

The LEADER

A STRONGER COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2015



LEAD Presents: Steve Robbins May 7 & May 19

Dr. Steve Robbins may look or sound familiar to some of you, if you were fortunate enough to attend his presentation on “Unintentional Intolerance” in 2011.

Why ask Dr. Robbins back for an encore performance?

His new topic, “An Open Mind is a Terrible Thing to Close,” caught our attention as we considered pertinent topics such as generational differences, the unfortunate racial tension that faces our country, and the ongoing questions about how to work most effectively and creatively within and among departments and with citizens when others are so different from us. Do you sometimes wonder, “How could any- one think THAT was a good idea?”

Dr. Robbins asserts that human differences are really not the problem. Rather, the real issue is the hard-wired cognitive tendency to be closed or narrow-minded to people,

things, ideas, and places with which we are unfamiliar. Steve will help us understand why we all gravitate toward exclusion of people and ideas that are different from us, and he’ll help us learn how to make concrete changes to become more open-minded (the ability to entertain multiple perspectives).

Because being more open-minded increases our productivity and innovation, this learning experience will help us to become more comfortable with ourselves and others and give us the tools to learn from those that are different from us.

Steve Robbins speaks nationally and internationally on many topics, and is considered an expert in human behavior and inclusion.

Born in Vietnam, Robbins immigrated to the U.S when he was five years old at a time when there was much anti-war and anti-Vietnamese sentiment in the U.S. He credits this experience in part for helping him to create his insightful perspective on diversity and inclusion.

Steve has consulted with numerous municipalities as well as with many major corporations such as Microsoft and Toyota, and the US Navy and Air Force. He is the author of *What If? Short Stories to Spark Diversity Dialogue*.



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“An Open Mind is a Terrible Thing to Close” with Dr. Steve Robbins

May 7 Lincoln Inn - Batavia

May 19 The Centre - Elgin

- 8 a.m.-8:30 a.m.
Registration & full breakfast buffet (be seated by 8:30 a.m.)
- 8:30-11:30 a.m.
Workshop
- 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m.
“Lunch with the Author”

Register at www.strongercommunity.net



Employees from Elgin, South Elgin, and St. Charles at a recent book club

Hope for Better Days With the “Crazy” People in Our Lives

Our fall speaker, Mike Bechtle, offered practical advice to 160 LEAD participants about how to deal more effectively with the “crazy” people in our lives—those who seem to cause the most drama and affect us and others by their choices.

1. We don’t have to be a victim of other people’s choices.
2. We cannot change anyone else.
3. Focus on what we can change and what we can control, which is typically our attitudes, and decisions –we can choose how to respond.
4. Focus on the positive in others (especially the “crazy” people), and find their strengths.
5. Remember that we bring our own weather to the picnic. If someone else chooses to live in negativity and turmoil, we can choose differently.

Seven Keys to Changing Ourselves:

1. **Be realistic** that we are human and make mistakes– don’t beat ourselves or others up emotionally.
2. **Take ourselves more lightly**–and try to have a sense of humor.
3. **Don’t sweat the wrong stuff.** When upset, ask, “How important is this, really?”
4. **We can’t rush growth**—Changing ourselves in the midst of difficult relationships takes time. Patience with ourselves and others is needed.
5. **Look through the lens of kindness.** Choosing to be kind to others is always a good choice.
6. **Base choices on integrity**—What would I do if no one else was watching? What is the right thing to do?

7. **Go the distance**—We often feel like quitting and running away from difficult relationships, but this is not always the healthy choice in the long run.

Book Club participants highly recommended Mike’s book, *People Can’t Drive You Crazy If You Don’t Give Them the Keys*. Learn more from Mike Bechtle on his blog at www.mikebechtle.com.



Additional Venues for LEAD Events-100% Approval Rating!

In response to our member survey and focus groups, we tried a new venue for our LEAD speaker event that is closer to home for St.



Charles and Batavia employees. In October, met at the Northern Illinois Food Bank meeting rooms in Geneva, IL. All participants that completed a survey stated that they liked

meeting at this venue and recommended returning for future events. We intend to return to the NIFB meeting rooms when they are available for our speaker event.

One of our upcoming spring speaker sessions will be held at a new venue for us—Lincoln Inn Banquets in Batavia.

We are still very fortunate to have the use

of the classy Heritage Ballroom at the City of Elgin, which they so generously offer at no cost to LEAD.

We also met at Andre’s Restaurant in Batavia for two of our book clubs, and attendees were enthusiastic about this new location.

We value your suggestions!

Max Jaffe and Financial Fitness-Where to Start

“Financial stress is frequently listed as the top source of all the stress experienced by employees.” The practical and “best practice” solution is for employers to offer education on how to manage money and reduce debt levels.



Max Jaffe, financial expert, was LEAD’s 2014 spring speaker. Max provided an overall education about the economy, investing, managing day to day finances, and retirement planning.

In order to bring order into our finances,

“Interesting ideas on financial investment.”

Max said we have to deal with reality—know what we are spending and where. This requires honesty with ourselves.

What next? Break these expenses into categories: 1) monthly fixed; 2) monthly variable; 3) more than once a month; 4) less than once a month. Then evaluate to see where we can make adjustments over time to come closer to reasonable percentages.

