

# Multicultural **LEADERSHIP** Program

**Celebrating 5 Years**  
Leadership Untapped  
Our Graduates Are Our Legacy

To develop diverse leaders

October 2013

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## Who Are We

MCLP is an intense professional leadership development program that provides a framework for diverse individuals with an interest and potential to serve as leaders in our community.

Our goal is to prepare skilled, informed individuals for leadership positions in public, private, educational, political and non-profit sectors.

## Active Friendships



### Active Community

by Elayne Goldman

There is great potential for new friendships to emerge when groups and partnerships are established in MCLP. What makes a friendship great is when the relationship not only lasts longer than the program, but when it inspires action to better the community.

On the surface, Tim Golliday and Anand Bhende could not have been more different.

Tim grew up in the Midwest – tall, sandy-haired, thoughtful, careful with his words, and delivers on his promises. Anand grew up in India – a dark-haired, fast-paced, energetic, quick thinker who gets a lot done every day. Because of their MCLP experiences, they became best friends who “trust each other 100%.”

Tim and Anand became fast friends after they had completed

the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment within their first few weeks in MCLP's Class of 2012. With "Developer" and "Arranger" among their top strengths, the combination was perfect for Tim and Anand. Their story demonstrates it matters little how diverse people are on the surface; we are all more alike than different.

When asked what they have learned from each other or what has surprised them, Anand replied, "There are no surprises! We are straightforward and honest with each other and accept the way we are." Tim added, "He has shown me strength and compassion for what I want and desire. It empowers me to do what I want to do."

Tim and Anand worked on a recycling outreach project with the Ecology Action Center (EAC) – an MCLP community organization partner. They continue to volunteer with the EAC today. After their MCLP team project concluded, both graciously accepted the EAC invitation to serve on the organization's board and committees.

The EAC offers environmental education, information, and outreach to citizens of the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County. "Lots of people don't understand how green we need to be," says Tim. "It's a behavioral change that we need to make to change the way we see things." Anand agreed, "Composting, recycling, energy conservation; we need to keep doing these until people understand how it will impact the next generation."

The EAC also hosts educational workshops for clean water, water conservation, and more. They strive to achieve environmental health and sustainability by raising awareness and inspiring behavioral change with the help of people like Tim and Anand. "It's about making a difference in the community," says Anand. "We can't live with this status quo and we want to help with the change."

"We stayed involved in EAC after we graduated from MCLP because we believe in their cause. We focus on outreach and build membership. We get to talk to people in the community and say 'hey, this is what we are about'," Tim says. "Servant leadership is about putting others first. Before MCLP it was all about me and what I needed to get done." Anand added his views, "Servant leadership is different; it's not something people generally embrace. It's always good to step into another person's shoes and walk that mile to understand them better. We don't see that every day."

Both men are currently active with MCLP as well as the EAC, working with the community through various organization efforts. Their friendship does nothing but grow as they work together to make their community a better place.

# Living in Poverty

## An Eye Opening Experience

by Tommy Navickas



My name is Connie Chen, and I am a 16-year-old immigrant from China. My parents and two younger siblings came to the states two short years ago. My father was recently laid off, and he no longer qualifies to receive unemployment income. My mother has a full-time job, but her paycheck doesn't cover our expenses. I am also seven months pregnant, and of the five of us, only my brother and sister speak English.

Connie and the fictional Chen family are one of the many stories adapted in the Multicultural Leadership Program's (MCLP) annual poverty simulation. This year, the experience was co-sponsored by Leadership McLean County (LMC), and took place at the Lawrence Irvin Neighborhood Center (LINC) in west Bloomington. It is part of the core curriculum for both programs, and is always open to public participation.

The simulation was led by Carolyn Hansen, Extension Educator for 4-H Youth Development at the University of Illinois, and made possible through the help of countless volunteers. In her nonprofit work, Hansen assists poverty-stricken families on a daily basis, and their all-too-real—and common—struggles. She says that more than 50% of Americans are just two or less paychecks away from falling below the poverty line. Citizens of Bloomington-Normal endure poverty and homelessness at a similar rate.

