

Leadership Ashland recognizes graduates

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Leadership Ashland had its annual graduation program on June 8, during which 26 emerging community leaders were recognized for completion of the program and one Leadership Ashland Alumni was recognized with the Outstanding Alumni Award. Local business BCU Electric Inc. sponsored the event.

Leadership Ashland is designed to identify existing and emerging leaders, acquaint participants with community needs and issues, and broaden participants' understanding of the political, economic, business and social environments of Ashland County. The ultimate goal of the program is to prepare participants to take a more active leadership role within the community as well as in their sponsoring organizations.

This year's class began with a retreat in September 2016, when class members participated in an intensive team development workshop with Wager's Way Equine Assisted Action Learning and then spent the afternoon outlining the topics they wanted to learn about during the 10-month professional development program.

Throughout the remaining nine months of classes, held once a month, class members learned about a variety of community focus areas as well as participated in ongoing leadership development education where they engaged in learning and practicing actionable leadership skills that they could apply both in their professional and personal lives. Class focus days included a bus tour of Ashland County from north to south; Board Development; Education; Health and Social Services; Government and Safety Services; Agriculture and Environment; Business and Industry; and Culture and Recreation. At the retreat, class members selected a focus day they were interested in and then worked in teams to plan all of the logistics for their class day.

"Leadership Ashland helped to better my understanding of working as a team and developing a successful and positive functioning team. The ideas and training in Leadership Ashland's program brought me the challenge of becoming a better listener rather than jumping straight to implementing my own ideas" Heather Arangelovich, Brethren Care Village.

This year's graduates represented a variety of businesses and non-profit organizations in Ashland County. According to Leadership Ashland Executive Director Ginny Telego, a new curriculum was implemented for the 2016-17 class that was targeted at developing leaders through self-awareness as well as gaining skills to become facilitative servant leaders.

The Leadership Ashland class of 2017 members and their sponsors include:

Angela Ringler, Advantage Marketing Inc.; Jeremy Herrmann, American Augers; Cindy Kyser, Appleseed CMHC; Melanie Miller, Ashland Care Center; **Lanie Hartge, Ashland County Community Foundation; Mindy Howman, Ashland County Community Foundation;**

Michael Parry, Career Center; Deborah Sullivan, Ashland University; Dan White, BCU Electric; Heather Arangelovich, Brethren Care Village; Molly Bartholomew, Brethren Care Village; Kelly Marshall, city of Ashland; Melissa Mckenzie, Crystal Care Center; Katelyn Edwards, Eco-Flo Products; Nancy Pauly, Eva's Treats; MaryAnn Wilson, Farmers and Savings; Jake Blasdel, First Presbyterian Church -- ACCF Grant Recipient; Scott Fickes, Hedstrom; Heidi Bursley, Housekeeping by Heather; Doug Pauly, Pauly Accounting & Payroll (board member); Chad Emmons, Simonson Construction Services; Dustin Kruty, Spreng-Smith Agency; Barb Kruske, University Hospitals Samaritan Medical Center; Scott Cox, University Hospitals Samaritan Medical Center; Melissa McCormic, sponsored by United Way Women in Action; and Jordan Lance, Whitcomb & Hess Inc.

In addition to celebrating the achievements of the graduates, each year, Leadership Ashland recognizes a past graduate of the program who "exemplifies the essence of leadership in his or her community." Alumni are nominated based on contributions they make serving on boards and committees, leadership roles they serve in and the impact of their contributions. The 2017 recipient of the Leadership Ashland Outstanding Alumnus Award is Dennis Miller.

Miller graduated from Leadership Ashland in 2005. He has been, and continues to be, involved in many service organizations and projects in the community. As vice president of PNC Bank in Ashland, Miller collaborates with numerous organizations and individuals to bring people to Ashland. His volunteer contributions span an array of community organizations, including United Way, Mohican Area Growth Foundation, Hospice of North Central Ohio, Rotary Club of Ashland, Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce and the Ashland YMCA. In his nomination, Miller was recognized for "modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act and encouraging the heart of every organization he served and is currently serving."

Regarding his experience in Leadership Ashland, Miller said, "For me, the Leadership Ashland program was a great experience that reinforced the value of teamwork and provided me with the tools to improve my leadership skills. Since I graduated, I have been on eight boards of service and civic organizations in Ashland, and have taken an active, leadership role in every one of them. I can attest to the fact that going through the LA class really prepared me to be a productive and effective leader in those organizations. It has also proven to be very beneficial in my profession, and in my personal life as well. I strongly encourage anyone considering enrolling in this program to go for it. You will be very glad you did!"

More than 450 people have graduated from Leadership Ashland and have gone on to have a positive impact in their organizations and the community. Because they believe the Leadership Ashland program is a critical component in ensuring Ashland County has extraordinary leaders long into the future, the Ashland County Community Foundation became the Sustaining Sponsor of Leadership Ashland in 2015.

Applications are currently being accepted for the 2017-18 class. To learn more about the program, contact Ginny Telego at the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce office at 419-281-4584 or visit www.ashlandoh.com.