Max’s Magic Formula for Expenses:

Monthly Gross Income:	\$3,000
Taxes (25%)	\$750
Housing (25%)	\$750
Debt/Emergency Fund (25%)	\$450
Everything Else (35%)*	\$1,050
(*All other expenditures over a period of 3 weeks)	

Max’s blog on financial topics can be found at <http://www.getliquid.com/news/>.

LEADership Book Club-Try It-You'll Like It!?

A free breakfast...meeting others that have the same positive and challenging experiences working in city government...gaining some new insights for personal and professional growth...these are some of the perks for being part of LEAD's book club. We offer three book clubs a year and hope you try one or keep coming back!

Want to give it a try?

1. Book clubs are announced via email and in your City's internal communication (newsletters, etc.).
2. Sign out the book from your HR department.
3. Sign up for a date and restaurant location that works good for you.
4. "Food for thought" questions will be sent to you in advance so you have time to think about the content of the

book and questions for discussion.

5. Show up and enjoy an informal discussion over a delicious complimentary breakfast.

If you've read a book that you feel would be a good fit for the book club, please let us know!

Next book club in
June, 2015



Book club participants from Elgin and St Charles

What LEAD Participants Are Saying:

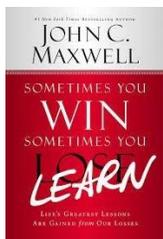
"I have gained so much knowledge both in my personal life and in my work life since joining the LEAD book club. Even before the next book is announced, I'm already on board."

"I had an awesome experience with the Lead book club. This was totally new for me, and I can personally testify that it was a change for me (positive)."

"The LEAD book club has been a great resource for internal team building. I've learned a lot about my coworkers, and building a shared language from the book we read helps us put those ideas into practice."

We Can Learn From Losses and Mistakes-If We Choose To

According to our recent book club selection, "Sometimes You Win-Sometimes You Learn," by John Maxwell, people can use their losses and mistakes as a springboard for positive changes.



Here's how:

- Nobody's perfect – we all know this, but if we accept it about ourselves, we'll be able to learn from our mistakes instead of beating our-

selves (and others) up for making them.

- If we ask, "What can I learn from this?" and take time to determine a different course of action for the future, we can indeed improve as a result of a loss or failure.
- Being humble and teachable is the key to learning from our mistakes. Believing that we don't know it all and can learn something from everyone will help us to be learners instead

of self-proclaimed experts.

- Intentions for improvement are just good ideas until they show up as scheduled actions on our daily calendars.

For more information on John Maxwell and blog insights, go to

<http://www.johnmaxwell.com/blog>.

You Spoke, We Listened!

In January and February of 2014, all employees from Batavia, Elgin and St. Charles that had participated in at least one LEAD event had the opportunity to tell us what they thought about LEAD and how to improve. 66 people responded with valuable input. We also hosted three focus groups with 42 people, some of whom had not attended LEAD.

To date, we've implemented these recommendations:

1. Shorten speaker events to three hours.
2. Offer a venue closer to St. Charles and Batavia.
3. Make a stronger connection between the speaker's topic and relevance for employees.

4. Encourage participation of upper management.
5. Use other forms of advertising besides email.
6. Add more collaborative small group options.

More to come this year!



Developing leaders through collaborative learning to build a stronger community

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LEAD Team Members

Please contact any of us with ideas or questions!

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Why LEAD?

In 2011 LEAD evolved from the former SMILE program. The Cities of Batavia, Elgin, and St. Charles continue their unique partnership for LEAD's mission:

Developing Leaders

- ◆ We are all leaders in our organizations, regardless of our positions, and each person is important to the organization's success.
- ◆ There is an intrinsic link between self-development, excellent leadership, and organizational success. LEAD provides a convenient forum for ongoing personal and professional growth.
- ◆ All regularly scheduled part-time and full-time employees and elected officials from Batavia, Elgin, and St. Charles are invited and encouraged to attend LEAD events. We invite guests from our communities.

Through Collaborative Learning

- ◆ Developing relationships with members of nearby municipalities paves the way for successful networking—we learn from one another's experiences.
- ◆ LEAD sponsors two speaker events per year focusing on broadening our understanding of ourselves and others so we can relate more effectively in our communities.
- ◆ LEAD's three book clubs provide ongoing learning on a variety of topics, and small group discussion introduces us to other municipal colleagues and their insights.

To Build a Stronger Community

- ◆ Leadership requires ongoing learning, and self-development shapes us into more versatile and resilient leaders.
- ◆ Ongoing learning makes us more effective in our city positions and helps us to be more skilled leaders in our families and other community groups.
- ◆ LEAD invites other municipalities to join us (for a small fee) as an outreach to the broader community.

You will receive information about LEAD events via email or through your city mail.

Take the 2015 LEAD Challenge



- ◆ Haven't ever attended LEAD or haven't come regularly? Come to at least one LEAD event this year— you won't regret it!
- ◆ Regular attendee? Bring a colleague that has not attended LEAD to at least one event this year.

If you complete the challenge, contact LEAD Coordinator, Jennifer Kuhn (762-7090 or jenkuhn@strongercommunity.net) and you'll be entered into a random drawing for a **\$25 Amazon gift card.**