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Leadership in the Community
Policy Paper: A Proposal

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Leadership in the Community

The Problem:

Community is describes as a “unified body of individuals” (Merriam-Webster online, 2010). However, in many cases, a community is not always “united.” The city of Las Cruces faces many problems as a community. Individuals struggle to obtain common goals within the community, resulting in lack of motivation and success. Leadership needs to play a more important role in the city. With leadership, Las Cruces may resolve many important problems that face the city today.

One of the more important issues Las Cruces must focus on is recycling. Executive director of New Mexico Recycling Coalition, English Bird, states that “the average recycling rate in New Mexico is just 12.4 percent compared to the national average of 33 percent” (NM Business Weekly, Para. 3). “Recycling helps to preserve environmental quality. It saves landfill space, preserves resources, conserves energy, reduces air pollution, and saves water” (Sherman, Para. 3). As a desert community, Las Cruces can’t afford to waste energy.

The citizens of Las Cruces must learn to continue to support local business. As the city grows, this becomes an issue. When the city grows, so does the number of businesses, including many large chains. According to Barry C. Lynn, from alternet.org, many large chains, like Wal-Mart, can disrupt the economy on a whole. With so much revenue in the chain, anything disrupting the flow of that money could be a devastation to the economy (Lynn, 2006). Also, according to Judith G. Schwartz, of Time magazine, helping local business helps local economy. In Schwartz’s article, *Buying Local: How It Boosts the Economy*, Schwartz writes, “At the most basic level, when you buy local

more money stays in the community” (Schwartz, 2009). Furthermore, Schwartz states that according to the New Economics Foundation, when buying locally, twice the amount of money spent “stays in the community” (Schwartz, 2009).

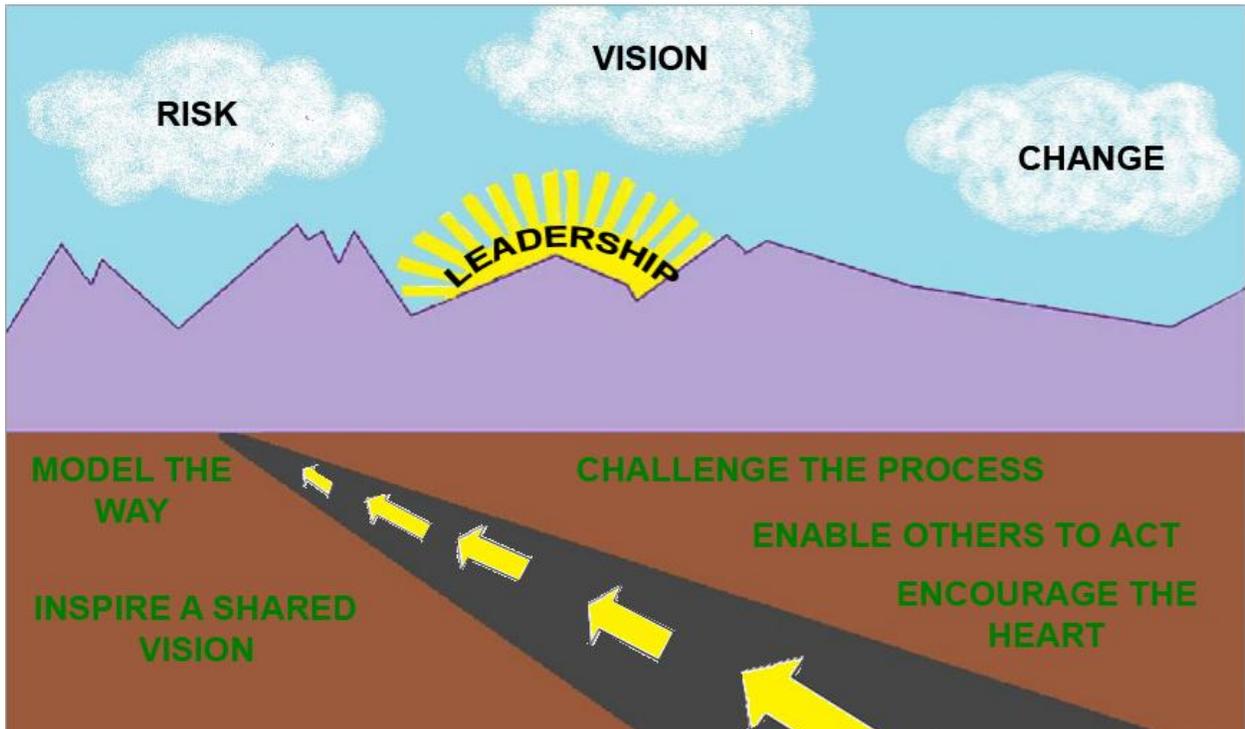
Another problem that faces the city of Las Cruces is the issue of children’s education and lack of after school programs. With the city of Las Cruces growing and schools sprouting with children, Las Cruces needs to be more on task in developing after school programs for our growing schools. Studies show that children “who do not participate in after school programs are nearly three times more likely to skip class or use marijuana or other drugs; they are also more likely to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, and engage in sexual activity” (YMCA of the USA, 2001). As the city grows, the community must face the challenge of creating more programs for our children.

