

# NLI NEIGHBORHOOD LEADER

Neighborhood Leadership Institute *Greater Cleveland's Connection to Neighborhood Leadership and Community Engagement*

## Grassroots Leaders Gather to Network, Celebrate

Winter 2005/2006  
Volume I, Issue 4

More than 100 grassroots leaders and their guests came together in December for the Neighborhood Leadership Institute's annual holiday gathering. This year's event was held at the historic Grays Armory in downtown Cleveland.

Attendees sampled a buffet dinner, danced to the sounds of a DJ, and renewed acquaintances with former classmates from Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland.

Shortly after the doors opened at 7:00 p.m., newly elected Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson stopped in to pay a visit. He posed for pictures and chatted with the early arrivals at the party before exiting to attend another event.

Seeing old classmates brought back fond memories for many of the leadership program graduates. Dionne Thomas-Carmichael (Class 11) of Fairfax recalled, "We had a lot of good times. The debates were very enlightening. Everybody feels so intensely about their own neighborhood."

William Dean-El (Class 16) of Glenville also valued meeting people from different parts of the Greater Cleveland area. "The class brought everybody together," he said. For Cleveland Heights resident Renee Benjamin (Class 19), originally from Haiti, the class represented a chance "to learn about Cleveland, about the neighborhoods."

For many graduates, their experiences in Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland have had a lasting impact. Carlton Garner (Class 5), who works for the Glenville Development Corporation, said, "It's the skills that I developed at Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland that are helping



me to get things done." Added Cleo Busby (Class 8), a resident of Hough, "I made friends who will be my friends for the rest of my life."

Ada Averyhart (Class 11) of Woodland Hills recalled a lesson that motivates her to this day: "Stay committed to your community and that will encourage other people."

It is a lesson that she and her fellow NLC graduates continue to embody as grassroots neighborhood leaders.

**While graduates enjoyed looking back at their NLC experiences, they also used the gathering as an opportunity to look forward. Many attendees could be seen trading strategies and hatching plans for 2006. (See page 3.)**

# Grassroots Leadership



Don Slocum  
Executive Director

## Leadership Link

The Fall 2005 issue of our newsletter focused on NLI's afterschool program, *Schools As Neighborhood Resources (SNR)*. I wrote about using SNR to make schools into true centers of community.

In a recent speech in Cleveland, KnowledgeWorks President and CEO Chad Wick said that the Cleveland Municipal School District's \$1 billion school construction project presents Cleveland with an opportunity to "transform every one of its schools into neighborhood learning centers where students receive the additional health and social services they absolutely must have to learn effectively, and where adults gather for civic or educational activities."

I couldn't agree more.

You can read the entire speech by going to the KnowledgeWorks Foundation's Web site at <http://www.kwfdn.org>.

## Building a Network of Grassroots Neighborhood Leaders

Dear Neighbor,

I hope you were one of the many people who joined us for our annual holiday gathering in December (see page 1). It was a great party, and we had a lot of fun.

I'm glad that we can throw a good party, but that was not the only thing we were trying to accomplish. When we bring graduates of our leadership programs together, it's part of our effort to build a network of grassroots leaders.

Graduation from Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland is a beginning, not an end. Our graduates want to take what they have learned in their leadership classes and put it to work in service of their neighborhoods and community organizations (see page 3).

They also want to maintain one of the things they value most about their leadership class: connections with other neighborhood leaders. In other words, they want to participate in a *network* of grassroots leaders—a network through which they can learn and grow as leaders.

We are working to build the Neighborhood Leadership Institute into a vehicle through which grassroots leaders can connect with one another.

Our Web site and this newsletter are important parts of that strategy.

But opportunities for face-to-face interaction, such as the holiday gathering, are even better. After all, you can't have a strong network without strong relationships.

A strong, connected network of grassroots neighborhood leaders has the potential to provide numerous benefits to the Greater Cleveland community. With a strong network in place, neighborhood leaders can:

- share lessons learned from their community projects
- share information about available resources
- collaborate on projects of common interest
- draw on one another's skills

The skills, connections, and resources that grassroots leaders derive from participating in NLI's network benefit not only individual leaders but also the neighborhoods in which they reside and the organizations that they lead.

It's not easy being a grassroots leader. The challenges can sometimes leave us feeling frustrated and lonely. Don't worry—you're not alone. We're building the network. Give us a call and we'll connect you.

