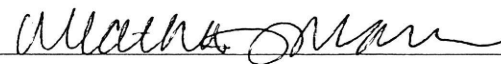
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Abstract

Leadership Program Outcomes Study:

Essential elements of leadership trainings offered to marginalized populations

Emily Halbur

June 15th, 2011

Thesis

Leadership Application Project

Non-thesis (ML597) Project

In order to better understand the purpose of and best practices associated with non-profit organizations offering leadership trainings to their constituents, 14 participants from two different organizations were interviewed about their experiences. These organizations work with two unique populations, those with intellectual disabilities and at-risk teens. The individuals interviewed were asked the same questions and their responses were compiled to help find themes within these two leadership trainings. Based on their responses, a list of seven criteria was assembled regarding what makes a leadership training successful from the perspective of the participants. For organizations looking to offer similar programs to their constituents, this list can be used to set the foundation for the launch of their own leadership training.

Keywords: leadership trainings, non-profit organizations, marginalized populations

Table of Contents

	Page
I. Introduction	1
a. Special Olympics Minnesota History	6
b. Urban Leadership Academy History	9
II. Literature Review	12
a. Qualitative Review	12
b. Quantitative Review	20
c. Summary	23
III. Methodology	25
IV. Results	31
a. Positive Outcomes	31
b. Training Challenges	48
V. Limitations	53
VI. Conclusion	59
VII. Appendix A: References	69
VIII. Appendix B: Interview Questions	71
IX. Appendix C: Institutional Research Board Approval Letter	72
X. Appendix D: Special Olympics Minnesota Interviews	73
XI. Appendix E: Urban Leadership Academy Interview	94
XII. Appendix F: Arnstein's Ladder of Civic Participation	108

Leadership Program Outcomes Study:

Essential elements of a successful non-profit leadership training offered to constituents

Introduction

Andrew* is a 19 year old man who has brain trauma and suffers from chronic seizures. His dream has always been to be a physical education teacher and a coach. But someone with an intellectual disability seldom gets the opportunity to be a leader, set an example and feel empowered to have a positive impact on their community. There are many “Andrews” in our society, and thanks to programs like one offered by Special Olympics Minnesota, their dreams are coming true and the traditional idea of leadership is changing.

The programs offered through Special Olympics Minnesota are called the Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs), and they were developed for Special Olympics athletes 16 years of age and older who wish to advance their involvement in the mission of Special Olympics Minnesota using their unique capabilities in a wide variety of capacities. ALPs give Andrew, and others like him, the chance to draw on their own experiences as veteran Special Olympics athletes as they guide, mentor, and instruct other athletes. As one of the ALPs’ coaches, Andrew gives other athletes someone to look up to, while helping them to develop their motor, social and developmental skills. ALPs help Andrew feel empowered and they give him the chance to inspire others as their teacher, leader and coach. At the same time, Andrew is setting an example for the disabled and non-disabled alike, and making a positive impact on his community along the way.

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Programs similar to Special Olympics Minnesota's ALPs have been established in diverse non-profit organizations across the world, and they have proven to bring forward some of the most unlikely leaders, putting them directly into the leadership spotlight. One such program is offered by the Urban Leadership Academy (ULA) through Christ Church International. A challenge is that these types of trainings are not offered by all non-profit organizations, but have proven to be an effective way of training future generations for leadership opportunities. The research conducted within these two organizations will improve what is already known about these types of trainings and will create a framework for other organizations looking to start up similar program. By surveying participants in the ALPs and ULA, other organizations will gain a better understanding of what processes and procedures go into these trainings to make them successful. The purpose of this research is to introduce other non-profit organizations across the world to a structure that is already in place within these organizations; organizations who have offered these types of trainings over an extensive period of time. Learning from ULA and ALPs is an opportunity for other organizations to gain insight into the value of these programs and the methods involved that create successful outcomes for the participants. For this analysis, the independent variable will be these two leadership programs, available to certain groups within the state of Minnesota, while the dependent variables will be factors that contribute to the programs' successes.

Leadership programs are not unique to non-profits as there are corporations, organizations and educational institutions that have quickly discovered the importance

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of empowering their employees and students. What separates these programs most often is that instead of, or perhaps in addition to, offering leadership programs internally, non-profits are offering leadership training and opportunities to the populations they serve. The term non-profit refers to an organization that is established without the purpose of making money or bringing in a profit. Typically their purpose is to serve a group or population of individuals that are in need of services that go beyond what the government or other individuals are able to offer. These organizations serve a variety of needs, and can also be called Non Government Organizations (NGOs) in countries outside of the United States. Their purpose is to serve the greater good of the world, although their missions vary depending on what needs exist in a particular community. A few common terms used in discussing corporate, educational or non-profit leadership programs are leadership development, skill enhancement or empowerment trainings. Each of these words will be used interchangeably to describe curriculum-based programs, experiential-based programs, or a combination of the two which can help to build leadership skills and opportunities for individuals and groups.

During times of economic instability, non-profit organizations have often been looked at to solve more problems with less funding. Frequently, programs established in financially strained communities are put on hold or dismissed altogether because of budget limitations, as other programs may take higher priority during tough economic times. However, cutting programs or postponing growth in the area of client leadership development can have long-term consequences. Oftentimes, the purpose of non-profit

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organizations being an agent for change in the communities gets lost in their need to provide basic human needs to their clients (Donaldson, 2008). It is easy for non-profits to become centered on developing programs to solve the immediate and pressing issues directly in front of them, but it is just as valuable and critical for these same organizations to empower the populations that they are working with. The individuals within these identified populations will help create social change both now and in the future. Therefore, it is imperative that these programs allow and encourage participants to become leaders in a nontraditional approach: it is an organization's way of demonstrating their investment in the future of their community.

Primarily, non-profits are established in order to serve a client base that is discriminated against, minimized, or seen as followers of the status quo since they often lack a voice in the general public. It is up to non-profits to put the power of change into the hands of those involved in their programs, and provide them with an outlet to be heard. In a 2004 article from Donna Hardina, she point out that a big piece of the leadership puzzle is on empowerment, which allows individuals to control their own fate and the fate of their community (Hardina, 2004). Although employees at non-profit organizations are hired primarily because of their knowledge or education on a certain subject, many of them have not experienced life with a disability, or living in a community affected by gangs, drugs or violence. In many cases, the best guidance for individuals facing these obstacles are other individuals who have also faced those same things. A positive way for a non-profit to setup a community for future success, as well as initiate change-makers in the community, is by empowering its constituents to strive

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for change. The staff may have the education to support the organization through change, but the leaders trained through these programs have the greatest wealth of knowledge about the social issues existing in their community (Donaldson, 2008). Therefore, through experience, and with the appropriate training from non-profits advocating for the population they serve, these individuals can initiate change in their communities and lead others to do the same.

In a 2010 study about leadership, engineering students were asked what the most important incentives were for performing in a leadership role. The top four identified were academic and professional growth, ability to make decisions and cause change, an increase in responsibility, and the exposure to different roles and experiences (Crumpton-Young, et. al, 2010). These remain the same for any population. The rewards for stepping into a leadership opportunity can be great, but the opportunities must first exist. It is through studying the leadership opportunities already in existence through some non-profits that we can best gain insight into the impact of leadership programs for marginalized and often ostracized populations. By utilizing the results of this study, other non-profits will be able to assess the impact that implementing a leadership program for their clients could potentially have on their community, organization and clients' successes. However, first, understanding the purpose of these organizations in the state of Minnesota and the value of these organizations within their communities must be discussed.

This research is critical for the community because numerous non-profit organizations lack training and leadership opportunities to the populations they serve.

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This is detrimental to both the organizations, as well as the communities they exist within. By empowering these individuals to speak out against injustices, stand up for what they believe, and make decisions for the betterment of their community, impactful outcomes can be achieved. By pulling together past research conducted on leadership trainings as well as new research on the two organizations previously discussed, the collected data will help other organizations anticipate challenges, know what to include in their leadership trainings, and prepare them for the impact it will have on their participants.

Special Olympics Minnesota History

Originally started over 35 years ago, Special Olympics Minnesota is a state chapter of Special Olympics North America branch, which is included under the Special Olympics International organization. The organization was founded as a way for people with intellectual disabilities to have the same opportunity to experience the physical, developmental and social benefits of sports participation. The traditional sports programs were developed for individuals 8 years of age and older. In recent years, Special Olympics Minnesota has looked at other outlets to give athletes a chance to empower themselves and strive for change in their own communities. An example of this expansion is ALPs, which allows athletes over the age of 16 the opportunity to pair up with a mentor and take different leadership courses which focus on a variety of leadership opportunities that exist in the state of Minnesota. The courses that are currently offered in the state include Athletes as Coaches, Athletes as Volunteers, Challenges through Choice, Beginner Global Messenger (public speaking), Graduate

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Global Messenger, and Governance and Leadership 101. Each program is offered every other year to a different set of athletes. For example, Athletes as Coaches was last offered in 2009, and was next offered in February 2011.

The reason for offering these leadership programs to athletes is to give them a thorough training in a variety of areas where leadership opportunities are available to them. The program outlined in this research will be Athletes as Coaches, where athletes attend a three-day training at a camp in central Minnesota. The training included a review of the material all Special Olympics Minnesota coaches are required to know, including an orientation and a protective behaviors presentation that helps reduce harm to the athletes. Additionally, there is role playing included in the second day of training to help athletes better understand the role they will play as a coach. For many of the athletes, they may participate in one sport as an athlete, while they will be a coach in a different sport. It is important to outline the role they play in each of these situations in order to allow them to better understand the differences between these two positions.

The athlete is also required to attend the training with a mentor. Their mentor can be a friend, family member, coach or a knowledgeable volunteer who will help to guide the athlete through their leadership training and through the duration of their participation in the program. The mentor should have experience in leadership capacities in order for them to have the knowledge to guide the athlete. A mentor plays a key role in the success of the athlete. Their mentor is an important guide in this process as they will be attending practices with the athlete, and will help them to understand the actions they should take to handle certain situations. For example,

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during role-playing, the athlete and mentor will alternate in playing the role of athlete and coach at a practice. This allows the athlete to hear their mentor redirect a difficult athlete or assist an athlete with learning a sport. It will then be their turn to demonstrate these skills as they take on the role of a coach.

Trainings such as Athletes as Coaches help athletes to take skills they already possess and bring those skills out in coaching. They even have the opportunity to take an assessment which will help them to gain insight into their coaching style. The results of the assessment will help them better understand their strengths and challenges in leadership roles. This knowledge will help them to better prepare for planning and executing a practice with the help of other coaches and their mentor.

Overall, the ALPs offered help athletes to explore different leadership opportunities that exist within Special Olympics Minnesota. There are four goals associated with all ALPs trainings, as taken from the Special Olympics Minnesota website on ALPs:

1. Allowing athletes to choose how and in what role they participate in Special Olympics, such as athlete, coach, volunteer, and/or leader.
2. Encouraging athletes to take meaningful positions of influence and leadership throughout the organization to help determine policy and direction.
3. Providing additional training for athletes as they develop their leadership skills in new roles.
4. Allowing athletes to explore opportunities for participation in roles previously considered “non-traditional.” Through ALPs, athletes are trained to serve as

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public speakers, assistant coaches, volunteers, and gain knowledge about the responsibilities of becoming an effective board or committee member.

Urban Leadership Academy History

The basis of the Urban Leadership Academy (ULA) is to offer youth in a higher crime area of Minneapolis the opportunity to become a leader in their community. The program was established in order to pull in youth from a higher risk community and teach them about alternate life choices that may differentiate from what they experience on the streets or even in their own home. The hope of the program was to create leaders in the younger generation that would transform their community and would take pride in what they are able to do for others, whether at the local, national or international level. While many youth may also have leadership opportunities in a school-setting, this offers them a community-wide leadership training that helps them to be a more active member of society. The mission of the program is, "We see a world where urban youth experience the knowledge, power, and passion to rise above individual circumstances and become leaders who create lasting change." Since being founded in 1997, over 600 youth have participated in their program, all coming from varying Christian denominations, as well as racial and community backgrounds. The overall goal of the organization is to utilize the most valuable resources in their community, the youth, to help transform their neighborhoods and the lives of all community members.

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They have a 3-2-1 guideline for their program, which allows youth to first take part in a three-day retreat that focuses on the youth discovering their gifts and talents that they have to offer as a leader. A large part of this retreat is to combine religion and spirituality with an opportunity for the youth to do personal exploration of their own interests and passions.

The two week academy is a follow up to the retreat and helps the youth to gain knowledge about what the role of a leader entails and how they can get to where they want to go. The specific areas outlined in this portion of the training, as taken from the Urban Leadership Academy website, include the following: the call to leadership, theology, service-learning, justice and racial reconciliation, creative witness of the arts, preparing for the future, major Christian thinkers and doers, and relationships as a leader. The curriculum is specific to the needs of the youth participating, and the program addresses the ever-changing issues that youth face on a daily basis. Each day also offers the participants the opportunity to put their leadership into action by participating in service learning opportunities as well.

The final piece of their leadership program is their commitment to one year of leadership. This can include starting a new program in their community that relates to an issue they often see, or something more specifically related to their religious institution, which gets them out and giving back. Throughout this year of service, they have meetings and sessions with mentors setup in order for them to stay on the path of leadership and have guidance throughout the process.

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By engaging youth in leadership trainings and opportunities in their community,

ULA's mission is:

1. To awaken a spirit of service and leadership among urban youth.
2. To equip these young leaders with the tools for service learning.
3. To introduce urban students to the power of self-discovery and creative expression.
4. To develop emotionally healthy leaders, with the life skills necessary for effective leadership.
5. To create spiritually minded leaders who have compassion for the city.

Exploring these two organizations and talking directly to those impacted by these programs will allow for additional knowledge to be obtained regarding these types of leadership programs and what contributes to their successes. However, while this study will contribute to the knowledge in existence about these types of leadership programs, it is not a case study of these two organizations. Information will be divulged throughout the study summary that will outline the programs each of these two organizations offer to their clients, but its purpose is not to critique, evaluate or be a complete summary of the trainings these organizations have established. The trainers, mentors and program developers were not interviewed during this research. The information presented is purely from the perspective of the researcher and those participants interviewed following their participation in the training. Instead, this will serve as a general knowledge about these types of trainings, and will assist in better understanding what makes these two specific programs so successful.

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Literature Review

A structured leadership program in any setting can be of great assistance or detriment to any organization depending on if it is an effective use of time for the trainers and the attendees. This review looks at ten different studies and articles that assess leadership programs in a variety of settings, particularly focusing on non-profit organization. These programs were studied between 1988 and 2010 with similar successes listed and a variety of drawbacks mentioned. The qualitative, non-profit articles specifically focus on leadership programs related to youth development, improving the lives of the homeless or impoverished, or assisting those with disabilities. The quantitative articles focus on both non-profit and community leadership programs centered on decision-making skills, empowerment and policy changes.

