

Our mission is

To develop well-informed leaders who are passionately engaged in building a vibrant community.

Leadership Victoria's teams turn big ideas into lasting community legacies

By Jennifer Blyth
Black Press

Over the last decade, Leadership Victoria has graduated nearly 200 alumni whose work has created a living legacy of more than 33 community action projects and who have gone on to assume leadership roles in business, government and the voluntary sector.

From idea to implementation, Leadership Victoria fosters a collaborative community approach and project teams have been active on many successful initiatives.

In partnership with Vic West Elementary School and mentored by coach Shauna Fenwick, Acacia Ashton, Louise Carlow, Marijke Edmondson, Daniel Hegg, Lisa Nichols, Anna Russo and Karen Wallis built an urban rain garden at the school as an interactive classroom to provide students with a way to explore sustainability issues and discover how to improve their environment. The garden provides teachers with a medium to demonstrate sustainability principles.

For a second Leadership Victoria team – Rosie Croft, Jason French, Joanna Morton, Shawn Steele, Wendy Robinson and Sara Wegwitz – the focus was enhancing the Vic West community's Rainbow Kitchen, serving hot, nutritious lunches to 100 to 140 people in need, five days a week. Ingredients come both from donations and the kitchen's garden.

Under the direction of project coach Barry Herring, the team quadrupled the garden's growing capacity and installed a micro-irrigation system and composting system, increasing the locally grown produce incorporated into each meal. The team also promoted a neighbourhood "Grow A Row" campaign, encouraging residents to grow an extra row in their garden with produce to be donated to the kitchen.

These two community projects, along with dozens more, demonstrate the diverse



Leadership Victoria participants built a teaching shelter at Witt's Lagoon.

initiatives spearheaded by Leadership Victoria. Since 2000, Leadership Victoria has brought together individuals from a variety of sectors to learn from community experts, becoming well-informed leaders passionate about building a vibrant community. Led by members from business, government, education, and the non-profit sectors, Leadership Victoria fosters community collaboration and partnerships and provides opportunities for emerging leaders to really make things happen.

"Our approach is based on groups reaching out to the community, identifying pressing issues, developing plans of action and working collaboratively with community partners to turn those ideas into reality," explains Leadership Victoria President Kate Mansell.

Executive Director Jack Shore notes that Leadership Victoria's 33 community action projects span a wide range of issues, themes and projects. "Whatever our teams can dream up, we work with them step by step to make it happen. On a one-on-one basis we link up participants with experienced mentors and as a group we provide them with a team coach. Our project teams tackle the issues they feel are the most important and the results are all around us – upgrades

in our parks and community infrastructure, increased capacity building by local non-profits and new partnerships to tackle the most pressing social issues head on."

Delivering a challenging, life-enriching, nine-month action/study program that hones the skills of emerging leaders by immersing them in real-world community issues, Leadership Victoria promotes the sharing of ideas, experiences, resources and networks as current leaders pass the torch to participants who, in turn, become informed, active, well-rounded community citizens. Participants, led by experienced

coaches who ensure projects are manageable and connect students with community resources, partner with community organizations to develop and deliver projects that provide a lasting community benefit.

Projects allow participants to work collaboratively, practice group development and engage in participatory decision-making. They also provide unique opportunities to apply leadership skills in a tangible context. Community agencies and their constituents benefit as participants develop these skills and in turn, participants gain practical insight into the workings of Greater Victoria communities. "We invest in the most results-oriented projects by harnessing the passion and power of teams," Shore says.

Like, for example, another of last year's Leadership Victoria teams that tackled an environmental project at Witt's Lagoon. Guided by Shauna Fenwick, Kate Longpre, Dan MacKinnon, Rob Olsen, Jaya Polden and Aaron Slingsby constructed a new teaching shelter at the park. The open-air classroom is the first of its kind, serving as a staging area for more than 80,000 community residents who visit Witt's Lagoon each year, including 9,500 who attend CRD Regional Parks guided walks and events.

It will be a lasting legacy of these community leaders – and Leadership Victoria.

Just the FAQs

Q: What is Leadership Victoria?
A: Founded in 2000, Leadership Victoria is a community-based, voluntary organization committed to developing, supporting, recognizing and honouring outstanding community leaders. Over the last decade, it has become the "go to" organization for community leadership in Greater Victoria, graduating more than 200 leaders from diverse backgrounds who continue to work to improve their community.

Q: What programs are offered?
A: Three main programs include: The core nine-month experiential-based learning program; the annual Victoria Leadership Awards, in partnership with the Victoria Foundation, University of Victoria, Vancity and Rotary Clubs of Victoria; and an annual leadership symposium providing an opportunity for key people to gather and challenge conventional wisdom on pressing social issues.

Q: Why is community leadership so essential?
A: Leadership Victoria believes the community's future is in our hands. Because community leadership can be taught and learned, as a community we are accountable for developing emerging leaders and ensuring the current generation passes on its skills and wisdom to promising new leaders. As the community faces many challenges, experienced, trained leaders are required more than ever to tackle those challenges head on.

How you can get involved

For more information, or to apply to the program please contact us at:

- 306 - 620 View St.,
Victoria, BC V8W 1J6
- Jack Shore, Executive Director,
250-386-2269 ext. 31 or email
jack@leadershipvictoria.ca
- Visit www.leadershipvictoria.ca

Want to learn more?

Attend one of Leadership Victoria's coming information sessions, April 28 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. in Room C130, David Strong Building, University of Victoria, or May 11 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. in the boardroom of the Rental Owners and Management Society of BC, 803B Pembroke St.

Unleash your inner community leader!

Enroll today for the transformational learning experience of your life!

Visit our website and sign up now for our Community Leadership program

or attend one of our upcoming information sessions;

5pm April 28 in room C 130 in the David Strong Building at the University of Victoria
5pm May 11 in the boardroom of the Rental Owners and Management Society of BC
- 803B Pembroke Street

For more information visit us at www.leadershipvictoria.ca
or call Jack Shore at 250.386.2269

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