And last, the community must involve itself in helping our local community service operations. The growing city of Las Cruces faces the challenge of lack of community service among its citizens. “The community facilities like schools, hospitals, parks, parking lots and roads are some of the things that do not belong to an individual, but to the community, yet we all get benefit by their use” (Bandari, Para. 5). When the city does not help volunteer for services that help the community so much, the city suffers. By not helping our local services that help us, we are giving up on our community.

Many issues, like the ones discussed, affect our community. When local support is ignored, the community suffers. We must face the issues that are threatening the

community, by developing better leadership. If the community continues to avoid the issues at hand, Las Cruces will be affected negatively.

The Vision:



Objectives:

My Vision to see Las Cruces develop better leadership within the community. I think that following the “five practices of exemplary leadership,” will turn the community around for the better. First, we need local leaders to “model the way.” This means our community needs leaders to step up to the plate and start talking about the issues we face in Las Cruces; better recycling programs, larger support of local business, more after school programs offered to youth, and more community service involvement within the community.

Secondly, the leaders must “inspire a shared vision.” Leaders must explain to community what problems the community faces, and how it can be changed for the better. When the leaders spark interest among the citizens of Las Cruces, they can inspire a shared vision.

Thirdly, the leaders and community must “challenge the process.” This means that they must follow through with their shared vision. Once a vision is obtained, the community must challenge it. They must start more recycling programs, convince others to support local business, develop more after school programs for our youth, and involve others in community service.

Fourthly, the community must “enable others to act.” The members involved in the process must enable fellow peers to take action in the effort. The more people involved the more help it will make towards the effort.

Finally, following through with the four steps in the leadership will encourage the heart. The citizens of Las Cruces will see the challenge and success they’ve experienced through creating a better community. Members of the community will feel inspired to do more. Following through with the steps will promote stronger leadership in the community, helping the community better as a whole.

Vision & Impact:

Once more recycling programs sprouted throughout the city, people would see the streets more cleanly than ever. Recycling units could be seen at the workplace and schools. Using the recycling units daily would influence others to make it a habit at home as well. I believe seeing the city streets cleaner would give Las Cruces more

confidence about their beautiful city. In the end, Las Cruces would save more energy and power by recycling products already used on a day to day basis.

As the city contributed to more local business, we would see the Las Cruces economy become more prosperous. As the revenue increased, the money would help in spending on local infrastructure needed for the city. More businesses could help in supporting and contributing to local programs, like after school programs in schools.

After working to develop more after school programs for children, the city would see more success among its children. Children would not only do better in school, but would develop important communication skills with their peers. With more after school programs being offered, parents would have more flexibility and less expense, rather than wasting their dollars on daycares. This would not only help the parents of our community, but help keep children focused on their education.

Community Service programs would also prosper. More individuals would volunteer for the programs, increasing prosperity among the programs. As the programs grew, many more would benefit from the services. Individuals volunteering would feel a sense of achievement and self gratitude. As the services grew, we would be giving an appreciation for our community of Las Cruces.

Summary:

By following through with the vision, Las Cruces could fix many problems that face the city, and becoming stronger in the process of it all. Our citizens would become strong leaders in society. All it takes is leadership to pave the way to success!

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