



FUTURE MILWAUKEE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

College of Professional Studies, Marquette University

September 2009 – May 2010

“What I learned through my Future Milwaukee program experiences.”

Tanya Bissen, Special Events Manager, Children’s Hospital and Health System Foundation

What I learned is that there are many organizations and people in our city who are doing a fantastic job strengthening and educating our community on how to sustain local food systems in the central city. Not until my involvement with Future Milwaukee did I ever know about the existence of places like Walnut Way, Alice’s Garden or the Fondy Food Center. These wonderful places are contributing, every day, to the economic vitality of their neighborhoods and our city. Through the transformation of vacant lots into fruitful gardens to sharing a passion in eating locally grown foods, I’ve truly learned what it means to be a “community”. Not to mention, I’ve become a great fan of Walnut Way’s honey and the fresh produce offered by local farmers at the Fondy Farmers Market!

Erin Hareng, Children’s Hospital and Health System

I considered myself relatively aware of what Milwaukee had to offer until I started Future Milwaukee. The first weekend opened my eyes to a variety of services, organizations and wonderful people who all are doing great things to impact our community. Since that point, I have had the opportunity to hear different viewpoints and meet people I wouldn’t have otherwise met. Through our group projects, I’ve had the opportunity to dive in deeper to organizations I hadn’t been exposed to before and become an integral part of finding solutions for essential Milwaukee non-profits.

Future Milwaukee has given me a greater appreciation of the resources, programs and extraordinary people impacting our community every day.

Andrew Aschenbrenner, Regional Sales Manager, AirTran Airways

Future Milwaukee has been a wonderful and eye-opening experience for me. It has given me great appreciation for not just the city of Milwaukee, but for the people of Milwaukee. It has taken me to areas of the city that I normally would not venture to, and shown me the bright rays of hope that are shining out of them. Doing corporate sales and public relations for an airline, my day is mainly focused on revenue, market share, promoting a company, and helping preserve a strong image in the community. Future Milwaukee helps bring me back to the day-to-day

world of Milwaukee and the people who are trying to make a difference here from the ground up. It has introduced me to people who share a common interest, in that we all want to help be a part of making Milwaukee the best city that it can be.

Lindsay Schweikert, Senior Accountant, We Energies

Future Milwaukee is a leadership program that pushes participants to think outside the box. The variety of sessions really allowed the opportunity to explore the different neighborhoods within the city, understand the complex issues the city faces and a chance at a more in-depth look at the history of Milwaukee. As I near the end of the program, I find that I have underestimated what I expected to get out of the program. Future Milwaukee introduced me to many accomplished peers with whom a strong volunteer network has been formed throughout our many months together. Through this program I have developed personal skills that have helped me with both my job and my various community activities. My favorite experience with Future Milwaukee was working with the Ronald McDonald House of Southeastern Wisconsin to begin the process of implementing a dental care mobile program. It provided a great opportunity to mix business skills with community needs and hopefully the end result has a big impact on the families in the Milwaukee area. Thank you, Future Milwaukee for an opportunity to grow as a person and as a leader. The experiences have shaped my life in more ways than I could have imagined.

Scott McFadden, President and CEO, Lutheran Home and Harwood Place

For roughly 20 years, I worked for a wonderful company with business spread throughout the United States. Unfortunately, we had virtually no business in Wisconsin and I had little opportunity to connect with the greater Milwaukee business and civic community. I made a significant career change in 2006 by accepting a position with a local nonprofit organization. As part of my transition to a new role and organization, I realized that I needed to quickly increase my knowledge of nonprofits and the issues that confront the greater Milwaukee community. Future Milwaukee offered the comprehensive and accelerated curriculum I was seeking. I entered the Future Milwaukee program believing that the city was in a potentially irreversible downward spiral and that there was not much going on to better position the community for the future. After participating in Future Milwaukee, I understand a considerable amount of effort will be needed to help Milwaukee reach its fullest potential. However, after working with an amazing, talented and engaged group of younger professionals in Future Milwaukee, my outlook on the future of Milwaukee is much more positive. There are great things going on in this city and Milwaukee's potential is limitless.

David Delgado, Fundraising Manager, Columbia St. Mary's Foundation

As a Latino professional and native of the city of Milwaukee, I was very interested in learning more about non-profit and civic organizations that are producing a direct impact on people's lives. Marquette University's Future Milwaukee Leadership Program offered me an opportunity to meet leaders from throughout Greater Milwaukee and learn about needs being fulfilled across different locales, cultures and economic groups in Milwaukee. I also had a chance to directly help two local organizations through special projects: the Ronald McDonald House of Southeastern Wisconsin and the Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee. Through my work with these valuable organizations, I was able to set in motion initiatives and ideas that will pay dividends in the future to children and Latinos in the city of Milwaukee. It is with pride that

I reflect on the many experiences in which I have been able to partake in my neighborhood, from the Fondy Food Farmers' Market to discussions with John McKnight.

