

Leading Edge | PROGRAM REVIEW 2017

THE CLASS OF 2017

Having completed its sixth successful year in Summer 2017, Leading Edge is Leadership Pikes Peak’s comprehensive community leadership program developed specifically for high school teens.

This year, the Leading Edge program accepted 24 students from 13 different high schools including public, private, charter, and online schools. Students accepted into the program had to complete an application process that included a teacher recommendation as well as an interview with the Leading Edge team. We are proud to say that we had a 100% graduation rate, showing the deep commitment of all participants to this year’s program. These students completed the program with a better understanding of themselves, their personal communities, and the city in which they live. They are equipped with the skills and empowerment to be the next great leaders of our community.

2017 Class Statistics

Genders Self-Identification: 55% Male 45% Female
 Ethnicity Self-Identification: 63% Caucasian 16% Hispanic 16% Asian 5% African-American
 Tuition and Scholarships: 75% received full or partial scholarship 25% full pay tuition
 Total Tuition Funds Awarded: \$5,950

THE PROGRAM

The Leading Edge program started the summer with a full week of “boot camp”. This frontloaded the educational curriculum and provided a shared formative experience to help the teens tackle the more challenging part of the program, small group projects to assist local nonprofits. The remaining curriculum took place on a weekly basis throughout the summer. The curriculum familiarized the students with key leadership concepts and offered opportunities for immediate practice and first-hand community education.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

In addition to program day curriculum, the teens all participate in community service projects. These projects are requested by local nonprofits and voted on by the teens, which allows them to practice teamwork, project management, and creative thinking, as well as community stewardship. The 2017 Leading Edge class completed the following five projects:

- Colorado Springs Utilities Waste Water Unit: This group were educated on and researched the effects that pet waste has on our environment and water systems. The teens then conducted surveys at local dog parks to find out how the general population feels about picking up dog waste. They also attended several community events to educate dog-owners of the risks of leaving waste in public spaces.

THE CURRICULUM

Civic Topics Covered

Homelessness and Hunger
Public Safety
Arts and Culture
Environment and Conservation
Local History
Physical and Mental Health
Local Government
Innovation and Entrepreneurship
STEM and Local Industry

Leadership Topics Covered

Personality Assessments
Emotional Intelligence
Team Building
Communication
Project Management
Diversity Training
Public Speaking

- **Catamount Institute:** The Catamount Institute is located in Sonderman Park here in Colorado Springs. Often, visitors of the park ask Catamount for a map of the park and the walking trails. The map Catamount had of the park was created in the 1980s and was in need of updates. The students designed and printed a new map that was more appealing, accurately portrayed the locations and difficulties of the trails, and could be used interactively by visitors to the park.
- **Colorado Collective COCO Crafted:** Newly opened in Colorado Springs, COCO Crafted is an organization working to bring arts and crafting to community members of all ages. This group of teens assisted COCO Crafted in completing market research and building a target audience of patrons. They also created marketing materials to be distributed in the community.
- **Kids on Bikes:** Bristol Elementary participates in Kids on Bikes program, where students who have good attendance and grades are rewarded with being able to rent bikes from the Bristol Bike Library, encouraging healthy physical activity as well as good academics. Through Kids on Bikes, Bristol received a recycled shipping container for their new bike library. The Leading Edge students in this group worked to design and paint the exterior of the container as well as build shelving and storage for the bikes and tools inside of the container.
- **Peak Parent Center:** Working to ensure that all people with disabilities are fully included in their communities and all walks of life, Peak Parent Center asked their group of teens to create a video series to humanize teens with disabilities. Each of the teens in this group interviewed a teen, who they know personally, that lives with a disability. These videos will be used as an educational tool.

RESULTS

We are continually making efforts to improve our programming to be impactful for our participants. In addition to surveys for each session day, we also conduct pre-program and post-program surveys to monitor the participants' growth over the course of the program. For example, in the pre-program survey, only 50% of this year's participants agreed with the statement, "I consider myself a leader", while in the post-program survey, 100% of participants agreed. In response to the question, "Would you recommend Leading Edge to a friend or classmate?" 100% of participants answered "Yes!"

One student wrote, "Leading Edge opened my eyes about the diversity and beauty of the Pikes Peak Region. Before this program I did not know much about what I could do as a leader in my community, but now I feel informed of the region's issues and ready to help." This sentiment was mirrored in many students' comments about the program. Not only did the students recognize their own growth throughout the program, but we had many parents speak to the positive changes they had seen in their students and how impressed they were with the knowledge and skills their children were gaining from the program.

PROGRAM INVESTORS

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the program, financially and through time and energy. Your impact on our youth has been profound and we look forward to working with you in the future. We would especially like to thank this year's financial sponsors:



Leadership Pikes Peak's mission is to build a thriving community through leadership and service.