Qualitative Research on Non-Profit Client Leadership Programs

One of the earliest research studies conducted on leadership programs for the homeless and disabled, Robert Gould and Robert Ardinger (1981) created a nationwide list of homeless advocacy organizations, social service organizations and government agencies that provided services to those in need. A random sample of 300 of the 600 organizations was completed using a 51-question survey focused on facility funding, facility accessibility, and program information. Of those surveyed, 40 percent, or 120, of the organizations completed the survey. The results showed that many of those that are disabled and homeless do not have access to the same resources as those who are homeless and without a disability. During their research, they attempted to bring

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together community members to become self-advocates and leaders in their own community. This research brought about the self-advocacy movement for the disabled homeless. The need for structured, self-advocacy trainings was identified in order to empower those who were homeless and disabled to take a stand and make a change in their own lives as well as in their communities. Due to their experiences, either currently or previously, living with reliance on these services, they best understood the human services industry and where it lacked support for them. Since they are, or were, the users of those services, they were best-equipped to critique and advocate to change the services to meet their needs (Gould & Ardingner, 1988, p. 51). By empowering these individuals and providing them with leadership training within their community, they would be able to lead their communities and these organizations to change. These individuals were able to experience support from their peers and develop strong friendships in their communities throughout the training and during the duration of their activism. The researchers reported that the homeless were forming support networks, where they utilized peer support to help them better make decisions. They also noted additional benefits from participating, including increased self-esteem, self sufficiency, the ability to build and sustain meaningful and beneficial relationships, the opportunity to set goals, and the ability to advocate for issues (p. 50-51). In order to achieve this, they trained these individuals in the definition of their rights, helped them to identify their civil liberties as humans, and informed them of their legal and civil rights as a member of the homeless population. This article contributes valuable information on the positive impact leadership trainings have on groups of individuals,

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specifically those that struggle with advancement in communities and acknowledgement in governmental movements and policies. However, this study is limited by the fact that it is over twenty years old and no new research has been developed with this specific group. It would be extremely valuable to understand where these programs are today and if those same results are reported over two decades later.

While examining the lack of empowerment found in impoverished women, a program called Candora was established in 1989 to aide in the advancement of low-income, single mothers. Many of these women battled low self-esteem and an overall sense of powerlessness over their lives and their futures. However, Candora became a place where they could be safe and “gain a sense of control over their lives” (Schmitt-Boshnick & Scott, 1995). By being a part of the leadership program designed and implemented at Candora, the women learned the importance of taking a stand and how to have a voice for themselves. The women discovered that it is important for people in the community to hear what they have to say (Schmitt-Boshnick & Scott, 1995). Empowerment and leadership coincide for these women as they gained the resources through Candora to make significant advances for themselves as well as for their families. Three major themes emerged from the research on the program’s success and the impact it had on the participants: counteracting power, empowerment for self-confidence and self-sufficiency, and advocating for the interests of the women. This was an opportunity for the women to understand that life was not just something that happened to them, but instead, was something they could make happen for themselves and their families in order to be successful and live a happy life. Although there was no

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empirical evidence to suggest the long-term impact this had on women in the community, there were strong testimonials and interviews that outline its successes. The women who were involved experienced differences within themselves and created changes in their own lives that were positive and would impact the choices they made in the future.

In 2003, the New Haven, Connecticut community forged together to develop a specific leadership training, called the Leadership Project, for homeless and formerly homeless individuals. At the time, some local organizations serving individuals with behavioral disorders began offering Board of Director openings to those served through their programs. However, their representation was sparse and inconsistent (Rowe, Benedict & Falzer, P. 2003). When attempts to involve these individuals in positions of leadership were unsuccessful in New Haven, the Leadership Project launched, and began making changes to empower those who were homeless. Through this project, the organization's decision makers began creating trainings for these individuals to help them gain a better understanding of how to use their skills, and what might be expected of them if they were to serve on a board or in other leadership capacities. Edward*, a participant, spoke highly of his involvement, saying that the training increased his self-confidence and provided him with a solid reason to start advocating for himself and the rest of the homeless community. He stated, "I liked feeling like the program belonged to us and we got to create our own rules for it" (p. 240). The program met twice a week for three hours to cover topics such as public speaking, assertiveness training, board and committee training and conflict resolution. Keeping the class size to ten or less helped

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to build a sense of community among the participants, while setting a personal and intimate setting in which they could comfortably express their views. The project coordinator also was available before class for each student to address any concerns they may have been having in their personal lives (p. 253). The program wrapped up with a formal graduation ceremony which included the mayor and other local decision-makers. Benefits of the program included increased self-confidence, a better understanding of advocacy and the important role each person plays in it, long-standing friendships with other participants, and successful board experiences for both the individual and other board members. There were a few factors they had to take into consideration in developing this program, such as inconsistent attendance, inappropriate behavior, and individuals' access to the training sites. One limitation of this program was that it initially provided this opportunity to those who would most likely do well with it, a research term called "creaming." Although, this was something they only planned to do for their first session in order to pilot the program, it does limit their initial research of the program. Additionally, once the creaming phase of the research was complete, it would have been valuable to do a follow up study to see if the results were similar with a more varied group of participants.

Victoria Bautista (2005) defends a specific term in her article on citizen empowerment, deemed, "inspired leadership" that is beneficial to the study of all leadership programs. Inspired leadership is the idea of creating goals, missions and strategies specific to helping build leadership opportunities for individuals in minimized population. The concept is directly applicable to the posed research question because it

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outlines the importance of creating a collaborative environment where both the organization and its clients take equal responsibility to eliminate poverty. It brings about the importance of gaining buy-in from all constituents, and also addresses the value of internal rewards. Instead of participants being coerced into the program by extrinsic rewards, they feel intrinsic value in their participation, which can be significantly more powerful to inspiring and continuing their involvement. Plans were most successful when the individuals were not forced into participation or bribed, but participated voluntarily because it related to something they felt strongly about (Bautista, 2005, p. 252). Additionally, the programs that saw the greatest success were ones developed with input from the future participants, as those individuals were experts in knowing the needs of their community. Just because a certain program may be a priority for the organization does not necessarily mean that it is a priority for the population they serve. The article also effectively outlines what organizations need to have in place to launch programs that are best suited for their constituents. For example, if participants are illiterate or struggle with psychological challenges, it is critical for the program leaders to have an understanding of this in order to adjust the program and create varying levels of training appropriate for all participants. An inhibitor to this article was that Bautista minimizes the usefulness of polling smaller groups of individuals to discover their feelings on the effectiveness of the programs. Bautista said that organizations should be “apprehensive” if only a few community members are registering for the program. Many organizations need a launching point from which they develop a program. All it may take is the program starting small and,

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through word of mouth, community advocacy, and building trusting relationships, it will flourish.

Donna Hardina has written numerous articles on citizen participation and empowering clients of non-profit organizations. The main purposes of having structured empowerment programs in place are to increase civic participation, decrease a sense of alienation from society; and facilitate their ability to change the political system in support of their issue (Hardina, 2006, p. 4). Her article strongly supports the need for structured leadership programs within organizations, for profit or non-profit, in order to strengthen minimized population and strengthen their community as a whole. Hardina primarily focused her study on gaining input from the constituents that will be the most impacted by any policy or organizational changes. She also introduces the readers to Arnstein's Ladder of Civic Participation (Appendix D). Arnstein visually displays how an individual or group's level of involvement in decision-making changes their level of belief in the program. For example, keeping participants at the manipulation level, the lowest level on the ladder, likely will not allow participants to feel invested in the decision as the choices have been imposed or forced upon them. Some of the benefits Hardina outlines when civic participation is high with communities or populations are improved service effectiveness, increased power and leadership among residents and constituents, and an increase in the populations' perceptions of their ability to have an impact (Hardina, 2006, p. 17-18). Hardina also acknowledges that for people in marginalized populations, "the acquisition of skills necessary to form self-help groups, engage in self-advocacy efforts, participate in organization decision

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making, and become politically active are essential components of the personal change process” (Hardina, 2006, p. 27). Unfortunately, Hardina conducted minimal research for her own articles, but relies heavily on qualitative research completed by others. However, she did pull together information from multiple researchers to come to conclusions these researchers may not have otherwise reached on their own.

In studying youth leadership programs, a research assessment performed by Melanie Otis focuses on the Lexington Youth Leadership Academy (LYLA), a program created to develop effective leaders by supporting youth-driven community change. The basis of their program is to support personal growth of the participants and help build skills in leadership as well as conflict resolution. The intended outcomes of the program were that participants would be able to apply their new skills to combat an issue that was currently of concern to them in their community (Otis, 2006, p. 75). Additionally, by getting them involved in civic life at a young age, their likelihood to continue in that role and become socially responsible adults increased (Otis, 2006, 73). Previous research that Otis used points out that one of the main common denominators for successful youth leadership programs is that the youth are involved in the issues that impact them. Additionally, the programs need to center on strengthening the individual, the organization and the community, building knowledge, as well as building a collaboration between youth and knowledgeable adults (Otis, 2006, p. 73). The program uses a common empowerment framework that suggests that youth who feel supported and encouraged, who are equipped with the knowledge, self confidence and appropriate tools to take action will be agents of social change. A major factor to which

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many of the youth attributed their success was the involvement of the staff and other mentoring adults to encourage and nurture their learning and application process. However, a big piece of this study is that the outcomes were likely more long-term, and may take students, educators and community members years to identify. At the time of the research, the program was extremely new and the long-term implications on both a community and individual level were not fully realized.

Quantitative Research on Community Leadership Programs

For a long time, the United Way has been a leader in community development in healthcare, safety and education. In 1997, Julian et al. studied a United Way community needs assessment process to discover if and how citizens' participation in the needs assessment, whether at a high, moderate or low level, would impact their sense of community and belonging. The idea was to question whether a sense of community leads to civic participation or vice versa. The researchers' levels of measurements were sense of empowerment, sense of community, congruence with policy decisions and manipulation check. There were 101 participants in this study. Participants were nominated by United Way and non-United Way human service agencies based on their interest in participating in the United Way planning process. Each participant was randomly assigned to the high, moderate or low level of participation in the community assessment process. In researching the participants throughout their involvement in the assessment, their evidence indicated that the more individuals feel they have power

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over the process, the higher their sense of community and participation (p. 353). The groups at the highest level of participation also had guidance from United Way staff in order to help facilitate conversations and ask questions to stimulate discussion. Their original purpose for conducting the research was to better understand how a participant's level of involvement in the decision-making process impacted their sense of community and involvement. In their research, they outlined that empowerment is the cross-over between individuals believing they are competent and their willingness to take action (p. 346). They also reference Arnstein's Ladder of Civic Participation (Appendix D) and outline that the first two levels exhibit an individual being nonparticipatory, while moving up the next three rungs brings them to a precursor to participation, and the final three rungs represent true participation and having the ability to influence the status quo (p. 346). The more people felt they were taking on a leadership role and contributing to the voice of the community, the more they felt committed to that community.

The Third Age Initiative, researched by Doe Hentschel and Mary-Jane Eisen (2002) was structured around the idea that individuals now live to an older age and have valuable knowledge and experience to contribute to leadership roles within their community long after they retire from the working community. The program was launched in 2001 by the non-profit Leadership Greater Hartford (LGH) organization. Their mission was to build and improve the community by building leaders within that community who were former workforce leaders. By using their wisdom, energy and knowledge to help find solutions to community problems, they remained active and

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contributing members of society long after their time in a structured work environment was over. The members of the program began with five training sessions focused on topics such as enhancing their community, youth, voter education, and better understanding their neighborhoods. These sessions were followed up with a two-day retreat where participants were encouraged to develop one project for their team that would address a specific need in their community. Their graduation took place one year after the start of the program; however, many did not stop after graduation. Over ten teams started community initiatives as a result of their education, and 70 percent of the graduates of the program reported that they had taken on other community leadership responsibilities following the training. The program helped the participants to learn about group processes, discover needs in their communities, forge partnerships and learn about organizations in their communities providing services. The participants reported joining the program because they knew they had more to give to their community, they wanted to be involved in a meaningful way, and they sought to connect with like-minded people. According to the article, the organization went on to state, "We passionately believe that the existence of our initiative and the effectiveness of our graduates will make a difference in the world and, consequently, be a catalyst for improving society's view of older people" (p. 14). Their outlook on community participation and involvement strongly reinforces the impact of leadership trainings in all facets of a community.

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Summary

In studying the impact of structured leadership programs created by non-profit organizations for the betterment of the populations they serve, very little is statistically known about the successes and setbacks of such programs. Many programs are currently run worldwide on a smaller scale, which means non-profits have established forum groups and set up interviews with their clients for evaluating the programs. The one common denominator in all of these non-profit studies was that each served a minimized, often discriminated, population that wanted to voice the issues that were impacting them and others in their communities. Through these types of programs, these individuals could work for the common good. Although many leadership programs have been studied from a qualitative angle because of the pure nature of these programs, specifically because they generally have low enrollment for a more intimate learning environment, quantitative research is scarce. However, there are strong testimonials by the participants outlining the positive impact these trainings have had on their lives and the amount they were able to contribute back to their community as a result. Adding more research to this minimally-studied field would allow for more organizations, specifically those focusing on the homeless, youth and those with disabilities, to add leadership opportunities for their constituents. Additionally, it would allow other non-profit organizations working to improve the lives and communities for their clients to see what benefits there are to implementing such programs. Based on the articles above, the benefits to individuals are immense: increased self-confidence, increased awareness of issues in their community, stronger willingness to take a stand

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against an issue, ability to lead a team, building relationships with others in the community, and overall improved self-awareness. Knowing more about these specific types of leadership programs would also help non-profits to anticipate any challenges and work to structure a program around the successes and obstacles. What is currently known is helpful, but by further studying specific leadership programs that local non-profits already run, it could benefit individuals, communities and society as a whole. To set a framework for success for future non-profits to run with could benefit minimized populations everywhere.

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Methodology

This study examined the successes of leadership programs for under-represented populations. A qualitative research approach was used to study participants involved in these two non-profit organizations' leadership programs offered specifically for the clients they serve. Prior to the launch of this study, an application was submitted to Augsburg College's Institutional Research Board. Approval for this research was given on January 24, 2011 (Appendix C). This study investigated two unique, local non-profit organizations: Special Olympics Minnesota, serving those over the age of 8 with intellectual disabilities, and the Urban Leadership Academy, serving high-risk teens. Both organizations have strong participation in their leadership programs and together they serve two populations that are often misunderstood or underrepresented in society. By interviewing 5-9 individuals from each organization who are participating in leadership programs, this study will help the community and other organizations to have a better understanding of what commonalities these two programs have that has helped to set the framework for their leadership training success. Additionally, this study will help other organizations who may plan to offer leadership programs to anticipate some of the challenges and prepare for some of the common outcomes associated with offering these types of leadership programs. The questions asked to these participants revolved around the knowledge the participants had about leadership since attending the training, what benefits they saw from participating, what challenges they anticipated with being a leader, and what successes they had seen with participating in this leadership training (Appendix A).

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The researcher selected these two sites specifically as they are both well-recognized for the quality programs they offer to their constituents. Both organizations would have offered these trainings with or without a research component as both offer similar events at the time of the year that the research was done.

Special Olympics Minnesota offers a rare leadership training to individuals with intellectual disabilities. The training serves to empower and provide resources to these individuals in order to equip them to be leaders in their communities all across the state of Minnesota. The Urban Leadership Academy works with a population of teens that live in South Minneapolis, which historically is an area of high crime, high drug use, and high violence. These issues are common ones that affect teens in the area, but there are a multitude of other community challenges as well, including higher levels of teen pregnancy and school drop-out rates. Both Special Olympics Minnesota and the Urban Leadership Academy focus on empowerment of the participants, having participants making a positive change in their own communities, and giving the individuals the opportunity to work with other leaders in their communities, as community members serve as mentors and guides through the training.

