

2017 London Life Young Leaders Program Report

"Walking into the program was very intimidating, especially the recurring statements of "board governance" and "we will be learning about board roles on nonprofits." The incredibly welcoming and supportive team at the Young Leaders Program enable you not only to feel comfortable enough to learn and explore, but also to support you through your personal journey of discovery allowing you to find your passions and interests and bridge them into the program. It was a very enjoyable experience, throughout. We, as youth, are incredibly lucky to have such a beneficial and crucial program right here in London."
(Program participant)

Pillar Nonprofit Network, in partnership with the London Youth Advisory Council was delighted to take over the delivery of the London Life Young Leaders Program from the United Way London & Middlesex. It has been an amazing experience and a wonderful opportunity to meet and work with dynamic young leaders in our community.

Candidate Recruitment:

- We received 16 applications for the 2017/2018 London Life Young Leaders program.
- 15 candidates were selected to be matched on boards
 - 13 women, 2 men
 - 53% of this cohort represented ethno-culturally diverse communities

Candidate Placement:

The 15 candidates have been placed with the following organizations:

- Cheshire Homes
- ChildCan
- Childreach
- Community Living London
- Cross Cultural Learner Centre
- Daya Counselling
- Growing Chefs
- John Howard Society
- London Employment Help Centre
- London InterCommunity Health Centre
- LUSO Community Services
- Neighbourhood Legal Services
- Pillar Nonprofit Network
- Twelve Canada
- Youth Opportunities Unlimited

"The Pillar Young Leaders program has provided me with the opportunity to acquire the experience required to become a member of a board for an organization. I think as a young person, it is hard to imagine how you can contribute in that way to your community, but through this program I believe I have an increase in confidence that this is something that young people should be doing, and doing more often."
(Program participant)

Candidate Preparation and Learning:

We provided two professional development-training days: Fall 2017 and Winter 2018.

Fall 2017:

This session was designed to help candidates prepare for their volunteer leadership experiences. Topics covered included:

Board Roles and Responsibilities
Understanding Strategic Planning
Understanding Financial Statements
Advice and a Q & A with a past participant

Winter 2018:

This session was designed to hear what candidates had to say about their experience, apply their learning into case study discussions. Case study situations included:

How to juggle financial accountability and organizational mission
Running effective meetings
Board Chair and Executive Director roles

We invited a guest speaker from Elgin Middlesex United Way to present on their GenNext Program, so that participants could learn about ways that they may continue to contribute in the community.

"I liked the lectures as they make me feel more prepared and confident going into my first board meeting; it allows me to learn and become accustomed to new terminology"
(Participant comment Fall 2017 training session)

"This has been a great experience and I am definitely looking forward to being involved again. I also really liked how the day was structured. I felt like I got perspective on how various boards run and best practices around board governance"
(Participant comment Winter 2018 training session)

Overall Key Learning for Participants:

Participants were asked to complete an online survey to evaluate their overall learning from the program:

Participants reported:

- Increased overall understanding of board governance
- Increased understanding of board decision making
- Increased understanding of the roles and responsibilities of board members

When asked to identify the top two most important things they learned through their experience on their board placements, participants identified a range of learning, including the following:

- The importance of diversity on boards
- The key role of the Executive Director and Board Chair in a non profit
- The importance of good communication within an organization

100% of respondents said that they would recommend this program to others.

Final Comments Observations:

This program has been a great fit for Pillar Nonprofit Network and The London Youth Advisory Council. The expertise of both our organizations allowed us to deliver a program that helped the Young Leaders gain a valuable experience with their board placements along with professional development that allowed them understand nonprofit leadership, gain more skills and enhance their leadership potential. We look forward to the opportunity to work with another cohort of young leaders for the 2019-2019 year!

"I think this was an amazing opportunity as many young people do not get the chance to have an experience like this. I have really learned a lot about myself and what I can bring to the table. I am actually staying on the board moving forward and have been asked to join the fundraising committee. I am really excited to continue to learn." (Program participant)

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