Honore Croze, Marketing, Bader Rutter & Associates

As a young woman in the community, I've learned the importance of gaining knowledge about the community we live in. The next generation of leaders need to know the problems that our community is facing, because they will ultimately be the ones responsible for creating change.

Future Milwaukee opened my eyes to a side of Milwaukee I've never seen. There are wonderful places in our community that are working everyday with such passion to create change for Milwaukee, and making it a better place for the future. Sadly, many of these places don't get the attention they deserve and many people don't know about the work they do. Future Milwaukee allowed us to go behind-the-scenes of these gems in our community and start to give them the credit they deserve.

I have been inspired by the people I have met and their openness to talk about the best things about Milwaukee, and more importantly, the things that need to be changed. As I complete this program, I have a whole new respect for Milwaukee and I am excited to be part of its future!

Joseph S. Ford, Senior Investment Accountant, Northwestern Mutual

My time spent in the Future Milwaukee program through Marquette University has been a very rewarding experience for me. I entered this program not knowing what to expect. My goal was to get a different perspective of Milwaukee that few people get the opportunity to see, touch, or feel. I've lived in the Milwaukee area for just over ten years. It's an amazing city that has so much diversity and culture with nonstop festivals going on every weekend in the summer.

I enjoy getting involved in the community and seeing the change that a city goes through. Future Milwaukee has opened my eyes to so many more organizations and events happening right around me. I've always struggled with trying to find out about all the good that is going on in this community. It's hard to read a newspaper or watch the evening news to get a positive perspective with the change that Milwaukee is going through.

Future Milwaukee has allowed me to open my heart and see with my own eyes how special a place this really is. I've always felt that every person has a story to tell. They just need someone to listen to them.

Jason Lindner, Risk Management Services, Marshall & Ilsley Corporation

I grew up in the Milwaukee area but spent much of my time in high school thinking of ways I could leave the city for something bigger and better. This led me to Chicago for my undergraduate studies and eventually to California for my career. After a decade of living under seemingly endless sun, I realized the real land of golden opportunity was actually back where I first started.

Of course much had changed since I first left Milwaukee, but what I've learned through this program is that this city is not just trying to hold on to what it used to be. On the contrary, it is in the midst of a very significant cultural, societal and economical renaissance – a rebirth! There are so many people here who are making positive changes happen in their communities by leveraging the power they have within themselves and their organizations, which in turn empower countless others to also positively contribute. What I've learned is that this power can be unleashed by anyone as long as they have passion and a strong desire to make those positive changes a reality.

Kate Lundeen, Executive Director, Admission Possible – Greater Milwaukee

Working at Admission Possible, a growing education non-profit, I am used to building collaborations. But my experience with Future Milwaukee has given me an even deeper appreciation of what is possible through passion driven by collaboration and relationships across sectors. With my Future Milwaukee projects I sat at the intersection of some of the most creative and innovative partnerships happening in Milwaukee. As the UWM College of Nursing successfully teamed up with an elementary school, Walnut Way Conservation Corporation, Fondy Food Market, and AirTran Airways to bring a new message on health and health careers to central city youth, my teammates and I marveled at the possibility of this partnership; a partnership in which we too were now members. Thanks to Future Milwaukee, I have seen what is possible when we all bring our best assets together and direct them towards our common goal of making Milwaukee stronger. As I strive to develop Admission Possible's positive impact on the college going rates of low-income students, I now know where to turn for on-going guidance and inspiration – to my 30 classmates who share a passion for this city that will be my glue for much future professional and personal collaboration.

Brandy Lester, Sergeant, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office

Throughout this year I have learned so much about the community in which I serve. I started this program with what I thought was a good knowledge of the city and county in which I grew up in just to find out on the first day I had no knowledge of the rich and exciting history right here in Milwaukee. I have learned that a lot of developments and changes have been done in areas I currently live in which will transform my community vastly within the next 5 to 10 years - as long as we continue to work together and get actively involved. I learned that there are a lot of non-profit organizations that are doing a wonderful job and are in need of help to continue or their efforts might be lost. I also learned that without the non-profit organizations, a lot of social needs would not be met which would place a lot of stress and dismay upon society that I truly don't think we, as a community, are ready to handle or deal with. So, I say that to say this, if you want change you have to be ready to get involved and help make change a reality. I would like to thank The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office and Marquette University for giving me this great opportunity and for opening my eyes to a whole new perspective of Milwaukee County.

Autumn Misko, Resource Specialist, IndependenceFirst

Through traveling to various locations throughout the Milwaukee area, Future Milwaukee has provided an all senses experience of the Milwaukee area. As the Resource Specialist of a local non-profit, IndependenceFirst, I have had the opportunity to learn about the community and its resources. Being a Milwaukee native and an active community member, I have been astounded

by how many remarkable places, initiatives, community efforts, and influential people that Future Milwaukee has brought to my attention.

The program has not only enhanced my knowledge of the community, but has improved my professional skills. I have achieved invaluable experience through working with peers on a project for Walker's Point Youth and Family Center. We prepared a comprehensive communication plan which included research on the implementation of social media as well as other innovative community awareness initiatives. This project opened my eyes to the issues of runaway and homeless youth in the Milwaukee area and the obstacles encountered by small non-profits in our community.