*Warmest regards,*

*Don*

The Neighborhood Leadership Institute exists to develop grassroots leadership that will contribute to rebuilding the bonds of community and improving the quality of life for neighborhood residents throughout the Greater Cleveland area.

**Catching Up with NLC Grads** NLI's annual holiday gathering (see page 1) provided an opportunity to hear what those in attendance worked on in 2005 and what they are planning for 2006. Below is a sampling of how NLC graduates are putting their leadership training to work.

## Addressing Community Needs

**F**aruq Abdul-Khaliq (Class 18) is a group facilitator with the Fathers and Families Together program.

**R**ose Armstrong (Class 12) is the Family to Family coordinator at the East Cleveland Neighborhood Center.

**K**im Foreman (Class 18) is doing advocacy work for lead poisoning prevention for Environmental Health Watch.

**C**arlton Garner (Class 5) is doing community outreach for the Glenville Development Corporation.

**E**vangeline Hardaway (Class 11) is active in the West Park Community Coalition.

**L**arry Martin (Class 12) and several other NLC graduates met with Councilman Zack Reed to discuss the needs of the Mt. Pleasant community.

## Working with Youth

**N**orma Barbour (Class 21) is working on a project to help young people learn videography and create a cable access TV program.

**D**iane Goodrum (Class 14) is helping students in grades 4 through 12 prepare for college.

Teen Start, led by **S**tanya Greathouse (Class 19), is collaborating with churches and agencies on service learning projects and life skills training for teenage girls.

**L**illie Hunter (Class 21) and **T**wila Norris (Class 21) are working to connect students with elderly residents for service projects.

**L**ucille Short (Class 9) is leading Arts of Peace, an arts-focused violence prevention program for children in grades K-12.

**J**ohn Cox (Class 9) is serving as a tutor at Marion-Sterling Elementary School.

## Participating in Electoral Politics

**P**am Poindexter-Crews (Class 19) was elected to the school board in Maple Heights.

**H**amid Abdussatar (Class 19) ran for Cleveland City Council in Ward 2.

**A**da Averyhart (Class 11) worked to get young people to register and vote.

**I**siah Powell (Class 21) worked on Frank Jackson's mayoral campaign.

**B**ill Newsome (Class 2) and **C**leo Busby (Class 8) are running for state representative in 2006.

## Advocating for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs

**B**etty Mahone (Class 14) and **D**ionne Thomas-Carmichael (Class 11) are working with the Fairfax Business Association to get more small businesses into the Cedar, Central, and Fairfax areas.

**T**ammy Kennedy (Class 19) is working with the Entrepreneurial Academy, which is run by the City of Cleveland's Empowerment Zone.

**R**enee Benjamin (Class 19) is starting a new business that will work on energy audits, conservation, and energy procurement.

## Exploring International Connections

**S**helley White (Class 19) is involved with the International Collaborative of Cultural Artists. She visited Brazil in August and hopes to return in 2006 to work with young women living in the *favelas*.

**S**hareefah Sabur (Class 9) traveled to Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia, and South Africa in 2005 doing consulting work on board governance, organizational capacity, and palliative care.

**W**illiam Dean-El (Class 16) recently returned from Egypt and Ghana, where he was looking into real estate investments.

# What's Inside

Neighborhood Leader

- Holiday Networking Event
- Leadership in Action
- Building a Network of Grassroots Leaders

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 UNITED WAY SERVICES OF GREATER CLEVELAND

The 22<sup>nd</sup> class of Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland began in January.

Sharon Cole (Class 7) joined the NLI staff in January as director of computer services.

NLI's new Web site is on line at [www.neighborhoodleadership.org](http://www.neighborhoodleadership.org).

The following NLC graduates are involved in projects that received Neighborhood Connections grants in November 2005: Barbara Anderson (Class 16); Norma Barbour (Class 21); Evette Clark (Class 8); Araaman Alvin Fudge (Class 21); Lin Hayes (Class 20); Delores Marchmon (Class 19); Michael Martin (Class 19); James Ray Reid (Class 4); Tim Walters (Class 15).

**NLI** Neighborhood Leadership Institute  
 1761 East 30th Street, Suite 200  
 Cleveland, OH 44114

Phone: (216) 812-8700  
 Fax: (216) 812-8709  
 Email: [lee@neighborhoodleadership.org](mailto:lee@neighborhoodleadership.org)  
 Web: [www.neighborhoodleadership.org](http://www.neighborhoodleadership.org)

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 US POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 CLEVELAND, OH  
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