"In fact," said Hansen, "McLean County's poverty rate is .8% higher than the national average of 8.4%."

During the simulation, the LINC gymnasium was transformed into a virtual city including a bank, shelter, school, grocery store, a "quick cash" business, a potential employer, community action center, utilities company, childcare facility, pawn shop, police station, health department, transportation center, and mortgage company. Participants were segmented into families, including a few single-person units. Before the simulation began, Hansen took a moment to help put participants in the frame of mind of a poverty-stricken family.

For those who want to make a difference, the Bloomington-Normal community has numerous resources to assist those in need and combat hunger, homelessness, and families fighting poverty. These resources are always in need of individuals interested in donating time and/or funds, and include:

[Mid-Central Community Action Center](#)

[Project Oz](#)

[Providing Access to Help \(PATH\)](#)

[UNITY Community](#)

[Home Sweet Home Mission](#)

[The Jesus House](#)

[Western Avenue Community Center](#)

among others.

She told them: “You no longer have the job you walked in here with today. You do not own the same car. In fact, you may not even own a car. This means you depend on public transportation. You are unsure where your next meal will come from, and are struggling to meet your own basic needs, and for those of your family.”

Olemuel Ashford, a systems analyst and team leader for State Farm, serves as a curriculum developer for MCLP. This was his fourth straight year participating or volunteering in the simulation, and this time he ran the public school.

“At the beginning of the month, attendance was good, but as time went on, they stopped showing up,” Ashford said, describing the simulation.

Often, this happened because the children were needed to help their families at home. The Chens were no exception. They leaned on Connie to help pay bills, deposit checks, and even haggle at the pawn shop. Her younger siblings were pulled out of school to help translate for their parents. The family was evicted by the third week, prompting them to consider resorting to illegal activities to help make ends meet.

Following the simulation, participants discussed their experiences, and the stressors they endured.

“It was a race where we were always competing against time.”

“We were robbed in the first week, and after that I felt useless.”

“There was little direction, and the stress got higher as time went on.”

“It felt like nobody cared.”

However, along with those struggles, there was camaraderie and teamwork.

“One family welcomed us into their home after we got evicted, and we helped out by paying for the weekly meals.”

“We slowly began to understand what we needed to do to act as a community.”

At the end of the night, the most common descriptors used about the event were “jarring” and “eye-opening.” Participants also indicated that they began to understand how many things they take for granted that serve as daily challenges for others, such as feeding their family, procuring transportation, and paying the mortgage.

Perhaps the most important impact of the simulation was to change this group of leaders’ perspective and knowledge of what they can do to help, and why they should act.

“What is one thing you can do to make a difference? What is one way you can make others’ lives better?”

# Life-changing and Energizing

## An MCLP Alumni Story

*by Kelli Saizon, Class of 2013*

The Multicultural Leadership Program (MCLP) produces great graduates who continue to credit the program for their ability to serve their communities. Erica Scott is an MCLP Alum from the Class of 2013. Scott attributes where she is now—and the ability to make a significant change in her life—to her MCLP experience. She believes it was the program’s curriculum that assisted in her professional development, ability to take on leadership roles, and desire to bring about positive change.



Scott is currently a resident of Dallas, Texas where she supports multiple managers and teams at a mobile communications company. She credits MCLP for helping her to understand her strength for contributing to the success of her team and company as a whole.

Prior to leaving Bloomington, Scott had a conversation with a ten-year-old girl who asked her some unexpected questions about life. In a short time, the young girl took note of Scott’s character. Never having been exposed to someone as approachable, kind-hearted, and inspiring as Scott, the impact was so great that she still inquires about Scott to this day. Regardless of whether someone is “watching” or not, Scott wants set a positive example for others.

