

# NLI NEIGHBORHOOD LEADER

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

Winter 2006-2007  
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## NLI Pilots New Leadership Program

The first group of residents to take part in NLI's new neighborhood-based leadership program graduated in December. Twelve grassroots leaders from Cleveland's Mt. Pleasant neighborhood completed a 13-week curriculum designed to develop their leadership skills.

The Mt. Pleasant class was the first NLI-sponsored leadership program to focus on a single neighborhood. In contrast, Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland, NLI's flagship leadership development program, draws residents from neighborhoods throughout Greater Cleveland.

NLI developed the new program at the request of the Mt. Pleasant Community Zone, Inc., an organization that supports and coordinates community-wide planning in Mt. Pleasant.

Participants in the class researched the rich history of Mt. Pleasant and catalogued the neighborhood's many assets, including its core of longtime residents, small business owners, and faith-based institutions.

Like Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland, the Mt. Pleasant leadership class boasted an impressive roster of guest speakers. Participants heard from Cleveland City Councilman Zack Reed, who represents Mt. Pleasant; Cuyahoga County Commissioner Peter Lawson Jones; City of Cleveland finance director Sharon Dumas; and Amy Swanson, the executive director of Voices for Ohio's Children.

NLC grad Mark McClain (Class 21) also took a turn as guest speaker. McClain helped class participants understand some of the legal issues that impact neighborhoods' attempts to reduce crime and deal with nuisances that affect residents' quality of life.

Graduates of the class are determined to put their new skills and connections to use. They will be

meeting in January to discuss action plans and next steps.

In addition, two of the graduates have submitted applications to participate in Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland, which begins its 23<sup>rd</sup> class in January.

NLI's executive director, Don Slocum, sees more neighborhood-based leadership classes in NLI's future (see page two): "We think there is a demand for neighborhood-based leadership programs. With a successful pilot program under our belts, we can begin to talk with residents who might want to develop similar programs in other neighborhoods."

### **Congratulations to the first graduating class of the Mt. Pleasant Community Zone Leadership Academy!**



(Back) Henry J. Taylor, James Gresham, Jr., \*Hamid Abdussatar, Edmund L. Butler, Bruce Allen; (Middle) Angel Robinson, Michelle Hunter, \*LaShorn K. Caldwell, Vera L. Moore; (Front) \*Benne Christian, Norma J. Scott, Rashia Rosalind Smith

*\*also a graduate of Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland*

*Photo by McKinley Wiley*

# Grassroots Leadership



**Don Slocum**  
Executive Director

## Leadership Link

For the past several years, Cleveland's Mt. Pleasant neighborhood has been engaged in a community-wide planning process. A major outcome of that process is the development of the *Mt. Pleasant Comprehensive Community Revitalization Plan*.

The plan outlines strategies for revitalization in four key areas: 1) Economic Development; 2) Education; 3) Physical Environment; and 4) Community and Family Empowerment.

To learn more about the plan and the process that led to its development, visit the following link:

[www.mpcz.org](http://www.mpcz.org)

## Two Approaches to Neighborhood Leadership

*Dear Neighbor,*

Men and women. . . young and old. . . black and white. . . East-Siders and West-Siders. . . from GED's to PhD's.

That is how I typically describe the variety of people who take part in Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland (NLC). The diversity of the participants is one of the program's greatest strengths.

Year after year NLC brings together people who otherwise might not have an opportunity to meet one another. Despite their differences, the participants come to understand that they face similar challenges and share many of the same aspirations for their families and communities.

It's important to bring grassroots leaders together from different parts of the region—especially in light of Greater Cleveland's history of racial and geographical separation. Tackling the region's toughest challenges requires all of us to rise above our differences and work together toward common goals.

While I am eager for the start of Class 23 of Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland at the end of January, I am also excited about our new leadership program, which graduated its first class in December (see page one).

Unlike Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland, our new program focuses on a single neighborhood. For our pilot session, Jacquie Gillon and I worked with twelve residents in Cleveland's Mt. Pleasant neighborhood.

We found that the single-neighborhood focus presented opportunities to draw upon the residents' common points of reference and to delve deeply into issues specific to Mt. Pleasant.

That was especially true when Councilman Zack Reed visited the class one evening in November. Watching the frank and respectful exchange between the councilman and his constituents, I really felt that I was witnessing democracy in action.

As impressed as I was by the commitment of the Mt. Pleasant residents, I know that there are citizens across Greater Cleveland who are just as passionate about their own neighborhoods.

I would like to see us build on the success of our Mt. Pleasant pilot project and organize one or two more neighborhood-based leadership classes in the next year. Ideally, I would like to see those classes led by graduates of Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland.

If you think residents in your neighborhood are ready for a neighborhood-based leadership class, I would like to hear from you. Give me a call and let's begin the conversation.

In the meantime, we will continue to bring together grassroots leaders from all over the region as we launch Class 23 of Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland.

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**

# Leadership in Action

## 2006 Holiday Gathering

NLI held its annual holiday gathering in December at Cleveland State University. Graduates of Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland came together to celebrate, network, and renew acquaintances. The event featured a buffet dinner, deejay, and other entertainment.

The annual gathering provides an opportunity to catch up with NLC graduates and hear about the many ways in which they are putting their leadership skills to use.

**Evette Jackson Clark** (Class 8), who organized the holiday gathering, is the founder and executive director of the Phenomenal Foundation.



**Marcia Bufford** (Class 8) is the secretary of the student government at Cleveland State University, where she is preparing to apply to the doctoral program in education.

**Priscilla Cooper** (Class 12) is the executive director of S.T.O.P. (Stop Targeting Ohio's Poor).

**Katie Evans** (Class 22) participates in the E. 46<sup>th</sup> Street Block Watch.

**Tynnetta Harris-McCall** (Class 18) serves as a parent representative on the Cuyahoga County Family and Children First Council.

**Illinda Reese** (Class 22) hosts a TV show on women's issues, "Taking Care of Business," on Time-Warner Channel 20.

**Gayle Huggins** (Class 21) participates in a mentoring program for young women in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in Cleveland public schools.



**Gina T.A. Washington** (Class 21) is the acting artistic director for Sankofa Fine Arts.



**Donna Johnson** (Class 22) led discussion groups on Tavis Smiley's book *The Covenant with Black America*.

**Rev. Leonard Killings** (Class 22) is working on the development of Citizen Circles to help reintegrate people returning home from prison into their communities.

**Conni Blair** (Class 22) is the vice-president of the Bohn Tower Local Advisory Council.

**Michael Martin** and **Delores Marchmon** (both Class 19) continue to teach their SPELLMASTER program to children at seven libraries throughout Cleveland.

**Bruce Martin** (Class 22) worked as a voting rights inspector in the November elections.

**Rev. Alfred Leak** (Class 22) leads Antioch Baptist Church's "Bridge the Gap" program for children ages 6-15.



**Isiah Thomas** (Class 21) works as a tenant organizer for people living in subsidized or low-income housing.

**Pamela Poindexter-Crews** (Class 19) serves on the Maple Heights school board and chairs the board's Parental Involvement Committee.

**Cheryl Mays** (Class 6) is a residential worker at a mental health facility for young adults.

*Photos by McKinley Wiley*

# What's Inside

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## NLI NOTES

The 23<sup>rd</sup> class of **Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland** begins in January. For the second year in a row, NLI has received a grant from The Raymond John Wean Foundation to support the class. United Way Services of Greater Cleveland also provides annual support.

In December NLI received grants for the **Schools As Neighborhood Resources (SNR)** program from the Alcoa Foundation and the Eva L. and Joseph M. Bruening Foundation.

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

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

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