

Lenawee United Way
1354 N. Main St.
Adrian, MI 49221
517.263.4696
www.lenaweeunitedway.org

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Lenawee United Way Young Professionals Announce New “Emerging Leaders” Program

Throughout the United States, local United Way’s have begun to engage the X and Y generations in their work. According to United Way of America, 51 United Way’s reported having formalized Young Leaders programs in 2004-05. A Young Leader is defined as being under the age of 35 and as having enthusiasm about non-profit agencies and charitable giving.

The idea was brought forth in Lenawee County to join the United Way Young Leader movement during a CEO luncheon in May, 2007. As a result of that meeting, Lenawee United Way joined the 51 other United Way’s across the country by creating their own Young Leaders group in October 2007, called the Lenawee United Way Young Professionals. The group consists of young professionals from the following local organizations: Adrian College, Community Action Agency, Gleaner Life Insurance Agency, Hospice of Lenawee, Kemner-Iott Insurance, Lenawee Intermediate School District, Lenawee United Way, Sand Creek Community Schools, Siena Heights University and United Bank & Trust.

Lenawee United Way’s goals for the Young Professionals group include:

- learning the best practices in moving forward into future campaigns, community initiatives, and community development,
- creating a model of inclusive leadership, and
- building bridges between the generations of leaders.

In addition to being advocates and volunteers for Lenawee United Way, the Young Professionals have designed a county-wide leadership program, called Emerging Leaders, specifically created for Young Professionals.

The first group of Emerging Leaders will begin a nine month program in August, 2008. Emerging Leaders focuses on the development of leadership skills that can be employed in the workplace as well as in the community. Emerging Leaders is a program of Lenawee United Way.

Participants in the Emerging Leaders class will learn about economic development, strategic planning, volunteer opportunities, how to serve on a non-profit board, managing conflict, generational communication, advancing the common good in Lenawee County, and many other timely and important topics. The 2008-09 class will wrap up with a Lenawee United Way “Day of Action” community project in June, 2009.

For more information, contact Lenawee United Way at 263-4696 or visit www.lenaweeunitedway.org.

This column was written by Amy Palmer, Community Investment Manager at Lenawee United Way.