“I now find myself thinking about what I am doing in my life that will not just help those in the present, but also benefit and make a better place for future generations,” she said.

Upon arriving in Dallas, the first thing she did was to write down her goals—what she wanted to do, not what others wanted her to do. At this new beginning in her life, Scott found inspiration in a quote: “Easy to dream a dream but harder to live it.”

For Scott, MCLP gave her the courage she needed to take a chance and pursue her goals in the face of obstacles.

“My MCLP journey removed the complacency in me and energized my spirit to actively go after the things I was hesitant to do, and to not prolong my goals,” Scott said. “I am an MCLP Legacy.”

Scott realized that the more she put into the program, the more she benefitted. She found it to be a life-changing experience for her and those she touched.

“Those in the program never used anything I divulged against me; instead, they used what I revealed about myself to build me up,” Scott said. “MCLP taught me that vulnerability is not a weakness, but being open to what others are thinking and being open and honest with myself is strength, a platform to be able to tell people the truth and be comfortable with what and who I am.”

MCLP provided Scott with a terrific support system that still encourages her to this day as she continues to reach out to her colleagues in the program. The lessons of MCLP are with her every step of the way in her new community.

Not long after arriving in Dallas, Scott researched and talked with individuals in her community to determine where she could contribute. She was immediately drawn to an alumni chapter of her alma mater, Jackson State University (JSU), and has become active in recruiting high school students for the university. She was also able to continue volunteer work she started in Bloomington through the Dallas Habitat for Humanity.

“What I really like about volunteering is that no matter who you come across, everyone is trying to help,” Scott said. “Being around positive people when you are trying to make a difference is rewarding to the soul. Even though I am only volunteering one or two hours [a week], that time is priceless when contributing to someone’s life.”

Scott strives to be a confident leader and engaged citizen for her community. This includes returning to school to earn her master’s degree in global strategies. She is looking forward to the collaboration she will have with individuals of different cultures and the opportunity to continue to interact and learn from people with various insights and experiences.

“From time to time I ask myself if I am really doing what I want to do,” Scott said, “and I really am.”





With the holidays drawing near we tend to reflect on our past year and what we are truly thankful for. MCLP would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to all who have made the program successful over the past 5 years.

To all our past and current presenters, mentors, advisory council members, board members, committee members, staff, and volunteers; we say Thank You, Thank You, and Thank You for supporting our mission and assisting in the development diverse leaders.

We invite our readers to share how MCLP has positively impacted you by completing the following statement for posting on our social media sites.

[“Because of MCLP I am thankful for...”](#)

## Save The Date

### Community Project Team Mid-Term Presentations

**December 7, 2013, 8:30 am-10:30 am**

**Illinois Wesleyan University Memorial Center**

Our project teams are mid-way through their community projects. Come hear the 20-minute presentations by each of the 5 project teams on the status of their projects and how all their hard work will benefit the community.

### 2015 Recruitment Reception

**December 7, 2013,**

**Illinois Wesleyan University Memorial Center**

Interested in applying for the Multicultural Leadership Program? Register to attend an MCLP Recruitment Reception. Contact the MCLP office at [contactus@bn-mclp.org](mailto:contactus@bn-mclp.org), subject "2015 Recruitment" or 309-438-3417 if you have any questions.

### Board Networking Fair

**Saturday, February 8, 2014, 11:45-12:45**

**COUNTRY Financial/IAA, 1701 N Towanda Avenue, Bloomington, IL**

We are soliciting for boards to apply to participate in the fair. At the event, the Class of 2014 will experience numerous 4 to 5 minute sessions of speed networking with local community organizations in need of board and committee members. Each organization will provide information on their mission and needs.

If you represent a non-profit organization in our community that wishes to be considered for participation, please submit the [MCLP Board Networking Fair Form](#) by December 20th.

Multicultural Leadership Program (MCLP)

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