The subjects of these studies were current participants in leadership programs offered by these two organizations. The first organization was Special Olympics Minnesota, which offers Athlete Leadership Programs to individuals 16 years of age and older who have intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics Minnesota hosted a leadership training called Athletes as Coaches February 11-13, 2011 where 12 athletes attended

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with a mentor. Athletes had the opportunity to participate in this research, but it was not a requirement of their leadership training. Since some athletes could be either their own guardian, or they may have had a guardian, athletes participating in the training were e-mailed a consent form prior to the training. Space was provided for the athlete's signature, or for the signature of their parent or guardian, if necessary. Post-training interviews were conducted at the end of the training while still at Athletes as Coaches. Interviews took place within the eyesight of others, since it is a requirement of Special Olympics Minnesota, in accordance with their protective behaviors policy. However, the feedback was not overheard by other participants, and in the majority of cases, it was not overheard by their mentors. For one interview, the participant requested that their mentor be present, which was allowed. This did not seem to have any impact on the truthfulness of their responses. In order to assure accuracy, each conversation was recorded. All tapes were destroyed after transcription occurred. All transcriptions have been stored on a secure, password protected computer, and will be destroyed after three years.

The second organization was the Urban Leadership Academy, a non-profit organization that focuses on developing youth leadership skills, specifically with at-risk teenagers in South Minneapolis. Individuals involved in their leadership trainings were interviewed about their experience. Interviews took place with five individuals who had participated in the leadership training in the past three years, but still remained active in their leadership endeavors. Determination as to which individuals would be selected was based on suggestions made by the program director, and were based on which

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individuals were in attendance for the youth event that evening. These youth were within the age range of 18-20 and when they were selected, they were asked to complete an agreement contract before they were eligible to participate in the interview. The youth had the opportunity to participate in this sampling, but it was not a requirement of their leadership program. Those who were interviewed were in attendance on Feb. 18, 2011 at an event called *Dream Night*, held at the local church. The interviews revolved around their leadership training experience. The hope during the interviews was to understand how their participation had impacted their public speaking ability, self-confidence and decision-making skills. Interviews were within sight of others, but were in a place where their responses were not overheard by other participants attending the event that evening. The interviews took place in accordance with any policies the organization had as well, in order to protect the youth that the organization serves. All interviews were recorded for accuracy, and once all recordings were transcribed, recordings were destroyed. All transcriptions are stored on a secure, password protected computer, and will be destroyed after three years.

Based on the responses from these 14 local participants about their level of changes in leadership, their conclusions helped to provide an outline as to the effectiveness of leadership programs for under-represented populations. Although this was not a large sampling, their responses helped to build a framework for how leadership programs can impact the individuals that are served through specific non-profit organizations. The subjects were asked questions about how confident they are in their ability to be a leader in their community, if they think they can have a positive

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impact on their community, what qualities make someone a good leader, and what qualities and knowledge they now possess since attending the training that make them a good leader. Additionally, probing questions were asked as needed based on the respondents' need for clarification or direction. The research was done in a way that avoided leading interviewees to specific conclusions or responses.

In order to respect the privacy of all participants, all recordings and notes were and will continue to be held in a secure location at all times. In the assessment of the interviews, few or no names have been used. If names have been used, these pseudonyms have been specifically created in a way that does not have any connection to the participant being quoted. Each participant's privacy was taken into consideration during the interviews and throughout the assessment of the interviews, and their safety and security was also factored into the interviews. Although privacy is a large factor, precedence was always given to any organizational policies regarding the researcher being alone with the individual being interviewed. During the final assessment of these programs, quotes from interviews have been used intermittently, but no names have been used, or if there has been a name attached to a quotation, that name has been changed; in addition, there has been a strong attempt to avoid any identifying factors. However, the researcher acknowledges that with such a small number of interviewees from each organization, it is not entirely possible to eliminate all identifying factors.

Throughout these two sets of interviews, the researcher anticipated that the participants would feel that these programs are successful for a variety of reasons. It is expected that the participants will come away with increased levels of self-esteem as a

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result of their overall participation in the program. Additionally, their feelings of being better equipped to make decisions and their belief in their ability to have a positive impact on their community will also increase, based on the networking opportunities they have had and the experiences they have gained through their participation. Both of these programs offered intensive trainings that expose the participants to leadership theories, practical suggestions for how they can exercise their leadership skills, group bonding experiences, and the opportunity to build a strong relationship with a mentor or guide. As a result, it is expected that they will feel increasingly empowered through these trainings and they will be motivated to take action. Since they will have likely discussed opportunities to be leaders in their community throughout the training, the researcher would hypothesize that each individual will walk away with an action plan that outlines their next steps to become a leader or enhance their leadership. However, the length of time that these trainings last, the lapse of time since the individuals attended their respective training, and the content covered in the program will significantly impact the outcomes associated with the trainings. This research will help to create a framework for how other organizations can mimic these programs to create a structured leadership training of their own that has the same level of positive outcomes the individuals interviewed reported.

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Study Results

Based on approximately four hours of interviews with multiple individuals from each organization, there were many common trends found between these two programs. All of the research was conducted with prior approval from Augsburg College's Institutional Research Board, with research number 2010-96-1 assigned to all research conducted through this study. Although each program was established for different populations of individuals, and each with a different focus in mind, the goal of empowering individuals in minimized populations was still the similar reason these programs being offered, and would likely be a similar goal for other non-profit organizations offering a comparable training. There were quite a few positive trends that arose from these interviews. Those areas included things such as building friendships, creating support systems, increasing knowledge about the organization and an overall increase in self-confidence. These and other areas will be covered thoroughly as information gathered through these interviews was utilized in order to best understand the role each of these topics plays in successful leadership trainings. There were also some limitations of the trainings that interviewees mentioned, specifically related to frustration, worry or concern during the trainings. Both the positive elements of the trainings and the shortcomings are outlined in order to better grasp what the common themes are in these trainings and what outcomes occurred as a result of them.

Positive Outcomes

When offering any type of training to a group of individuals one of the greatest benefits for which to strive is that of ensuring that they are learning something new and

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valuable. It is also beneficial if the information can be directly applied to what happens in their daily lives. In the case of both the Urban Leadership Academy and the Athlete Leadership Programs, participants indicated that the knowledge they gained during their time participating in the training was invaluable. Whether it was learning more about the rules of coaching or gaining a greater knowledge about the expectations of taking on a leadership role, both groups commented on how much they took away from these trainings. All coaches participating in the ALPs are required to take a specific training, called Protective Behaviors. This training is also required for those who participate in the Athletes as Coaches course. Multiple athletes commented that this was a critical piece of the training, helping them to gain a better understanding of appropriate versus inappropriate behavior for coaches. It also helped them to have a better grasp of exactly what the role of a coach was and how to implement their new skills in specific situations. A large piece of this training was their understanding about what the difference is between when they are a coach and when they are an athlete, as those two roles are very different. When they are an athlete, they are there to socialize, have fun and learn about the sport. However, once they choose to become a leader on their team and transition into coaching, the purpose of their participation is to be a resource to all of the athletes, to be familiar with the rules and to actually lead practices as an assistant to the head coach. Additionally, participants realized they would be looked up to as role models for the others on the team. These two roles look very different, and for many people it is difficult to distinguish themselves in each role. Without the knowledge they acquired through the training, many of the athletes

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commented that they may not have been aware that these roles were in any way significantly separate from one another. In order to set the athletes up for the greatest success and for the training to be multi-beneficial to the organization and the participant, it is crucial to include this differentiation. By doing so, it helps the organization to be proactive by heavily communicating expectations of the participants. Rather than waiting to deal with an issue when it comes up, these pieces of information are built into the training and are addressed in advance of the athletes' transition into a coach role. As one athlete said, "You have to be understanding, you're in charge of a group, so you have to be more of a leader, and that's hard. That it (being a leader) is harder than it looks because you have to be there to help the coach out, and a lot of times we're the athletes, so we don't realize the coach setup all this stuff, and now we have to be the assistant, so there's a lot for us to do." He was able to learn through the training that in order to be the best coach that he could be, he was going to be helping to setup for practices, offer his assistance to other coaches and be a positive influence for the other athletes. Without this information though, he may not have had the right tools to go into the next practice and know what his role was with the team. Another individual summarized it appropriately when he said he might have to remind himself, "Oh, I'm not playing here. I'm in charge!" Things look very different from the perspective of a coach versus the perspective of an athlete, and teaching the participants this early on helps to alleviate some challenges once they actually move into the leadership role.

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Similar comments were made by the individuals interviewed from ULA, but on a much more personal level. A couple of the youth interviewed talked about how the training changed their self-perception and helped them to better understand where they needed to be in their personal lives in order to be a successful leader in their community. They learned specifically what that leadership role looked like and were provided with the knowledge they needed to understand it, but they realized they had to look internally to figure out if they were ready to lead others. One individual interviewed outlined the importance of working on personal things first to be best prepared to be a positive example to others and a solid role model for younger teens. Without the knowledge of what that leadership role looked like, this individual would not have been able to adjust his own personal decisions and choices to ensure his life matched with what his community was asking of him.

One important aspect individuals from both groups appreciated was receiving handouts about leadership. The paperwork they received from their trainings was something that the ULA participants said they looked back on quite often, and something that the ALPs' participants looked forward to using in the future once they began their coaching. Having specific handouts and takeaways that pertain to their specific needs, interests and abilities helped them to see what the training included and how they'd use it to structure their future leadership roles. Additionally, when a leadership challenge presents itself in their leadership ventures, ULA participants reported that the handouts were something that helped them make it through the tough times, getting themselves back on the right track.

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In both programs, the participants mentioned how important they felt it was to know what they were talking about when they were in leadership roles. By setting these groups up with the knowledge first and then teaching them how to apply that knowledge, they felt equipped to deliver the correct information to their followers. Another piece is that this education helps them to build an understanding of why the organization is important, and what purpose it serves. Having the background information helps the participants to put into words why they feel passionately about the mission of the organization. Both of these organizations included a summary of their organization into their training session, teaching participants about the organization's mission and purpose. They also outline how each participant plays a role in their overall goals. As one ULA participant stated, "I think the struggle to being a leader is you'd really have to genuinely care about what you do, and know that what you're saying is true and it will benefit other people." Understanding and being passionate about their leadership focuses remained critical elements of leadership for both groups. They felt more confident in their own abilities and as a result, they were stronger leaders.

Additionally, the way that they gained the knowledge and expertise in their given areas of leadership study was through learning in a safe, comfortable, hands-on environment. In the ULA training, the participants were able to intermingle in the community, interacting with those in elderly care, talking with community advocacy groups, putting together food to send to the hungry worldwide, and visiting a homeless shelter. It is through these experiences that the participants seemed to learn the most

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about what being a leader in their community might look like. They saw that leadership looks very different from one place to the next, but that leadership is simply taking a chance to help someone out or taking a stand in their community. It's a way of bringing others together, helping or making life easier for someone else. Working within the community allowed the youth to see what opportunities there might be in the area of community service. By volunteering, it showed them what opportunities would exist to them once they were to the final portion of their program where they would be doing a year of leadership service. As one participant in ULA understood about being a leader, "It's a challenge, but it's one of those challenges that you know it is going to pay off in the end." By attending these types of trainings, the participants were able to recognize what leadership is, and that it will not always be easy, but it will be a valuable and worthwhile experience, both for themselves and for those they are able to serve.

The experience those participants in ALPs had was very similar to those who did community service with the ULA. ALPs participants also discovered that learning in a hands-on environment would be critical to their success down the line. For these individuals, first being provided with the knowledge of what coaching would entail was a step in the right direction. However, it was not until they setup a mock practice that the athletes really began to grasp what their role on the team would look like once they completed the leadership training and were a certified coach. In this specific instance of hands-on learning, they performed role playing, with the athlete acting as the coach, and their mentor taking on the role of the athlete at practice. All 12 athlete participants came together to act as the head coaches for the team and were told they had to setup

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and run a practice for the athletes, who would be showing up in just a short period of time. They were rushed, provided with minimal instructions and had to make decisions quickly. The lessons the participants learned from this experience were unbelievable because they suddenly saw how a practice is run from the other side – the coach’s side. For one athlete, his mentor disappeared into another room which is something that can, and does, happen in typical practices because athletes sometimes roam or hide. This was the mentor’s opportunity to show his mentee that things do not always go according to plan when you are in a leadership role. As the athlete later said during the interview, “The A-Team [the trainers for the weekend] were trying to train us to tell us that athletes do take off. I’m sure a few of us have taken off before, but now you’re a leader, you can’t just take off.” Role playing a practice was not only a valuable opportunity, allowing the athletes to know what a practice should look like, but it also allowed the trainers for the weekend to demonstrate the importance of looking out for what is unexpected. Additionally during the weekend, the trainers did a fire drill with the athletes in order to make sure they have emergency action plans created for their teams. The trainers stressed the importance of always knowing the number of individuals they are working with, in the event of an emergency. By setting up these situations and forcing the participants to look at their practices in a proactive, rather than a reactive way, they are more keyed in to what they need to look out for once they become real coaches and have to respond to these things in a real-life setting. This was a chance for them to experience what happens in situations such as not coming to practice fully prepared, losing an athlete, failing to create an emergency action plan, or

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not following the directions of the head coach. These training exercises are safe environments where succeeding is not the goal. Instead, the purpose is to help them gain a better understanding of what specific situations might look like if they ever faced them.

Additionally, many of those interviewed commented on how helpful it was to collaborate and brainstorm with others to find out the best plan to pursue their goals. For many of them, these lessons were learned most effectively through the hands-on learning and subsequent group discussions. The power of collaboration and working with others was a significant lesson most of the participants highlighted as a favorite part of the training. Whether it was working with other individuals attending the courses or the mentor with whom they were working, the ability to bounce ideas off of someone else or talk through things that have worked well for others proved to be essential to these trainings. It was an opportunity for both mentors and their participants to learn new activities, discuss challenges that they anticipated facing, or employ problem solving techniques they could share with and implement with their community or team. It also seemed to provide the participants with a strong sense of a smaller community of learners, as well. That community often becomes the backbone of their success both at the training, and likely well into the future. As one ULA participant said, “this sense that they’re going in the same direction you are going as a leader, and for you to be accountable to each other was really the strongest part for me.” To be going down a path, but not having to feel like they were going down it alone helped to empower the individuals, allowing them to feel that if they faltered, they would have a

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new network to help catch them. Another ALPs' participant echoed these notions when he responded to the impact the hands-on activities had on him; "It was a little weird actually setting up the staging area for mentors to play the role of the athletes. I was like 'okay, I've never done this before.' But on the other hand, I didn't feel so bad and out of place because I had 11 other people doing it with me all in the same boat."

Having the chance to test things out in a safe and nurturing setting with a group of individuals that support them and are able to help in the learning process was crucial. It was a chance to test the waters and know that this was not the final test, only a chance to explore how they would respond under certain circumstances.

One ALPs' participant took this piece of information and applied it directly to how leadership works in a traditional setting as well. As he explored his own leadership venture, he realized that the things he learned were replicated with another group he was involved in at home. Although the head of his group is quite busy, he said he reflected on this weekend and realized that his leader at home has surrounded herself by other organized and driven individuals who help her to succeed. This was something he himself seemed to strive for as well to ensure his own success. By partnering up and collaborating with others, the ability to come up with better solutions and feed off of one another's ideas typically results in a wealth of solutions created by the *group* of thinkers, rather than just one individual. Quite often, these solutions work best, as they force the group to look at the problems from multiple angles and find the solution that fits the majority of the people.

