



Develop base for conducting business through Leadership Novato

Leadership Novato (LN) provides an opportunity for current and aspiring community leaders to learn firsthand about the inner workings of the community. Current City of Novato and civic leaders and experts conduct interactive presentations, site visits and discussions to give North Marin's future leaders a firm foundation of knowledge about how Novato works. Best of all LN classes form tightly-knit cells of informed people who can call on each other for the rest of their business and professional lives.

“Even though I graduated from LN in 2003, I still pick up the phone and call someone I met in that class to confer when I have a problem or need some information,” says Laura Levine, COO and Vice President, Realtor-Broker for Northbay Family Homes. “Leadership training is a great gift to give yourself if you expect to live or work in the North Bay.”

In addition to expanding graduates' network of personal and professional contacts, LN training has the following immediate benefits:

- Educates participants about local needs and concerns so they can become more effective leaders.
- Provides a forum for exchanging ideas among current and emerging leaders representing diverse interests and backgrounds.
- Broadens participants' perspectives of issues and trends.

Coy Smith, CEO of the Novato Chamber that produces LN, says the training is particularly good for community representatives, business professionals from the public, private and non-profit industries, executives new to Novato and entrepreneurs, aspiring leaders and board members who are interested in understanding the issues first hand.

“Graduates can expect to increase their businesses or professional practice in Novato and our region by increasing their awareness and understanding of the local community,” Smith adds.

“People often ask, ‘Why can't this action be taken, or that policy be implemented’,” explains recent LN graduate Amy Lindsay-Murphy. “At first glance, many new ideas have merit and people are disappointed to learn that there is another, perfectly valid policy that would suffer if the new ideas were adopted.

“Leadership training gives people knowledge about existing policies and explains the history of each,” she continues. “After people have graduated from Leadership, they don't spin their wheels on ideas that will never fly. Instead, LN graduates have the information to improve existing policies or develop them further.

“Leadership is truly the jump start for anyone who expects to make North Marin their longtime home.”

LN commences with a mandatory retreat on Tuesday, Sept. 9. The first session takes place the following day.

Subsequent sessions are held the second Wednesday of each month, from October to May. Participants enjoy a Continental breakfast and buffet lunch at each meeting. A graduation ceremony follows on the evening of the final session.

Participants simultaneously work on a community project outside of the session. The purpose of the projects is to encourage team building and develop community relations. Just in the 2007-08 year, LN graduates provided \$186,000 worth of goods and services to the Novato community:

- The “Growth Spurts” raised \$10,000 and performed the physical labor necessary to revitalize a 25x90-foot garden at Lu Sutton Elementary School This team worked cooperatively with the Novato Parks, Recreation and Community Services department.
- Team “Found of Youth” raised funds for and installed an eye-catching new street sign to replace the 30-year-old sign at the Novato Youth Center. The value of the sign, installation and landscaping was \$6,000.
- “Team Novatopoly” created and marketed a Novato-based version of the world-famous Monopoly board game, sales of which raised \$10,000 for School Fuel.
- The “Green Team” helped the Novato Unified School District develop a way to keep its trash collection costs low by installing trash-reduction and -recycling systems at schools and training teachers and students how to use them. The team also raised money for student-initiated incentive programs for recycling at both Novato high schools. It is estimated that the NUSD will save up to \$160,000 a year.

Applications for LN must be submitted and tuition paid by August 31. A limited number of scholarships for up to 50 percent of tuition are available.

Call the Chamber office at 415-897-1164 for more information, or see the Leadership link online at www.novatochamber.com.

-- *Novato Business News*
August 2008