Future Milwaukee has been a truly awe-inspiring experience. The program has provided the opportunity to learn from community leaders and enhance my own leadership skills both personally and professionally. This experience truly redefines community involvement, leadership and Milwaukee.

Lynn Eliason, Internal Audit Manager, Harley-Davidson Motor Company

When my children ask me where I go on Monday nights, I am proud to tell them that I am learning about the city where our family works, goes to school and enjoys our time together regularly. Future Milwaukee is not a foreign phrase in our home and has prompted much discussion about the great city we live in. I am not a native of Milwaukee, or Wisconsin for that matter, and the Future Milwaukee Leadership program has given me great insight into the city. I have learned about people and places I might not discover on my own. The benefit is that my family can learn about people and places which will broaden their horizons on Milwaukee.

- *I might not have taken my children to Fondy Foods Farmers' Market and talked to them about "food deserts" – but I will now.*
- *I might not have talked to my children about poetry and the opportunities to read their poetry at Woodland Pattern Book Center – but I will now.*
- *I might not have visited the Urban Ecology Center and talked to my children about reducing crime in the city – but I will now.*
- *I might not have talked to my children about art and economic development, women helping in the diverse communities, and educational programs within the city – but I will now.*

Future Milwaukee has opened my eyes to the great people who are making a difference in our communities. I hope my family can join in all this greatness around the city!

Timothy Posnanski, Attorney, Whyte Hirschboeck Dudek, S.C.

As a Marquette University alumnus, I was educated in Milwaukee. Yet, my participation in the Future Milwaukee Leadership program has given me a brief education of Milwaukee. I have been introduced to a small sampling of the organizations and individuals working to make this a better place to work, a better place to attend school, and a better place to live. In calling everyone to participate in making a difference in their society, John F. Kennedy recognized that all citizens “have responsibilities in short to use [their] talents for the benefit of the society which helped develop those talents.” I have been profoundly encouraged by witnessing my fellow citizens using their talents to bring about positive change in our city. More importantly, however, I have been given the opportunity to join them.

Mario Hall, Program Coordinator, Walnut Way / Lindsay Heights Neighborhood Initiative

I was first introduced to the Future Milwaukee Leadership program by a colleague who attended Marquette University. I decided to apply for the program after looking at the alumni list on the website. I found that some of the people on the alumni list were real advocates for positive change in their communities. In addition, I found that others on the list came from many different areas of work and organizational backgrounds. This combination made for an intense metaphor of growth for me and other participants. When I reviewed the prior year’s class list and the class locations, it was clear that I would continue the practice of relationship building. This thrust for real relationships for change has made my work experience far more rich, exciting and fulfilling than I ever thought possible. I was assured that not only did I have a deep need to listen and learn, but to share with others what I have heard and learned. In my most recent work, assisting with the quality of life plan in the Lindsay Heights neighborhood, this Future Milwaukee experience reminds me that relationships are key. This time of sharing reminds me that we all have a role to play in the advancement of our children, our families, our neighborhoods, our cities, our states, and our world!

Mindy Schroder, Marquette University Office of International Education

The Future Milwaukee program has given me the opportunity to see very clearly what is good and beautiful about the Milwaukee community. When applying to the program, I anticipated primarily learning about the challenges and struggles Milwaukee faces, which I have, to a certain extent. Still, Future Milwaukee more so introduces its participants to the Milwaukee residents and community programs who are creatively and actively advocating for positive change. From touring (and eating from!) community gardens, to talking with our city’s newspaper reporters up close and personal, we learned about the people who make a difference in the place we live and work.

The program opened doors to meeting knowledgeable presenters who led each class period from a diverse array of community organizations and companies, but also provided a forum for getting to know our classmates, who have also proven to be dynamic and interesting individuals, very involved in our community as well. Maybe most importantly of all, the program has challenged me to embrace my neighbors and community in a very personal way, by identifying my passions and putting them to work!

Heather E. Turner Loth, Sales / Project Director, MSI General Corporation

The Future Milwaukee Leadership Program has provided a life-long learning experience that I will turn to in several aspects of my professional, philanthropic and personal life. The opportunity to learn about honey being made on Walnut Way and sold on the weekends at the Fondy Market opened my eyes to a world beyond my own neighborhood. There are incredible things happening in our city, I just need to get out and explore and experience more! I took back advice to the boards I serve on through learning about other non-profit boards and legalities that impact non-profit organizations. I built upon my own leadership skills through our group project which translates back to my daily profession. I also learned there is so much yet to be done for organizations throughout our community (neighborhood associations, non-profits, for-profits); and really, sometimes, so little needs to be done by an individual to make a big impact. We just need to step forward and get involved. I have formed amazing relationships with so many of my peers from my Future Milwaukee class. Each person comes from a unique and diverse background, and I take from the class new knowledge learned from each participant this year.