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Out of working together and collaboration comes another element that both groups interviewed commented on valuing: creating social and networking opportunities for the participants. By learning skills with other individuals to whom they are similar – whether due to age, the neighborhood they grew up in, ability level, or some other defining factor, the individuals who attended these trainings also commented that the friends they met and relationships they built with others made them feel less secluded and alone in the world, or at least in certain situations. Most people want to feel the ability to relate to others, and these individuals were given that opportunity by participating in a leadership program. Their participation enabled them to build relationships and talk through similar problems and concerns with people who are like them, and who are going through the same things as them.

Additionally, the trainings showed these individuals how to relate to those that are different from them as well. As one ULA participant stated, “the world is changing daily, and you have to change with it in order to reach out to those living in the world. And I feel like ULA has equipped me to do that. To communicate and to relate to people that come from different walks of life. And that even though they may look different, act different or talk different, they can still be touched because we both have hearts. We both have like minds.” No matter where people come from, they all want to be accepted and understood, and these trainings have helped equip participants with the right tools to bring people together and lead them towards positive change for a group of people.

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By embarking on a journey of leadership, many of these participants now view themselves as leaders rather than followers, and are much more comfortable with that idea. Many of them joined the leadership programs as shy, quiet and reserved individuals who were afraid to speak their minds or even just speak loud enough for others to hear. However, when they were surrounded by a supportive network of people who they learned to trust and who have accepted them as they are, many come out of their shells in a significant way. One participant in the ULA program outlined an important lesson that many came to realize during their trainings; “if you’re not willing to step out of your comfort zone, then you can’t really step into places where there’s really a need for leadership.” The trainings taught them that finding the right leadership opportunity might not be right in front of you, but with building up knowledge of their community, they would find an opportunity where there were the most needs for a leader in their community. The ALPs’ participants stated they saw the benefit in becoming a coach and giving back to other individuals with intellectual disabilities. It is their chance to demonstrate to the other athletes that they can also be leaders to others and that just because they have a disability does not mean that they cannot advocate for themselves and for others with disabilities. One individual interviewed following the Athletes as Coaches training expressed his excitement to go back to his delegation, or team, and have his skills used to help others. He said his next plan would be to “go home to my delegation and say, ‘I’m ready! I want to help wherever you need me.’” The training encouraged him, and created enthusiasm in him to go forward and make a difference, no matter how big or how small the task might be. Those who

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participated in the ULA training had aspirations that were much more community based, such as service to others who were homeless, hungry or in need of support. However, in both situations, it took self-exploration and encouragement for them to discover where their leadership skills could be best utilized, something both of these trainings do extremely well.

When those interviewed talked about what changed the most for them from before they attended the training to after, they most often stated that it was the minimization of their initial fear and concern about speaking out publicly in support of or in dissatisfaction of something. In short, their fear of public speaking was at least diminished over the course of the training. For those with Special Olympics Minnesota, many have become advocates of the R-word campaign, which addresses the importance of eradicating the use of the word “retard” as it is hurtful and extremely offensive to individuals with intellectual disabilities. Although this is an important issue for which everyone should stand up for, the impact on those who are being addressed is much greater when a Special Olympics athlete speaks out about it. It is critical that athletes participating in ALPs learn the importance of having a strong voice and using it, whether as a coach, volunteer, a public speaker on behalf of Special Olympics or simply standing up for themselves. As a result of this campaign and others like it, all ALPs trainings include public speaking components. The purpose of exposing them to public speaking is to increase their comfort level whether their new skills are used for speaking in front of large groups, or simply speaking up in a small group. As resistant as many athletes are at the start of trainings, once they receive encouragement from their mentors and

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their fellow participants, most of them stand up and begin to have their voices heard. In fact, many of them are excited to speak out in support of the organization they feel so strongly about. The power of incorporating this into a leadership training is critical and it increases the participants' confidence in their own abilities to stand up for themselves and others like them. One athlete feels that through ALPs, they have had the opportunity to inform and educate people about Special Olympics in general. "Some people look at S.O. as 'oh there's people that have disabilities, they're weird, they can't take care of themselves.' And I acknowledge that. I do Special Olympics and I'm proud of it. And I say, come and watch basketball or track and field. And they came to watch basketball, and their mouths dropped open because they never knew that some of the teams were that good." Statements like these are the epitome of self-advocacy and empowerment. Athletes who have attended these trainings know that they have an important role to play in the world, and that is to bring attention to an issue that is close to their hearts. By training them to advocate for themselves and others, they are able to stand up for what is right and speak out against discrimination and minimization against a population.

For ULA participants, they felt they had taken control back of their lives and, since attending the training, had the opportunity to impact their communities in a positive way. One ULA participant reported that after participating in the program, she experienced an overall boldness that she didn't have before. She was more willing to take on new challenges, meet new people, and most of all, voice her beliefs. She reported that whether it is in front of a large group of people or just a few individuals,

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she noticed a stronger ability to ask the tough questions and not be afraid of how people would respond. Following the training, she had a better understanding of what she was speaking out for, and as a result, became more confident in her ability to do just that. Another even mentioned that the biggest succession point in public speaking is confidence in what you have to say. "It's helped me to see and learn that people will listen to you if you have enough confidence and courage to just get up there and make them listen to you." Through education and with their increased confidence, these youth feel they have the necessary tools to be advocates for their own well-being and for the advancement of their communities.

During the duration of the interviews, numerous participants in ALPs mentioned that they wanted to be an example to the rest of their team and show other athletes that their involvement in Special Olympics does not have to end at being an athlete. ALPs are open to all athletes of all ability levels. The athletes who have attended become an example for other athletes due to the fact that they have successfully attended the training, and as a result, have seen a difference in themselves. They have shown others that there are numerous other opportunities to advocate for their population and impact their communities. Quite a few ULA participants echoed these thoughts too. Without even realizing it when they registered for the trainings, they became role models for others, and along to way, gained the confidence to be comfortable considering themselves role models and advocates for their groups.

The largest factor that every individual interviewed mentioned was an overall increase in the confidence they have in themselves. It is a result of all the above factors

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that these individuals now feel they have the necessary tools to ensure their leadership experience was a success. During one specific interview, a ULA participant stated that oftentimes, just starting something and telling people about their experience gets their voice heard, and that through their participation in this training, their confidence has significantly increased. As one participant discussed, prior to the training, she was timid, shy and had what she called, “a quiet voice.” However, through her participation in the program and with additional help from her mentor, she came to the conclusion that, “I can’t just stay in my bubble anymore. What’s the point?...If you can touch a life, then why wouldn’t you do that?” For someone who is a self-proclaimed timid person, this training helped her gain confidence and motivation to try to create change in her world. She has found a new passion and a calling in life that may otherwise have gone undiscovered. It is through trainings like these that the world is equipped to deal with people who are ready to take a stand, make a name for themselves and work to achieve change.

For one ALPs’ participant, he found not only the confidence that he needed to reach out to others and talk about his life and his experiences living with a disability, but he’s also realized how important it is to have a network of support throughout the process. Based on his experience, when he started participating with Special Olympics, “It’s like a large family. It’s actually really neat, because you’re treated like a regular person. A lot of people treat you like you have a disability, can’t do this, can’t do that. The word in my vocabulary ‘can’t’ isn’t a word.” With the help of his mentor and the support of his new friends in ALPs, he has honed his ability to be empowered to teach

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and inspire others through his actions, and he is speaking out on behalf of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

A couple of individuals who attended either the ULA or the ALPs trainings mentioned that they might not consider themselves leaders yet, but that they feel equipped with the right tools in order to be leaders in the future. Although both programs have goals of having the participants walk out of the training feeling empowered to make an immediate difference in their communities, some of them still needed to find the right opportunity. For others, it may just take some time before they feel comfortable stepping into a leadership role. Following the ALPs training, one athlete specifically felt like when the time was right, he would know it and he would be ready. "It's made me more confident that I'll be a good leader when the time comes. It might not be tomorrow, but I feel confident that I'll end up being a good leader because I've learned so much...they (the leaders of the training) are real supportive. There's no wrong answer. There's 'no you screwed up,' or 'you made a fool out of yourself' -- they're there for support." Both ALPs and ULA's programs have equipped these individuals to make changes and be leaders to future generations even if the response might not be immediate. One ULA participant acknowledged that the place he was in during the time he attended the training was not where he needed to be in order to be a successful leader. However, the training helped to show him how to get there. "Really understanding there are some things in my life that had to change. Or seeing parts of leadership that I had to adjust to (in order) to become a leader or be at a standard to perform in a leadership role." Being ready to attend the training and then

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being ready to take action are two different things. Some people left the training ready to take the first step, while others just needed some time to process the information and figure out what changes first needed to happen within themselves or in their current situation.

A large piece of the continuing learning and education of the program lands in the hands of the mentor and participant meeting following the training. It is critical that the participants trust and value the input of their mentor, who may be a parent, sibling, family member, or just a volunteer community member. However, part of the training also should include establishing an initial relationship between mentors and participants in order for them to become familiar with one another. This element is not as important for those mentors and participants that have a previous relationship, but can still enhance their experience by helping them to learn more about each other on a different level. At ALPs, the training incorporated specific one-on-one time for the participants and their mentors to talk through what a practice might look like or how to solve a particular issue that they often see on their team. During the ULA training, many of the mentors are staff or ongoing volunteers with ULA, so they work to build relationships with the participants during the training. As a result, the participants feel comfortable coming to a wide range of people to help them through the process. Both programs aim to have participants be involved with one specific mentor, but that is not always feasible. For example, with ALPs, athletes' mentors may change from one training to another. Therefore, they may have one person being their mentor for Athletes as Coaches, but have a different mentor help them during Athletes as

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Volunteers or any of the other trainings offered. Those involved in the ULA often pair one mentor with many mentees, and understand that circumstances may force them to change their mentor during the duration of their year of service following the training. One ALPs' participant in particular had a mentor for this specific training that had worked with him for quite a while, and the participant spoke very highly of the relationship they had built. "It's nice knowing someone's got your back. It's nice knowing that there's somebody sitting beside me. We both learn together. It makes that learning process, I think for me, just a little easier."

The major reasons both of these programs are so successful with the groups who attend is because each program is built around the specific needs of their participants; in addition, they have built in the major components of a leadership training. Both programs do not implement identical activities, but both programs bring in elements that overlap and have proven to be successful. These programs have a strong impact on those who attend, and have great potential to change their lives for the better. As a result, these programs are seen as a success both for the individuals and for the communities that they impact.

Training Challenges

While all participants interviewed named numerous positive components of the training, they also had feedback on how their experience could have been improved. While this is not an assessment of the programs ULA and ALPs run, this information helps to build a framework for other programs looking to offer leadership trainings. This portion of the interviews were used to better understand things that may have been

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missing from these trainings but which could enhance the participants' experiences in a positive way. This was not done as a way of critiquing the training programs that were being studied, but a chance to better understand additional elements of the trainings that could be included for other non-profit organizations looking to embark on the launch of leadership courses. There were common trends seen among this feedback from both groups of participants. One thing that was mentioned by at least three-quarters of those interviewed was that leadership is much harder than it looks from the outside. This is not necessarily negative feedback based on what the training shows, but many of them, especially those participating in ALPs who had yet to go out and take on leadership roles, stated this with an immense amount of fear in their voices. The training prepared them for what those leadership roles might entail. However, a drawback to that is that it almost created a sense of fear and hesitation for many of them, as the negative parts of being a leader stuck with them the most. In no way is this suggesting that the negatives associated with leadership should be omitted from the trainings, but it does show that perhaps there is a way to discuss this topic with the participants while following it up with a list of ways to combat the challenges they may face. Numerous ALPs' participants said that being a leader, "is harder than it looks," or "isn't as easy as it looks," which demonstrates that these trainings are showing them both the positive and negative aspects of leadership, which is a benefit. However, that could quickly turn into a drawback of the program if too much of the training focuses on the challenges or negatives, since suddenly the program starts to deter individuals from becoming leaders by instilling fear in them.

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Another comment that falls in line with the hesitations many of them had of being a leader was the idea that being a leader is a never-ending job. For many of these individuals, instead of this being a note of encouragement as to how important their roles are in these programs, it was more of an intimidating statement that created a sense of worry and fear. Suddenly, this “short-term” commitment that they’ve made to improve their communities has long-term consequences. Although these consequences of being a leader – bettering their surroundings, or having people look up to them – are positive for most individuals, for others, it was seen as a life sentence. It became intimidating. For many, instead of looking at a small picture of the changes they are able to make on a short-term basis, they become overwhelmed with the big picture. Choosing positive and encouraging words when talking about being a lifelong leader can really alter the way individuals feel at the conclusion of these trainings. By focusing more solidly on what being a leader is and is not, all participants can see leadership, and a life of it, as a chance to make small, continual change, rather than big picture change for the rest of their lives.

Additionally, one element of push back that some individuals reported was the need for ongoing, continual support as they continued on their journey to become, and remain, a positive leader in their community. This was very specific for the ULA participants as many of them participated in the training quite a while ago. Many of them were looking for more opportunities to refresh what they learned, be a part of a community of learners again, and have the opportunity to brainstorm with others on challenges they were facing. A suggestion to enhance the ongoing leadership

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experience for both groups would be to hold a regular meeting, once or twice a year as a refresher course for those who have attended past trainings. It's a chance to bring all of the active leaders together to talk, share ideas, brainstorm and walk away with encouragement from their peers and mentors. It is something that would encourage goal-setting and strategic planning for a pre-determined amount of time until they meet again. It would likely be a much smaller group than the original training supported, but would be a group to whom they were accountable to. Additionally, both groups reported that they appreciated the handouts and resources they received during their initial training. As new, valuable research is released quite often, it could be during these small group support sessions where the leader of the program could disseminate updated resources and reflect back on what those individuals found most valuable as they applied what they learned at the initial training. This would also be a group that could give feedback on their experiences and work with the trainers to ensure the training actually teaches and demonstrates what happens in real world settings. It would be a check-and-balance group to ensure the trainings are serving the purpose they intend to serve, as well as a peer network of supporters, all of whom help guide the leadership of one another.

One area of difference between the ALPs training and the ULA training is the number of individuals that attend the trainings. ALPs offer smaller groups of 10-20 people with trainings throughout the year. The ULA hosts one training that is on a much larger scale. Both programs would have their benefits and drawbacks based on the number attending, but one participant interviewed from the ULA felt quite

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overwhelmed by the number of participants in the original training, and commented that it was challenging to be a part of the training where there were so many differing personalities and opinions. On the other hand, ALPs' participants almost unanimously stated that the friendships they built and the people they met during this training helped to make the training better. None of the ALPs' participants specifically pointed out that they dealt with any significantly different personalities or challenging people during the course of the program. When comments like that were made, they were specifically directed at people (coaches, teachers or other athletes) with whom the participants had worked with back in their hometowns or on their teams. This suggests that better networking and friendship building takes place when the group attending the training is smaller. It might be because it's a more intimate setting, because their voices are more likely to be heard in a small group, or simply because they feel as though everyone gets to know each other much better with a small group. No matter what the reasons are, it would seem as though smaller groups improve the experience for those participating in the training.

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Limitations

Although the research with these two organizations was thorough and included multiple participants from each organization, there were a few areas of the research that could have caused limitations in the results of the research. However, these limitations could also benefit the research as they show that although these organizations may be different in many ways, and their trainings may vary, similar results were seen even with those elements aside. Therefore, any other organization looking to implement a leadership training for their constituents, even if their organization may not be similar to either of these, may still anticipate similar outcomes.

