

# greater MANKATO *this month*

## Leadership Key to Greater Mankato's Future

When I came to the community six years ago, I was impressed by the passion and willingness of Greater Mankatoans to step up and serve as leaders for the benefit of their community. From large scale projects that impact our entire community to niche focused efforts that improve an important segment within our community, I have seen again and again individuals in Greater Mankato willing to take on a leadership role.

And for the record, you don't have to be out front in an effort to serve as a community leader. Leadership is more about the way in which you serve in an effort than what position you have.

An important element of effective leadership is a sincere spirit of collaboration. Or to put it another way: *"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want it to last, go together."* This adage, which has been attributed to various individuals in a variety of forms, while simple, gets to the heart of what community leadership is all about for me.

I used it a few weeks ago, when I had the privilege of speaking to the Greater Mankato participants in the Blandin Community Leadership Program. This program that develops community leadership was offered to the community last year, and since then has helped instruct and guide three groups (72 individuals total) from the area on effective community leadership. In this program, participants learn about the importance of working together and embracing one another's differences and the unique talents each bring to the table to make the community a better place.

The development of leadership does not happen by accident; it requires an intentional effort. Fortunately, the Greater Mankato region has many programs that help nurture and enhance leadership traits in our community's current and emerging



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leaders. It is inspiring to see all the organizations that put a priority on leadership training in our community.

One program that Greater Mankato Growth is responsible implementing, the Greater Mankato Leadership Institute, has provided comprehensive leadership training with a community focus for more than 25 years. Another program, our Greater Mankato Leadership Delegation periodically brings our region's leaders together to explore challenges and opportunities for our region, strengthen connections and rejuvenate and refuel community initiatives. And our Leaders of Tomorrow program connects our community's future leaders who are in college at the moment, with current leaders in the business community.

Thanks to these and the many other leadership programs and the willingness of our citizens to work together to serve as leaders, Greater Mankato is well positioned to take advantage of opportunities that will present themselves and address the challenges we'll face as we continue to grow into the future. As another person once taught me, "Success is when preparation meets opportunity."

## Greater Mankato Leadership Institute Welcomes Back Alumni

Many past participants of the Greater Mankato Leadership Institute have indicated that the training was so valuable, they would like to participate again. Beginning this **January**, alumni of the Greater Mankato Leadership Institute (or its predecessor programs Leadership Mankato and Leadership Mankato Area) can participate in some 2011 sessions, alongside the current class. For more details and registration information, visit [greatermankato.com/gmg-leadershipinstitute.php](http://greatermankato.com/gmg-leadershipinstitute.php).