



ASHE Leadership Institute Provides Unique Training for Emerging Leaders

Most ASHE members get plenty of training in the technical skills needed to do their jobs, including areas such as maintenance and operations; code compliance; and planning, design and construction. But one area of knowledge critical to professional success is often overlooked in college programs and on-the-job training: leadership skills.

To fill that gap, ASHE created the ASHE Leadership Institute nearly a decade ago. The program offers emerging leaders intensive training in skills they can use to manage employees, improve their productivity, and generally become more effective leaders. The Leadership Institute fits into ASHE's strategic initiative of building members' reputations as highly valued professionals with a specialized body of knowledge, experience, and competency that contributes strategic, operational, and business value to their organizations.

The Leadership Institute, a two-day training program, is held annually in a historic desert resort outside of Phoenix, Ariz. Those invited include ASHE members who have won the ASHE Emerging Regional Leader award and members of the ASHE Board of Directors. First-time attendees start in the program's Year 1 and are invited back for three more years before they graduate. A Year 5 program offers another level of education, putting into action all the things learned over the previous years. Because of the limited number of people attending, class sizes are small and participants closely interact throughout the program.

"The Leadership Institute takes folks who are already successful and helps them take that next step in sharpening their skills," said ASHE Executive Director Dale Woodin, CHFM, FASHE. "We're finding this approach to developing future leaders provides benefits to both the attendees' organizations and ASHE."

Iona Canada is manager of Healthcare Business Development for Trane Commercial Systems, one of the sponsors of the Leadership Institute. Canada, who taught Year 1 students about accountability and the Oz Principle this year, said the Leadership Institute provides a focus on skills that are sometimes forgotten.

"Some may view leadership skills as a softer set of skills," she told her students, "but you need a combination of skills to succeed."

Graduates of the Leadership Institute rave about the effects the program has had on them. Jeffrey Arthurs, CHFM, CHSP, FASHE, first attended the Leadership Institute after being named an emerging regional leader in 2005. Arthurs said the skills learned in the program have helped him succeed—and contributed to his becoming the ASHE president in 2012.

“I’ve learned a great deal about how to lead people and lead projects,” Arthurs said. “It’s been a tremendous benefit back in my organization, and also in my work with ASHE. Having gone through it and seen the benefits of it, I’m really excited for the folks who are coming into Leadership for the first time.”

2011 ASHE President Skip Smith told attendees over dinner to look around at the people sitting with them. A future ASHE president is likely sitting here, he said, and the room was also full of future board members, committee members, and those involved in trying to raise the bar in optimizing the health care physical environment.

For now, though, the emerging leaders within ASHE said they are happy to be a part of the Leadership Institute and appreciate the chance for advancement.

“It’s an opportunity to meet people and network and expand your knowledge,” said Jeri Trippett, project manager at Davis Memorial Hospital in Elkins, W.Va., and the winner of the 2011 ASHE Region 3 Emerging Regional Leader award. “It’s an opportunity that wouldn’t otherwise be afforded to you.”

St. Joseph Hospital Director of Facilities Management & Safety Officer Dean Pufahl, CHFM, said he didn’t realize when he was named Emerging Regional Leader for Region 6 in 2011 that he would also be invited to The Wigwam hotel in Litchfield Park, Ariz.

“This allows you to network with people who are at the top of their game,” Pufahl said. “That’s important if we’re going to move the bar up. You have to have that interaction.”

But perhaps the most immediate benefits from the program are seen back in the workplaces of those attending the Leadership Institute. Dev Ogle, a senior consulting partner at the Ken Blanchard Companies, taught Year 3 students how to assess their personalities, how their dispositions play into working with others, and how to resolve conflicts. If his students put into practice what they learned at the Institute, he said, their employers will see real benefits.

“It will reduce turnover, increase satisfaction, increase profits, reduce costs, and they will have a higher quality relationship with the people they work with,” Ogle said.

ASHE members attending the Leadership Institute are in classes both mornings, but have afternoons free to network with some of the top leaders in the health care physical environment field.

“The educational content is very good, but I think what is even more valuable and just as enjoyable is the structure of the event,” said Cynde Dornuf, CBC, Healthcare Solutions Program Manager at Johnson Controls, a sponsor of the Leadership Institute. “It gives you a chance to really know and interact with people through solid networking opportunities. It also gives you an opportunity to dig deep into one topic—leadership—and really understand it.”

Participants quickly learn that others across the country face some of the same challenges they do, and can discuss which solutions work and which ones don't. Members swap stories over dinner, chat during rounds of golf on a manicured course dotted with palm trees, and make lasting connections throughout the weekend.

"It becomes a peer support group," Woodin said. "You leave knowing you have a national network of people to reach out to as a sounding board to help you with the challenges you face."

Arthurs said some of the friendships forged at the Leadership Institute last over time.

"The camaraderie is fantastic," Arthurs said. "Coming back to the Leadership Institute is like a family reunion."

To apply for the ASHE Emerging Regional Leader award or for more information on the program, see ASHE's website at http://www.ashe.org/about/awards/regional_leader/index.html. To volunteer to become more involved with ASHE, see this Web page: <http://www.ashe.org/about/volunteer.html>.