Both ALPs and ULA have been offering leadership trainings for many years with successful results, which is why these two programs were specifically selected to set the framework for this study. However, the structure of the leadership trainings vary. ALPs trainings are 3 days long, whereas the ULA offers one training in a three-step process, spanning nearly 2 weeks in total with a year of leadership at its conclusion. The ALPs has no minimum or maximum length of commitment attached to it, but the hope is that the participants will continue being leaders for many years, both in the organization and in the community. Their mentors do have to commit to a year of service in order to ensure that the participant has guidance as they embark on the initial journey of becoming a leader.

Another major difference between these two programs is that ALPs have many different areas in which participants may choose to become involved. For example, an athlete may decide to do multiple courses in coaching, general volunteering, a challenge

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course, public speaking or in governance and basic leadership. They may attend as many or as few of these courses as they'd like, but each one is a separate weekend with a separate curriculum. In contrast, the ULA has a very specific training that focuses on numerous areas of leadership all in one training. As a result, this training lasts a much longer time and it educates the participants in many leadership topics. There are benefits and setbacks to both structures, but each organization chose to focus their programs in these ways as it is most suitable for what they're striving to accomplish through their trainings. Just as with any other organization looking to launch a leadership training, it may be trial and error to select the appropriate way their trainings may be offered. The length of the training could have impacted the research outcomes as the ALPs' participants could have covered multiple ALPs trainings, or this could have been their first, so their leadership knowledge acquired during trainings was across the board. For the ULA participants, they all received the exact same amount of training, and on the same topics. This can significantly alter an individual's knowledge of leadership and their understanding of what being a leader entails in multiple different situations. To account for this, the researcher could have only interviewed those who had participated in at least three ALPs trainings, including the one offered that weekend. By doing so, that would have only involved those individuals who had experienced the same length of training as those participating in the ULA training. If they attended three of the trainings, and each training lasts approximately two and a half days, then they would have attended just over 7 days of leadership training through ALPs. Therefore, those interviewed would likely have a higher level of knowledge and

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experience related to leadership and would have experienced a training more similar to those who attended the ULA training.

As a result of the timing of the research, the ALPs interviews took place immediately after the conclusion of the training program. The programs began on a Friday evening, and all curriculum content had been delivered by Saturday at approximately 4:00PM. Sunday continued more mock practices, allowing the participants to explore the what-ifs that take place in coaching. However, since a portion of these mock practices took place on Saturday as well, the research was conducted on Saturday evening at the conclusion of the days training. As a result, much of the information was still fresh in their minds, so their responses were tied to very specific examples from the weekend, such as training content that was covered or conversations they had as a large group. This was positive because it helped to see what information they found most critical and what they would retain and bring home with them. In contrast, all of the ULA participants interviewed had attended the training anywhere from one to three years ago. Since the time span was different for each respondent, some had specific examples (if it was more recent), while others had responses that were more vague. This does account for many varying responses; however, many of the general comments were similar even with the span of time since they had attended the training. Additionally, one piece of feedback that a ULA participant gave was that she would have appreciated a retreat to update her skills a couple times a year, perhaps with a smaller group so they could recap their experiences and go over some of the details from the initial training that they may have forgotten.

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Although this may eventually be feedback from the ALPs' participants as well, the training was so current that they were still looking at the training materials with fresh eyes and the information was still recent in their minds.

One other piece of information that separated these two groups of individuals is based on the overall structure of the organization. Special Olympics Minnesota was formed under the branch of Special Olympics North America. Every participating country has a designated program, which all report to Special Olympics International. Therefore, the basic structure of the organization is on an international scale. However, Special Olympics Minnesota is more regionally serving athletes just within the state. In stark contrast, the Urban Leadership Academy is a grass-roots organization founded locally and developed to serve the needs of youth in a few specific South Minneapolis neighborhoods. Although the basic structures of these trainings overlapped in many ways, there are some obvious differences to the overall organizations based on how they were founded, what rules and standards they have to abide by and how they serve the community. Special Olympics Minnesota has very details rules and policies passed down from Special Olympics International that guide many of the actions they take with ALPs. They must adhere to those rules and policies when training athletes to take on leadership roles within the organizations. Additionally, they have been around for a significantly longer time in the community. In contrast, the Urban Leadership Academy is able to adjust their program structure as needed based on the limited outside influence by any overarching, umbrella organizations; however, the structure of the organization and the ULA trainings still must meet standards outlined by their board

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members and staff. Their programs may have a bit more flexibility based on this, but they obviously still have a similar structural dependence based on policies and procedures outlined on a local level.

Although it is doubtful that it had any impact on the results of the research with these two groups, the Urban Leadership Academy is founded on a religious ground, so much of the training focuses on Christian leadership and the ability to be a strong leader with the help of God. This is significantly different than the basis of the Special Olympics Minnesota leadership training as there is no religious affiliation or organized religion outlining the leadership program. The ALPs are based on the premise of uniting people with intellectual disabilities, whereas for the ULA, the basis of the training is to bring together teens who are followers of the Christian religion. This didn't appear to have any impact on the participants' responses from either program, but is a large part of each programs purpose, so it's something to which attention should be brought.

Each organization serves a unique population that is often minimized or discriminated against. Although these two populations are not the same, the research still serves to prove that the populations may vary, but the purpose of these trainings is very similar. Therefore, common principals can still be applied across the board to other non-profit organizations as well. Whether the training serves to teach Christians or Jews, people with intellectual disabilities or people without, teens or adults, working adults or the unemployed, the purpose is still to educate and empower those individuals. The goal of these programs is to prepare the participants to improve the world that they live in, whether locally, state-wide or internationally. The skills they

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acquire from these types of trainings can cross all borders and have opened their eyes to what other opportunities exist for them. A positive element that limitations in research show is that there are some areas of flexibility in establishing a structured training, and even with variation in these areas, the results of the training may be the same or similar. Therefore, whether the organization is locally founded or based on an international umbrella organization, a leadership training might still be a great way to advance the organization and bring together input from the organization's constituents. Some factors can be set aside once an organization decides to move forward with starting a training for their clients, while other factors will remain critical to the success of the training.

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Conclusion

By adding to the research knowledge already in place for non-profit organizations offering leadership trainings to their constituents, it seems that there are many common themes that already exist in current programs. Whether they are educational, corporate or non-profit organizations, they could be applied to any organization looking to develop a unique program opportunity for their participants. The purpose of this research was to enhance what is already known about leadership trainings and allow other non-profits to have a framework for what makes these programs successful, enabling every individual the opportunity to become a leader in their own way and have the necessary training to help them flourish at it. Although each leadership training and program will be unique based on the population it serves, there are commonalities that should be included in all leadership trainings, whether they are a week long or just a day long. Some of these items may have been mentioned in previous research outlined in the literature review, while others are unique items that came out of the above research conducted with two specific groups in Minnesota. Of these conclusions, many coincide with Arnstein's Ladder of Civic Participation (Appendix D) but are very specifically related to leadership trainings aimed at minimized or often discriminated populations. However, based on the outcomes of these two programs, there is a better understanding created about what goes into these programs and how the staff conducting the trainings can enhance it to make it the most beneficial to both the individuals and the communities in which they live. The seven common themes that arose from this research are outlined below, and include:

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- 1) The need for a mentor
- 2) An understanding of what leadership means and involves
- 3) Building in social and networking time
- 4) Role playing
- 5) Anticipating challenges
- 6) Goal-setting
- 7) Continuing the learning process.

While there may be others to add to this list, based on the specific goals of the training and the outcomes the organization wants to achieve through the training, programs overlooking any of these seven focus areas could easily be missing out on a piece of the puzzle that makes the training a resounding success for both the participant and the organization.

Prior to individuals attending the training, it is extremely beneficial to have them select a mentor who will attend and experience the training alongside them. While having a group of participants involved in the program can also be a source of guidance for each individual, having one mentor work with one participant helps to involve the participant in a meaningful way. The mentor may be a friend or family member, or it may be a volunteer who wanted to get involved. The hope is that throughout the training and beyond, the participant and mentor learn alongside each other and eventually begin to rely and depend on one another. It is increasingly beneficial if their mentor is someone who has already had some of the leadership experiences the

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participant is expected to have. At a minimum, it is desirable to have a mentor who has been in a leadership role, whether within the organization or elsewhere. Having a mentor who has encountered many of the same things as the participant plans to encounter enhances a leadership training for them, since they know their mentor has been through it before and has successfully made it to the other side. At the most basic level, a mentor is the person the participant can bounce ideas off and someone with whom they can share experiences. Arnstein would likely include a mentor-mentee relationship into a moderate level of civic engagement on his ladder (Appendix D), stated as the consultation level. At this place along the ladder, about mid-way between low and high civic participation, one individual is working with another gaining insight and advice on how to best move forward. They are both passionate about the issue at hand and are working to formulate a plan to advance their ideas. Having a mentor to consult with allows the individual to feel supported as they move forward in their leadership experience. It is very important that participants are not simply given the training and expected to go off and act on it without a solid support system in place to help hold them accountable and encourage them to move forward. A mentor who has a minimum time of service commitment is ideal, although that is not always possible if someone moves or has a family situation that prevents them from participating. However, it is in the participant's best interest if the organization establishes a pre-determined length of commitment depending on the organization's needs and the expectations of the participant.

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Since many of the participants may come in with a minimal understanding of what leadership actually is and what will eventually be expected of them, the training should include an introduction to what it means to be a leader, and what their specific leadership role might look like. This step on Arnstein's Ladder of Civic Participation (Appendix D) would be towards the lower end, considered the informing stage. Although this portion of the training may not be the best way to get individuals more engaged in community change, it is still a critical initial step in preparing them to ascend up the ladder. Based on the research done with the ULA and ALPs' participants, both groups had a great understanding of it means to be a leader. Some of the words used to describe what a good leader is include the following: reliable, on time, dependable, a good communicator, willing to teach, a desire to help others with problems, understanding and committed. By knowing what makes a good leader, those participating in the training know what it will take for them to be a good leader. These are the same terms that they apply on a general level to anyone they put in the leadership category: religious leaders, teachers, parents, supervisors, etc. After going through the training though, they start applying these words to themselves, and begin assessing how they measure up. If they expect a good leader to be responsible and organized, then they themselves need to ensure they work on these qualities so they can meet their own expectations. Without even necessarily knowing it, they begin to set personal goals for themselves as to what they hope to be as a leader.

Not being alone or feeling alone in their leadership venture is a feeling that will enhance every participant's experience in a leadership training. Specifically for

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individuals participating in trainings offered by non-profit organizations, this is a crucial element of the training. These organizations traditionally serve under-represented or minimized populations that may feel discriminated against or misunderstood by society as a whole. For individuals attending the training who may already feel that way, the organization should make every effort to decrease their feelings of isolation. The last thing the trainers should want is to make them feel as though they're taking on the world alone as this will only inhibit the experience for the participant, as well as decrease the impact the training will have on that individual. If instead a social component is incorporated into the training, it offers them a feeling of togetherness and helps them to know that they are venturing into this experience in a collaborative manner. Additionally, the friendships formed at trainings like these often form advocacy groups that the non-profit organization may not have originally anticipated. While one individual can make a difference in a community, that difference is only enhanced when like-minded people band together to move in the same direction towards change. As seen in Arnstein's Ladder of Civic Participation (Appendix D), by building a network of individuals into this type of training, it creates a partnering atmosphere where multiple people are working together, engaged in the same issue, for the sole purpose of bettering their community and improving the lives of a population of individuals. Following the training, the organization will likely see a group of individuals that have begun to speak up for themselves and have taken a stand against an injustice in their own backyard. By coming together, talking with others and eliminating the sense of isolation individuals may feel, a social benefit for a group of

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individuals can quickly turn into a societal benefit for an entire community as this group works to make a change.

In order to equip someone for the leadership opportunity that stands ahead of them, the best method is to allow them to experience the situation in a safe environment where failure does not exist. By setting up different role playing opportunities within the training, participants are able to test themselves and better understand how they will react in specific situations. The benefit of this is that the participants can practice with other individuals and learn alongside their peers and their mentors. It is a chance for their mentors to redirect behavior and gives the individual an opportunity to learn from how their peers responded to a similar situation. For instance, if the overall goal of the training revolves around training the participants to do more public speaking, a great way to role play is to have them write and deliver a speech to just a couple other people and add more individuals to the audience as the training progresses. For a group learning about community service, allow them to experience community service in small batches to get a feel for what they should expect. If the training focuses more on fundraising and advocacy strategies, perhaps they have a list of challenges they can anticipate printed on paper and they each select one. After allowing them time to brainstorm with a fellow participant, they are asked to present their solution to the rest of the group. There are many ways to incorporate role playing into a training, and these are the things both the ULA and ALPs' participants most appreciated about their trainings. The role playing components of their trainings helped them to see the areas of leadership they needed to work on and also helped

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them to learn from others. They felt better prepared to take on leadership challenges in many circumstances, both at school, on their teams and in their homes.

In regards to addressing the challenges they may expect to see, this is a fine line that program creators need to address in their training early on. While it is important to expose the participants to common challenges they may see throughout their leadership experience, there is also a point that is easy to cross where these challenges create a fear and anxiety in the participants. One common example that many ULA and ALPs' participants commented on was that just because they would be a leader does not mean that people would necessarily want to hear what they have to say. While any leader knows that this is true, and while every future leader should understand that this can happen, for many individuals who were presented with this fact, they became concerned that their attempts to be leaders would be unsuccessful because others didn't want to listen to them or follow them. With this just as one example of the many pitfalls of leadership, many of the participants took this to heart and almost began to expect people to turn a cold shoulder to them. Introducing these challenges is imperative to these trainings, but tread lightly to ensure that this portion of the training is not what the participants take away with them. One way to do this might be to introduce it in a way that expresses these types of challenges as rare, but still a possibility. Another could be to set them up for success and talk through the three (or more) most common challenges that other leaders have reported, and brainstorm solid solutions so they feel equipped to handle whatever challenges may come their way.

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Once the knowledge base is in place and the relationships have been formed, both with their mentor and with the other participants in the program, the process of setting goals for themselves helps to bring the entire training to a common end. Based on the research conducted with ULA and ALPs' participants, this was something that existed in both trainings but wasn't necessarily a specific part of the training. Based on feedback from those interviewed, it seemed as though setting aside an established amount of time for the participants to set goals would have enhanced the experience for all involved. Some individuals left not necessarily knowing exactly what their next step was, but thinking that leadership was something they would get to eventually. Goal setting is critical so the trainers, the mentor and the individuals know what is next. Whether it is to launch a community service group at their school, to coach in three sports in the upcoming year, or to setup up a single speaking engagement to expose community groups to what the purpose of the organization is, knowing what is next is helpful to all who are invested in these trainings. For one person, the goals may stretch out over a few weeks, and for the next, it may stretch out over several years. Each individual will have different goals, but to set them up for success, they need to know where they are going. Additionally, sharing these goals with the entire group will hold them accountable to achieving them.

Finally, and at the highest level of the civic ladder, is the ongoing phase where individuals from these trainings form together in a group to continue their participation, advance their knowledge and add to their education on the subjects that matter. The highest level of civic participation on Arnstein's ladder is that of citizen control. An

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additional way to bring the participants beyond the level of just a single training and goal setting session is to setup a meeting with former participants to brainstorm where they have been, where they are going and to continue discussing concerns they have for their community. Perhaps it is considered a post-training board, or it is setup more like a book club, it would be a chance for individuals who have completed the training to gather together for an hour a month or a couple times a year, whatever works best for the organization, to regroup and refocus on issues that pertain to them. Additionally, this would be an opportunity for the program trainers to expose former participants to new leadership literature or research that relates to what they've been working on or what they learned during the training. One ULA participant outlined how helpful this would be to have a refresher course to keep them engaged and motivated. After having a full week of information gathering, it is easy to get lost in it. However, if the training starts out that way and grows into a more regular meeting or group conference, it keeps them involved and ready to continually take action. The group is also then working towards a common goal, and re-drafting that goal at every meeting. Their message is more uniformed and they are all working towards the same outcome. While this may not be a fit for every participant in the leadership training, to offer it to individuals might be great for those who would like to continue their involvement, and likely even expand on it.

Every leadership training will be created differently depending on the specific needs of the individuals participating, the investment the organization is willing to make in the training, and what the desired outcomes are for the training. However, based on

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the research conducted with participants with ULA and ALPs, the above seven themes create a whole training process that starts at a basic mentor-mentee relationship building. Then it grows into a network of information gathering and goal sharing where the entire trained group is reaching towards a common goal. That goal may be individual, but it will likely be one that's shared by the organization itself, as well, as they strive to improve the lives of those they serve.

Whatever the organization's goal, or whatever the goal of the individual participating in the training might be, offering a structured leadership training to a group of committed individuals is a powerful way to deliver a message to the community. It allows those that have something to say to have a voice, and provides them with the necessary tools to make positive changes. As one ULA participant put it, being a part of a leadership training really is a challenge; as this participant said, "it takes you to places you that you'd never think you'd actually go. No matter how hard you try to stand back and not let it change you, you're still gonna walk away affected by it, even if you don't make it seem like it has, it's still going to have an affect on you, even when you leave." Each organization should strive to provide opportunities for the individuals they serve to have an impact, make a difference and change themselves for the better. Not only are these trainings of benefit to the individual, the community and the organization, but the long-term implications of how these trainings can impact the future of these groups, as well as society, is immeasurable. It creates a group of strong advocates, noble leaders and knowledgeable individuals who can now band together for the sake of bettering the world in which we all live.

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Appendix A: References

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* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Leadership Specific Questions

What are 5 things that make up a good leader?

What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

Training Specific Questions

What initially motivated you to become involved in a leadership training?

What are 5 things you learned about in this training about leadership?

What was the most challenging part of the training for you?

What part of this training do you feel had the greatest positive impact on your ability to become a leader?

What are the 3 greatest benefits you experienced from attending this training?

Do you feel this training has given you the power to make changes in your community?

Mentor

How has your mentor impacted your experience?

Moving Forward...

What did you learn about leading a team?

What impact has this training had on the confidence you have in your abilities to be a leader?

How will you apply what you learned?

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership qualities that I didn't ask?

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Appendix C: Institutional Research Board Approval Letter

Institutional Research Board

Augsburg College

Box 125

2211 Riverside

Minneapolis MN 55454

January 24, 2011

To: Emily Halbur

From: Bridget Robinson-Riegler, Chair

I am pleased to inform you that the IRB has approved your application for "Leadership Program Outcomes Study: The impact of non-profit organizations offering leadership programs to their clients"

Your IRB approval number that should be noted in your written project and in any major documents alluding to the research project is as follows:

2010-96-1

Your IRB approval expires one year from the date above, unless you request an extension prior to the deadline. Please inform the IRB of any changes in your address or e-mail.

I wish you success with your project. If you have any questions, you may contact me: 612-330-1498 or robinson@augsborg.edu.

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Appendix D: Special Olympics Minnesota Interview TranscriptsInterview #1**What are 5 things that make up a good leader?**

One of my advisors at school actually breaks down exactly what the class is and puts more clarity in it, good advice to move on the gather more knowledge, to actually advance in your career or becoming a leader, trustful, loyal, dependable

What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

It's actually the part of breaking up the task, the delegating. Showing that you're still involved in what you delegated out. You still want the athletes, or whoever's following you, to know that you're still there, you're still working for them. To make it a better event, or whatever you're planning, that will best fit them.

What initially motivated you to become involved in a leadership training?

I've been an athlete since I was in middle school, and right now, from all that I've gained from then up to now, I want to actually bring back to help out the new generation of athletes to show that you don't have to just stop at only being an athlete. You can actually go on and go back and train the next ones that come in.

What are 5 things you learned about in this training about leadership?

Be more observant, make sure you actually have a count of all the athletes, and be involved with planning for the athletes for their events. Always have an open ear if an athlete has something to tell you. Actually just being there, because they actually want to see you.

What was the most challenging part of the training for you?

It's really hard to say since most of it I've already covered in the Principals of coaching training course that I did for the leadership conference. Basically it would be more of the observing. Making sure you have all of your athletes as you're trying to plan out the event, how you're going to put everything together.

What part of this training do you feel had the greatest positive impact on your ability to become a leader?

I would say what the leadership style is. I was the Oprah. I want to be there, to put the athletes first, instead of all the paperwork. I just want to make sure the athletes go first.

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

What are the 3 greatest benefits you experienced from attending this training?

Actually having to actually setup, when you're doing practicing again, that form layout setup for the event. Having it setup before the athletes show up. Also, being more of a role model to the athletes. Again, going back to your job is never done as an athlete. By taking this course, you can actually show them that they can move on and do the same thing. Bring new athletes to the ALPs program.

Do you feel this training has given you the power to make changes in your community?

Yes, when I first actually took the bowling Level 2 before I found out about this course. This way it gives us more of an understanding. There are more programs out there. And now being a representative for ALPs in my local area, I can ask more people and encourage them to come to ALPs and become a leader themselves.

How has your mentor impacted your experience?

She's basically in the same area as I am. The athletes need to come first. You try to do everything to make sure the athletes get to go to their events and try to get what they want. Meet new friends, try to get into the competitions.

What did you learn about leading a team?

It is difficult, but if you have other coaches to do more teamwork help, you can get the job completed and actually help out more athletes than just a small number of athletes. You can take on more athletes to help them out to get their events completed, and their competitions.

What impact has this training had on the confidence you have in your abilities to be a leader?

Well, I was questionable before I took it. But there are benefits to actually being a leader. You can actually be the role model to show other athletes they can be where you are at, being a leader. You're also more able to help your other coaches to get anything that comes up, get it fixed if it needs to be, or get the event or the planning complete.

How will you apply what you learned?

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Take it one step at a time. Let them know that they can – like with warm ups – they can warm up, do stretches, that there are warm up that we can use to get us ready to bowl. Instead of going in there and pulling a muscle.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership qualities that I didn't ask?

Some of my friends do look up to me as a leader, and always being there to hear what they have to say. Try to give them the best advice to give them what they need to hear. Or sometimes what they don't want to hear. But actually get their problem taken care of.

Interview #2

I've attended ALPs classes before – 3 others

What are 5 things that make up a good leader?

Understanding, acknowledgement of understanding the rules, teamwork, working with the head coach, getting the word out about Special Olympics, acknowledging about my disability and more about Special Olympics. Making people aware that SO is a year round sport, has a year round sport, and that they need more people to volunteer.

What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

Having people understand you and listen to you.

What initially motivated you to become involved in a leadership training?

I wanted to get further with SO and wanted a chance to spread the word about SO, because I'm really dedicated to it.

What are 5 things you learned about in this training about leadership?

You have to be understanding, you're in charge of a group, so you have to be more of a leader, and that's hard. That it is harder than it looks because you have to be there to help the coach out, and a lot of times we're the athletes, so we don't realize the coach setup all this stuff, and now we have to be the assistant, so there's a lot for us to do. And I want to broaden my horizon too with Special Olympics, help out. And I know so many people (staff). But once I know more people...it's like a large family. It's actually really neat, because you're treated like a regular person. A lot of people treat you like you have a disability, can't do this, can't do that. The word in my vocabulary can't isn't a word.

What was the most challenging part of the training for you?

Probably working as a group to do, when we did that, when our mentor became the athlete, and trying to get them all situated and trying to figure out everything. My mentor, he decided to wander off, it's just that you learn new things. The A-team was trying to train us to tell us that athletes do take off. I'm sure a few of us have taken off before, but now you're a leader, you can't just take off.

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

What part of this training do you feel had the greatest positive impact on your ability to become a leader?

Well the first Global Messenger, the one I had to do a five minute speech got me acknowledged about Special Olympics and got me out in the community to voice about SO and tell them that it's not just, it's regular Olympic games, Olympic sports, but it's for people with Intellectual disabilities. It's out there, but we do normal sports. I've told people to come and watch.

What are the 3 greatest benefits you experienced from attending this training?

Getting to see people that I know, and the A-team. Learning more things about how to be a coach and about working with my mentor. Just having fun!

Do you feel this training has given you the power to make changes in your community?

Yes, it gives me the chance to spread the word and get my point of view out. I've done that several times, where people didn't know anything about SO, and now two of them are volunteers. Now they are involved. They thought at first. They were afraid to volunteers. Some people look at SO as "oh there's people that have disabilities, they're weird, they can't take care of themselves." And I acknowledge that. I do SO and I'm proud of it. And I say, come and watch basketball or track and field. And they came to watch basketball, and their mouths dropped open because they never knew that some of the teams were that good. Basically there are a lot of people that at the end of the games, you'll see tears in their eyes because they played such a good game. I've been to a point because I've been ticked off after a game, because you want to win so bad, but then you remember the oath, and that's what helps.

How has your mentor impacted your experience?

He's helped me with different speeches; he was there when I did a speech for the Lions club. Just there for support.

What did you learn about leading a team?

It's harder than it looks. And you have to work as a team, everybody has to listen to each other, otherwise it's not going to work out.

What impact has this training had on the confidence you have in your abilities to be a leader?

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

It's made me more confident that I'll be a good leader when the time comes. It might not be tomorrow, but I feel confident that I'll end up being a good leader because I've learned so much. The A-team has helped me so much. They're real supportive. There's no wrong answer. There's no you screwed up, or you made a fool out of yourself -- they're there for support.

How will you apply what you learned?

Basically, I learned a lot this weekend about how to deal with somebody who has a problem, and how to coach, coaching technique, everybody has different coaching techniques, but I think I'll take it in as I need to be understanding. I see it differently now as a Level 1 coach, or athlete coach, that not many people can see it as.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership qualities that I didn't ask?

Interview #3

What are 5 things that make up a good leader?

Just giving them encouragement, tell them they're doing a good job, listen.

What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

Just um, telling them what to do. And explaining to them. Sometimes they don't listen.

What initially motivated you to become involved in a leadership training?

I just, I was involved with track and field for a long time. I was an athlete for a while. And I just thought I'd give this a try. Because I can't run anymore because of my breathing.

What are 5 things you learned about in this training about leadership?

To respect others, just uh, cheering them on, encouraging that they're doing a good job,

What was the most challenging part of the training for you?

All of it. Because it's so interesting. It just makes me think of being a better coach. There's no right or wrong answer on it.

What part of this training do you feel had the greatest positive impact on your ability to become a leader?

I liked the one game that they did, the frogs and tadpoles. It made me think of what steps to go. Just trying to think of which way to go.

What are the 3 greatest benefits you experienced from attending this training?

The rules of being a coach. And there's also safety rules, CPR, first aid. In case anybody gets hurt. Responsibility.

Do you feel this training has given you the power to make changes in your community?

Yes, just want a better team.

How has your mentor impacted your experience?

Very well. She's been a really good teacher.

What did you learn about leading a team?

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

It made me think of being a better coach.

What impact has this training had on the confidence you have in your abilities to be a leader?

Very confident. Can be patient with the athletes.

How will you apply what you learned?

Chose to skip.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership qualities that I didn't ask?

I do devotions at the group home where I live. And I have this friendship class and I read from the bible there. And I take pictures for Special Olympics events. Then I also volunteer with putting stuff in mailboxes at church.

Interview #4**What are 5 things that make up a good leader?**

Somebody that can talk in front of people, unlike me, I'm really bad with that. Being able to come up with ideas on the spot. Somebody that could like go along with what you're talking about. I know Carrie is like quick on the dot. She's the fundraiser person in our group. She'll have an idea and she'll tell everybody just right there.

What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

Paperwork. Well I know, like, I help (another athlete), who's in a wheelchair. I've helped her for a while. I know that she is so excited when she gets a strike, and I feel good about it when I help her get a strike.

(But when I help her,) I can't do anything I normally do (challenge for when helping)

What initially motivated you to become involved in a leadership training?

Wanting to help everybody.

What are 5 things you learned about in this training about leadership?

It's a hard job. You have so much to do, and so much to like...you have to actually explain stuff, and I'm not good at explaining.

What was the most challenging part of the training for you?

Talking in front of people. Getting to know names and faces.

What part of this training do you feel had the greatest positive impact on your ability to become a leader?

Actually talking.

What are the 3 greatest benefits you experienced from attending this training?

Being able to come up with stuff when situations happen. Meeting new people.

Do you feel this training has given you the power to make changes in your community?

Yeh, I can talk to more people and try to get them involved too. Like when they're doing the meetings... I put my two cents in, and get yelled at for it. Now I can actually talk and they'll actually listen.

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

How has your mentor impacted your experience?

If I can't think of something, he helps me come up with something. He helped me spit it out. Getting me to actually talk. He motivated me to say stuff.

What did you learn about leading a team?

It's very hard. Having to communicate and keep track of everybody. Setup. Tear down. Practice. Like I help with setting up in practice, I like have to be there for setup.

What impact has this training had on the confidence you have in your abilities to be a leader?

Before the meeting, I was actually more childish and I didn't want to do anything. And now that I took the class, and they've explained how hard it's going to be, I just kind of think it's time to grow up.

How will you apply what you learned?

I will definitely help. Normally I just sit there and talk to people. Well I get along with most of the people now, so it's easier for me to actually talk to them. It's going to be a lot easier because some of the people I don't talk to and now I will. I won't be scared to actually do stuff – give directions, helping to lead practices, because I'm sure that's what I'll be doing.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership qualities that I didn't ask?

It was actually really fun. I actually didn't want to come once they told me about it. It was really fun.

Interview #5

I've taken all of the ALPs courses before.

What are 5 things that make up a good leader?

Responsible, being on time, courteous, understanding, knows the rules.

What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

Understanding some of the regulations.

What initially motivated you to become involved in a leadership training?

To learn new things and meet new friends and have a good time, have fun!

What are 5 things you learned about in this training about leadership?

I learned about my strengths and weakness, what I'm good at and what I'm not good at, what my abilities are, and um, I'm trying to think.

What was the most challenging part of the training for you?

Challenging part? The frog game. Because it was hard. I mean I didn't understand it at first until they explained it. I was clueless in how to do it.

What part of this training do you feel had the greatest positive impact on your ability to become a leader?

Protective behaviors. It really stood out because it's good to know. It protects you from um, things, stuff.

What are the 3 greatest benefits you experienced from attending this training?

Um, as in the training, or the all around stay here? The training knowledge, and authority to help people out or tell people to do certain things that the coach tells you to do. It helps me get out there and speak a little more about what Special Olympics is all about.

Do you feel this training has given you the power to make changes in your community?

Yes, it gives me opportunities to tell people what we're really about, and how we can help them if they have children. And how they can get interested in volunteering and donations, or contributions.

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

How has your mentor impacted your experience?

He's a good listener. He's firm, and by firm, what I mean by firm is he's strict on some things. He helps me through stuff, like I'm trying to cut down on pop intake. The impact he has on me is great. He has to tell me a couple times, but after that, it sticks with me.

What did you learn about leading a team?

How much work it takes. And all of the responsibilities and tasks you have to do in order to keep the team running. Whether you started it or just to keep it running.

What impact has this training had on the confidence you have in your abilities to be a leader?

I'm going to go back and say I want to help coach a team somewhere in my delegation. I'll say Tony, I'm ready to help you coach. I want to coach a team I'm not playing right now. Yes, it has had a difference.

How will you apply what you learned?

Go home to my delegation and say I'm ready, I want to help, wherever you need me.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership qualities that I didn't ask?

No.

Interview #6

What are 5 things that make up a good leader?

A good coach. They understand you when you talk to them. They try to work out all the problems. They're hard working with trying to get us to do what they want us to do.

What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

Trying to cool my temper. I have a temper. I can be patient, but I have a temper some days.

What initially motivated you to become involved in a leadership training?

Because I can't run anymore because about 20 years ago, somebody ran in my lane and tripped me. I had 6 knee surgeries in the last 20 years. I've been in physical therapy. I've been helping out with just the track part because I can't run anymore.

What are 5 things you learned about in this training about leadership?

All the information that has to be done. Paperwork.

What was the most challenging part of the training for you?

Trying to join in and helping to setup the obstacles.

What part of this training do you feel had the greatest positive impact on your ability to become a leader?

Talking to the coaches about where they can't have boyfriend, girlfriends coaching them.

What are the 3 greatest benefits you experienced from attending this training?

Trying to meet new people. Join in more. And work as a team.

Do you feel this training has given you the power to make changes in your community?

Yes, join in and help when your coaches are not there.

How has your mentor impacted your experience?

She influenced me to do it. Guide me.

What did you learn about leading a team?

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

How to do everything. Like setup the obstacles.

What impact has this training had on the confidence you have in your abilities to be a leader?

Not more confident. I'm very shy around people. The first day I was really scared. I feel a lot better now.

How will you apply what you learned?

Try to join in more and help the athletes. We had a couple athletes though they might not even listen to me. They don't like to listen to anybody. They don't know if you're a coach, so they don't listen.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership qualities that I didn't ask?

SOMN Interview #7

I have attended ALPs before

What are 5 things that make up a good leader?

Commitment, understanding, knowledge and know-how of running the sport, being organized, driven, being able to give orders and take suggestions

What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

It's going to be hard for me not being able to jump in with my friends – being in that leadership coaching role, and trying to keep that going for me, and trying not to think “oh, I'm not playing here, I'm in charge.” Be somewhat professional.

What initially motivated you to become involved in a leadership training?

I don't know. It's something to do. I come down here and hang out with some folks I don't get to see. It was all brand new people – that was awesome. This is a vacation for me.

What are 5 things you learned about in this training about leadership?

How to take charge, prioritize the items that need to be done, I'm not too keen on the whole delegation part of it, giving other people orders, but I'll have to work on that.

What was the most challenging part of the training for you?

It was a little weird actually setting up the staging area for mentors to play the role of the athletes. I was like “okay, I've never done this before.” But on the other hand, I didn't feel so bad and out of place because I had 11 other people doing it with me all in the same boat.

What part of this training do you feel had the greatest positive impact on your ability to become a leader?

I would say the vulnerability factor – the protective behaviors. I've always found interesting. I should probably mention that at Athletes as Volunteers we touched on the protective behaviors, but, it seems like every time I hear it, I may hear the same things come out of his mouth, but I always manage to pick up something more. It's kind of like hearing the same song 15 different times...and then you pick up something new every time you hear it.

What are the 3 greatest benefits you experienced from attending this training?

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Knowledge of leadership, when I met with you folks last night, and having the knowledge. Not only willing to take it on, but I have something to prove to myself. Whether it's tomorrow or 15 years from now, for him to step down some day, that I will be ready to take his place so to speak. So that spot is not left open. That's my plan in my head anyway, we'll see if it works out anyways.

Do you feel this training has given you the power to make changes in your community?

I would say in the Special Olympics community. Special Olympics friends or not Special Olympics friends. I don't belong to a church or anything, Special Olympics is pretty much my one main thing. I enjoy it.

How has your mentor impacted your experience?

It's nice knowing someone's got your back. It's nice knowing that there's somebody sitting beside me. We both learn together. It makes that learning process I think for me, just a little easier. I'm not the only one going through this, because there are 11 other people going through this with me. I was actually telling Chris, that I've kept all of the lists, and I'm going to start calling people.

What did you learn about leading a team?

It's hard work. It's not as easy as it looks. I've thought more than once this weekend, how in the world does (our head coach) do it. I think I have a theory on that actually. She has a lot of people, a lot of assistant coaches that she depends on. I've learned so much in the last 3, 4, 5 years. How do you organize?

What impact has this training had on the confidence you have in your abilities to be a leader?

It gives me a little bit of a boost. I think once I get most of the figuring out out of the way, and get a game plan with (my mentor), I think I'll feel a little bit more at ease.

How will you apply what you learned?

Just um, the vulnerability factor of all the athletes. I think that's going to be the key piece for me, not only with SO in my life, but work and community. Nowadays, you just don't know. And that's for me, especially when I talk a lot. It's good for me to keep in the back of my mind.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership qualities that I didn't ask?

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

I can work with just about anybody.

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Interview #8**What are five things that make up a good leader?**

Let me think. It's hard to think right now. I enjoyed all of the things we did. I learned a little bit more about being a coach. It's hard to think what to say. I always have a hard time thinking at first.

When people listen to me when I try to teach them how to do this stuff.

What I have to do is just close my eyes and take a deep breath and just calm down and just help them the best way -- if they say no, they don't want me to help them at first, I'm not going to push them. I'm just going to let them do the best I can do with them.

What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

With the other coach, I have a little problem with. Especially one coach, she makes it feel sometimes kind of miserable sometimes. She's upset quite a bit of people. And what I usually do is if I see that, is I usually go and tell (my mentor) about this. And let (my mentor) take care of it. I don't say anything to her. She makes me feel uptight sometimes. And then she gets kind of sometimes bossy sometimes. She thinks she knows everything when she really doesn't. I mean I know she's a coach, I know that.

What initially motivated you to become involved in a leadership training?

So I can help other skaters.

What are 5 things you learned about in this training about leadership?

I can't think of that one right now. I'll think of that in a little bit.

What was the most challenging part of the training for you?

Trying to remember all of the things they were telling me. Because I want to be a good coach. What you're supposed to do and what you're not supposed to do. Like if you're having problems, go to someone else. And have it be two people, not one person.

What part of this training do you feel had the greatest positive impact on your ability to become a leader?

Everything we did! Everything we did this weekend, every person that was telling me different things, that has helped a lot.

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

What are the 3 greatest benefits you experienced from attending this training?

Hmm. Yeh, let's skip that.

Do you feel this training has given you the power to make changes in your community?

Yes, I think it has. I think I'm going to be a really good coach, and I'm going to enjoy, and try to have a good influence on them. And try to help them the best way I can. Because I want us to improve so we do get more skaters, or more for basketball, or whatever we're going to do.

How has your mentor impacted your experience?

(My mentor) has been awesome. I could skate with kids. I love doing that.

What did you learn about leading a team?

I think everything. Like if you get upset with somebody, try your best to walk away from them and count up to 10. I think that would be something.

What impact has this training had on the confidence you have in your abilities to be a leader?

I can't think of that one.

How will you apply what you learned?

I can't think of all this stuff.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership qualities that I didn't ask?

I enjoyed it. I had so much fun, listening to each person telling us what we can do and what we can't do.

Re-asked: What are 5 things that make up a good leader?

Commitment, come on time, that's all I can think of on that one.

Re-asked: What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

Sometimes they might not want to listen, and I have to be patient with them and not force myself on them.

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Interview #9

What are 5 things that make up a good leader?

I would say, um, somebody that has leadership skills, and someone that's willing to take the time to learn what they're doing. Somebody that is willing to take the initiative. And somebody that is willing to help another person out. And, somebody that is willing to teach that person.

What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

I think all of the time that goes into it.

What initially motivated you to become involved in a leadership training?

Because, as far as at team sports, I know at least the basic skills of that sport. Like how to do some of the one on one drills, and stuff like that.

What are 5 things you learned about in this training about leadership?

How to do the safety precautions, how to become an athlete coach, how my role will change. It takes teamwork.

What was the most challenging part of the training for you?

I think the most challenging part has been getting to know people, and um, really doing things hands on.

What part of this training do you feel had the greatest positive impact on your ability to become a leader?

I think the games because they were fun to do, even though I hadn't ever done them before. It was good to learn new games. Planning to bring them back to the team.

What are the 3 greatest benefits you experienced from attending this training?

I would say how to become an athlete coach, and how to be a leader. Knowing what role I'm going to play on the team as far as an athlete coach. How different it's going to be for me. (how different it is as a coach and an athlete) I'm planning on being an athlete for one sport and an athlete coach for another sport.

Do you feel this training has given you the power to make changes in your community?

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

I hope so! Because I get out a lot, but not in a community setting too much. Hopefully I can get out in the community more.

How has your mentor impacted your experience?

My mentor has been really supportive of me doing this, even when she first told me about it. I was a little hesitant, but she thought I would be a good candidate for it.

What did you learn about leading a team?

I would say, um, how difficult it can be. You need a lot of input on it from other people, not just yourself. You gotta really get to know the people that you're working with and stuff. And who you're going to work with to know everyone succeeds.

What impact has this training had on the confidence you have in your abilities to be a leader?

I think my confidence has grown a little bit as far as what I'm going to be able to bring to my teammates and my friends. As far as skills and stuff like that.

How will you apply what you learned?

I think hopefully next year once I go through more training, hopefully I can be more proactive. Instead of having someone tell me to show them, I can just show them how to do the drill of something.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership qualities that I didn't ask?

It's pretty fun being up here. I really had fun.

Appendix E: Urban Leadership Academy Interview TranscriptsInterview #1

What are 5 things that make up a good leader?

Faith, values, confidence, patience and what else? Courage.

What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

Just like going places you've never been before. Having to like step up to your box. I think that's a big thing. Cause if you're not willing to step out of your comfort zone, then you can't really step into places where there's really a need for leadership.

What initially motivated you to become involved in a leadership training?

I didn't know about it. I got like what is the word, like recruited. But another youth leader told me about it and signed me up for it and stuff. She got me to like take it to the next level. Um, just basically to get closer to God and stuff, and it was a way for me to step out of my comfort zone and try something new.

What are 5 things you learned about in this training about leadership?

That you have to have followers, that...I learned the can theory, no matter how much your can gets destroyed, it's still a can. Like it never gets destroyed completely. Um, that you have to be willing to look through different lens, not just your own. And a lot of time when we're looking through, like in a mirror, we see everything else but ourselves. Um, what else? I'm trying to think that far back. I don't want to mix up anything with any other leadership groups.

What was the most challenging part of the training for you?

Um, probably during like the retreat part, doing like the obstacle course, we used, where it was just like, just trust God. Trust that He's gonna get you through this and stuff. It was really hard and scary. Like cause I knew God was there, but it was kinda hard hard at the same time to accept. Okay, is he gonna save me from falling if I jump off of this thing that you want me to jump off of. That was a pretty hard ask of myself.

What part of this training do you feel had the greatest positive impact on your ability to become a leader?

I think the serving part, like going back to school and trying to come up with the service project on your own and stuff and with your mentor. That was pretty hard and

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challenging. And I didn't think I'd be able to come up with anything or do anything, because I'm not like a, well, around that time, I wasn't like out, and just like a person who goes up to anybody and talk to them. So that like really challenged me and opened me up and got me talking more. And communicating with other more, and learning how to communicate with others in different ways.

What are the 3 greatest benefits you experienced from attending this training?

Confidence, trust and learning new things, willing to learn new things

Do you feel this training has given you the power to make changes in your community?

Yeh, it just like showed me how to go about trying new things. How to go about approaching things, to like start up things to change in the community and stuff like that. I don't know, connections and networking as well. So just like by doing the different service projects throughout the academy and stuff helped as well.

How has your mentor impacted your experience?

Um, it didn't really change anything. I already new the person. She was like a leader anyways to me. I think it made it more difficult because my mentor is involved in another program as well and I asked her to come over here and help me with this program as well. Just like juggling both of the two and working in a high school for her would have been hard and stuff. So I didn't really like...she came to meetings when she could. It was just hard going to meetings and stuff with her, and trying to connect with her when she had a lot of other stuff on her plate, so I didn't want to really bother her. It made it difficult, but at the same time it just challenged me to do more things on my own.

What did you learn about leading a team?

It take patience. You have to be willing to listen to their ideas as well. Just because a leader does the meetings doesn't mean what you say goes. Their voices still count as well. And when you're working as a team, you have to be able to work together. It's not just one person.

What impact has this training had on the confidence you have in your abilities to be a leader?

I guess it just basically gave me more self esteem in myself. Knowing like – cause the way I used to be I was just like people aren't going to listen to me, why would they listen

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to me? How am I someone like me going to make a difference? Just one person and stuff. But it's helped me to see and learn that people will listen to you if you have enough confidence and courage to just get up there and make them listen to you. As well as just getting out there – and just, like, if you start something and you show people that you're really trying to make a difference, your voice can be heard. So it gave me confidence knowing that I can actually do something like that.

How will you apply what you learned?

So many different ways. Like through school, in living situations, just dealing with friends and just dealing with family. It's given me more patience in those areas and stuff. Like giving me more of an understanding heart for people. I tend to like, ever since the training, look at people and things through different perspectives and not just my own. So I actually think about it before I say something about it and before I try telling others what it's like if I don't know. I actually look into it and stuff.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership qualities that I didn't ask?

I don't know. I guess it just really challenges you, takes you to places you that you'd never think you'd actually go. No matter how hard you try to stand back and not let it change you, you're still gonna walk away affected by it, even if you don't make it seem like it has, it's still going to have an effect on you, even when you leave.

Interview #2

What are 5 things that make up a good leader?

Integrity, confidence, communication, humble, heart and endurance

What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

It doesn't end.

What initially motivated you to become involved in a leadership training?

It's a life changing program. It really challenges the inner being of yourself, and challenges everything that you see in society from that point on when you walk out of ULA's doors.

What are 5 things you learned about in this training about leadership?

It doesn't end. Anyone can be a leader. There are different types of leadership. Everyone is a leader in some way or form, and leadership is influence.

What was the most challenging part of the training for you?

Really understanding there are some things in my life that had to change. Or seeing parts of leadership that I had to adjust to to become a leader or be at a standard to perform in a leadership role.

What part of this training do you feel had the greatest positive impact on your ability to become a leader?

The workshops. Great material and great teachers. Well put together and organized.

What are the 3 greatest benefits you experienced from attending this training?

Um, I became staff at ULA. They equipped me to be a leader in my community and my surrounding areas. And I gained a lot of great relationships.

Do you feel this training has given you the power to make changes in your community?

Yes, the just challenge you or show you different ways to fundraise or show you different ways to communicate or connect with people that you really wouldn't know how to, or think that you could connect with. They show you different ways to go about those things.

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How has your mentor impacted your experience?

Oh man, he's great! In everything that I do, or am in, he supports me. In all of that he relates to me also. So it's not like him pointing the finger, but he comes, or he connects with my on common ground. And lets me know, hey, you're going through this, I've gone through this, let me help you. So it's just amazing how he just sticks by me. And the leadership for myself has grown because of his teachings.

What did you learn about leading a team?

That it's not about demand, but it's about productivity. It's not who's the leader, but it's that we're a team. And it's that anyone can lead as long as we're in the team.

What impact has this training had on the confidence you have in your abilities to be a leader?

Greatly! Since ULA, I've become a youth pastor, and I owe that all to ULA because they pushed me and challenged me to become something greater than I thought I would be when I went through the program. And even that – staff!

How will you apply what you learned?

In my everyday life, in my youth groups, in my church home. Knowing that leadership is influence, so trying to use my influence in any way to attract people to the church and positive living.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership qualities that I didn't ask?

A lot of people don't...they kind of don't relate to the youth now days. I guess you'd call it old dog stuck in its own ways. They don't understand that the world is changing daily, and you have to change with in it order to reach out to those living in the world. And I feel like ULA has equipped me to do that. To communicate and to relate to people that come from different walks of life. And that even though they may look different, act different or talk different, they can still be touched because we both have hearts. We both have like minds.

Interview #3

Attended ULA training in June 2008

What are 5 things that make up a good leader?

Um, communications skills. Um, like the ability to adapt. To, the ability to like be able to relate to people or understand where people are coming from. Be open, the willingness to be, openness. That's three.

What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

I'd have to say, I guess acceptance. Like not knowing where you're going to be as a leader. I think for me anyways.

What initially motivated you to become involved in a leadership training?

It was through my church that I found out about it. And I came to the program. And ever since then, through the program was where I became inspired as a leader I guess. Oh, looking at the people, the leaders in my church that were a part of it. Like their influence in my life just made me want to do it and be a part of it.

What are 5 things you learned about in this training about leadership?

Um, I learned that ah, when you're leading anything, whatever ministry or organization you're leading, it can only be, it will only grow as much as you allow it. I guess your ability as a leader or your openness or willingness to accept different things. Like hearing other people out. The relationship you have with the people that you're leading. And then in a spiritual aspect, your relationship with God, like being strong in that. SO you know you're not going to be leading others astray.

What was the most challenging part of the training for you?

Oh, the most challenging part of the training would probably have been figuring out things as a leader that you'd need to work on. Like personally, to improve in yourself. Like how to go about doing that, and finding the right people in your life to help encourage you in the right direction.

What part of this training do you feel had the greatest positive impact on your ability to become a leader?

Um, I would have to say the encouragement from my peers, because it's really interactive and really personal. So You get to have really close relationships with them,

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and like knowing that, having this sense that they're going in the same direction you are going as a leader, and for you to be accountable to each other was really, really like the strongest part for me.

What are the 3 greatest benefits you experienced from attending this training?

Personally, just like a boldness about who I am and God. And then just like with my peers and stuff like that, I don't know, just like being able to be more open you know, and like not afraid to just like have those questioning conversations with them.

Do you feel this training has given you the power to make changes in your community?

Most definitely, um, it's up to, they can only do so much, the rest of it is up to the individual. And I know I've slacked off.

How has your mentor impacted your experience?

It's impacted my experience a lot, because I've never had a mentor until I came to this, through the program. And then like, having them walk with you and pray with you. All that. Having them just like there. Even if it wasn't talking about being a leader all the time. Just for them show their leadership in different ways was really encouraging, just like inspiring I guess.

What did you learn about leading a team?

It's work. Hard work. Um, it's a challenge, but it's one of those challenges that you know it going to pay off in the end. So, it's good stuff.

What impact has this training had on the confidence you have in your abilities to be a leader?

Um, a lot, because up until I came through the program, I was in church and stuff, and knew that I was called, but just didn't know how to go about it. So, being in the program and going through the program really helped me, um and gave me an understanding of how to search for that, you know, like I guess in my own personal relationship with God and stuff.

How will you apply what you learned?

Well, I learned, oh another thing I did learn there, they taught it in a very universal way, so it wasn't just like this is what you can do when you're in church, but when you're in

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school or when you're on the bus with your friends or you know, you're at a basketball game or something like that. Like how to use that leadership in those different areas.

Oh, um, a lot of it was really personal, like just in myself, in my life and my spiritual walk with God but otherwise with my friends and stuff, just being really active, but not just like complacent. With them knowing that I'm trying to be a better person and a leader, and a Christian, and things like that, but just being really active about it. And doing, but not just saying, not just talking about it.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership qualities that I didn't ask?

Interview #4

Attended ULA training in June 2010

What are 5 things that make up a good leader?

Ability to make a difference and stand up for what's right when others don't.

What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

Dealing with everyone's different personalities and how they clash, and how they differ and how they're alike.

What initially motivated you to become involved in a leadership training?

Um, well Rachel was really pushing me to go and try it out, and she saw leadership qualities in me. So I tried it out.

What are 5 things you learned about in this training about leadership?

To be a good leader you have to stand up for what's right, even when you're standing alone. That others may not like what you're doing, but to keep doing it anyway. To never lose focus on the task at hand.

What was the most challenging part of the training for you?

The endurance training was. We went up to camp and we jumped off of really tall telephone poles and climbed a spider wall and different things like that. I'm very scared of heights.

What part of this training do you feel had the greatest positive impact on your ability to become a leader?

Um, the going out into the community part did. We went to a homeless shelter, elderly home, home for the elderly, and we also went to Feed my Starving Children, and a few other places.

What are the 3 greatest benefits you experienced from attending this training?

Just feeling the community and feeling the spirit, holy spirit. The worship was amazing. And then the endurance training.

Do you feel this training has given you the power to make changes in your community?

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Yes. It gave me the proper tools to help come up with different events and different things that I can do to open my eyes to what's going on around me to help make a difference.

How has your mentor impacted your experience?

My mentor? My mentor helped a lot. Because she has wisdom. She knows a little bit more about what we were going to do for my project than I did.

What did you learn about leading a team?

That it takes a lot of hard work and discipline. Understanding.

What impact has this training had on the confidence you have in your abilities to be a leader?

It boosted my confidence.

How will you apply what you learned?

Um, I haven't used it just yet, but I will be using it to hopefully setup, set in motion....this is hard to explain. Um, I think the training will help me when I go to Honorary Academy to be able to work well with others and take the lead when I feel like I should.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership qualities that I didn't ask?

Interview #5

Attended ULA training in June 2008

What are 5 things that make up a good leader?

Five things? Courage. So courage, I think someone who is a good, like, intellectual, or likes to be able to speak. I think, like a passion, or a goal or something. A goal. I'm very bad at interviews. So courage, um, what else did I say? Definitely like a goal. Someone who is able to handle relationships, someone who's been a follower, to know how to be a leader. And I think, cause I think courage kind of steps into a lot of it. To be able to use your voice. Because I, -- you're familiar with ULA, right? Okay. Someone who's willing to step out of their comfort zone. That was something personal to me. I had a hard time stepping out of my comfort zone.

What is the most challenging part of being a leader?

Um, I think there will be people who won't want to follow you and you'll have to accept that there will be people that you'll inspire and there will be people that you'll just ...create. In anything you do, even if you're completely nice, you'll always have enemies. I think the struggle to being a leader is you'd really have to genuinely care about what you do, and know that what you're saying is true and it will benefit other people. Maybe just a struggle for them. You can lead somebody into the wrong path, but you just have to stay true to what you're saying. Like an example, a pastor can lead people into giving them tithing money, like use good words, but it can be leading them wrong. You just have to, I don't know. Have to say something that's true.

What initially motivated you to become involved in a leadership training?

At first, the \$300 we would get, BUT as I began experiencing all of the principals and lessons each day, and just the activities that we did, it was really completely passionate of me. I had passion for everything we were doing. It really taught me a lot. I feel that I've always had a struggle with stepping out of my comfort zone and having a bigger voice, because I have a really quiet voice. So it was really a challenge for me. But after that training, and meeting with Pastor Steve after ULA, I've just been in circumstances where I've had to be the leader. I just decided that I need to be an influence. I can't just stay in my bubble anymore. What's the point? You know what I mean? If you can touch a life, then why wouldn't you do that?

What are 5 things you learned about in this training about leadership?

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Five principals? I do remember, I do remember the power of the can to where basically, like I can and I can't do it. And how that you should just think positive. And another one is the lens principal, where if you're looking through a lens. Like if you have glasses on, that's your lens. How you were brought up, your experiences, how you have been taught how to look at things and circumstances. And if another person has glasses on, then you'll put them, like try to step out of your own way of thinking and look into another person's eyes. Like how they would view circumstances about things. I think, it was so long ago. Things that really got to me. Right. Um, I think the hands on learning got to me more. Basically, we went to like elderly homes and what's it called, a homeless shelter and a nursing home and Feed my Starving Children. And basically we just got to prepare food for the homeless and give it to them. Basically more of the hands on learning, service learning got to me a little bit more than what was taught. Not that the stuff that didn't get to me, but those are the things I remember every second, because I learn that way.

What was the most challenging part of the training for you?

There were so many people. There were so many people. I think that, when you come into a, what was I saying? Okay, when you come across a certain number of people, there's usually one person your personality isn't used to being okay with, like, it'll clash, you know? I think I might have had a couple issues, but nothing major. I don't know, they were just distracting, kind of. But other than that, I think that the challenging part is still using all of them today. I still read the book they gave me, but I just forget about more and more if I don't practice it. But I only remember so much of it, the whole two weeks. But otherwise, there's nothing as challenging as that.

What part of this training do you feel had the greatest positive impact on your ability to become a leader?

I think kind of the service learning. I know that we're required to do a ten month, um, a ten month community service project. And I know that I kind of wanted to do exactly what Urban Leadership Academy did, so every month, we would do a different - whether it was a nursing home, a homeless shelter and Feed my Starving Children, whether it was every month we'd go out and just do something. And that's what I got inspired from. So...and now I even still do those things sometimes. I don't organize it, like give people in advance, but I still do it on my own kind of. I collected a lot of jackets and hats and mittens this winter for the homeless shelter.

What are the 3 greatest benefits you experienced from attending this training?

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

I became wiser for sure. I definitely had, gained a lot of knowledge and understanding. I feel that I was able to determine more of what God's purpose was for me. And I really think that every Christian should be a leader. Well everybody basically. But you know? But it's even stronger to know that God's favor in you. Like what he's able to do with you, if you're just willing to search more into it. I feel that I would want to repeat it again - just a recap maybe, just every year. 'Cause, they're just good principals to know - in anybody.

Do you feel this training has given you the power to make changes in your community?

Yeh, for sure. Um, just that first step of doing it, like saying it, like thinking it "Yeh I would want to do that," then going out and taking time to do it. Um, for sure, I definitely took the initiative. I still want to go back to that organizing plan so more people can be involved in stuff.

How has your mentor impacted your experience?

Um, my mentor, I kind of switched. It wasn't one of them from the ULA, because they were so full, there was like 45 kids. But I had another mentor. She was pastor here, but then she ended up moving to Detroit, so I think me and Steve kind of met a couple times. Otherwise, I haven't had like a consistent mentor. I -- Of course the accountability. Someone who will, I love having somebody who I know is praying for me, and encourages me and just believes in me. You know what I'm saying? Like, every time I would meet with Pastor Steve, he would just say, "I see you as a different person. Not of you right now, but of who you're going to become, or who you're able to be. Basically, because of my heart. Like, you know what I'm saying? That was just extremely encouraging. Having a mentor, a genuine mentor, that will definitely keep accountability to you and pray for you, is just, a necessity for every young believer or just anybody. Accountability is key.

What did you learn about leading a team?

Um, I'd have to be accountable. And, I um, I have to have money and transportation and stuff. I feel, like just to have that leadership role, all right, everybody; we're going to be here at this time. Just to be on it. Like, It was good because I think when I was doing my service learning project, I even had my pastor help me, because I wasn't, I didn't think about like a recap after we were done. When we came back here, I was just like -- basically, you just have to be on top of it all, like the transportation, the money issues, the time, the accountability, have people's phone numbers, contact information and whoever's willing to do it and stuff.

* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

What impact has this training had on the confidence you have in your abilities to be a leader?

A lot. A lot. Yeh, because before, I wasn't really, I had accepted Jesus into my heart. And I didn't have any mentor after that, anybody pouring into my life. It was just going to church still. And this was definitely more knowledge and wisdom, and more people experiencing God but in a leadership way, and how you could give back to your community. It was just a lot, and I think that it really did affect my confidence.

How will you apply what you learned?

Well, I, I applied what I learned. Besides the community project, I still, I still do um, a couple of things. I, at the place where I live, it's a community, it's an all girls, single mom's school, I mean apartment complex. And basically, I don't know, I kind of, like I kind of try to plan get-togethers, like scrapbooking or like some sort of way to get people connected. And I definitely keep accountability to other people. Like other females and stuff. You know I pray for them. And I feel I'm able to keep accountability to people. You know, I feel like I'm able to see some of the things that they've struggled with, that I'll struggle with. That I'm able to help and advice and stuff, but I feel, I don't know, I want to do more. That's why I'm here. I want to do more to help. And I don't know. I want to be able to have everybody to experience most of what I've experienced. You know? So that's why I've definitely recommended the Urban Leadership Academy. But since it's so limited to only 10th and 11th graders, you know, it's kind of hard because most of the people that I talk to are older than me. Because I don't really connect with people that are younger than me. Like my mentality. I can't do it. I can have a conversation, but I can't relate to some of the things – the way they think.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership qualities that I didn't ask?

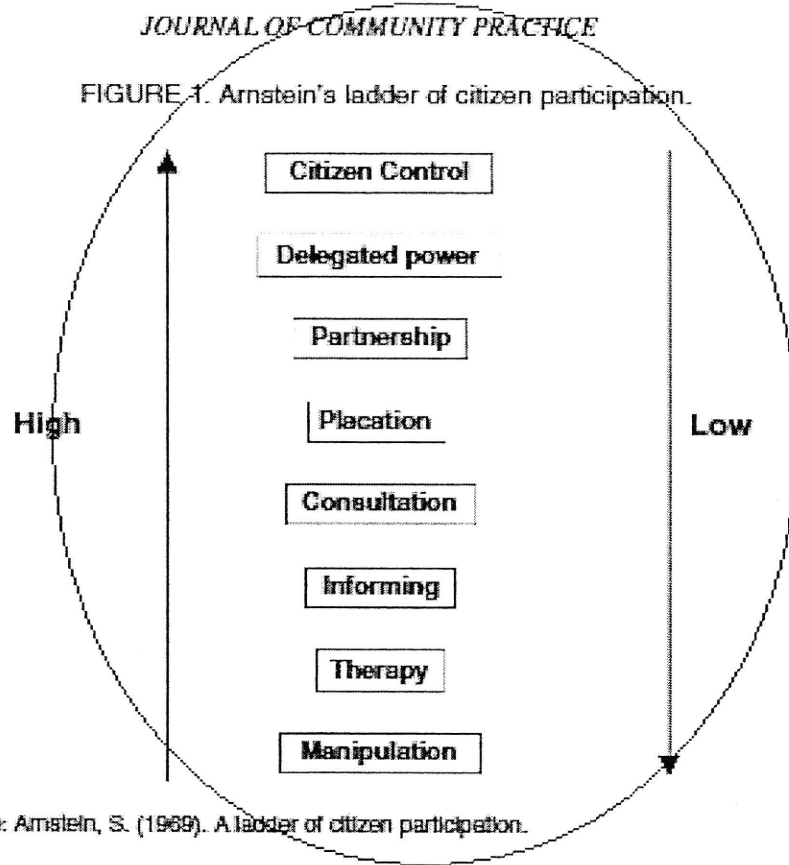
Um, I don't think so.

Appendix F: Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation

16

JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY PRACTICE

FIGURE 1. Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation.



* Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

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