



DATE: December 3, 2018

TO: Mayor Chelminiak and City Councilmembers

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Community Development

SUBJECT: 2018 Bellevue Essentials Program

Background

Bellevue Essentials just completed year six of providing an on ramp for emerging leaders in Bellevue to learn about the nuts and bolts of Bellevue City government and to encourage participants to become more civically engaged. On November 28, Bellevue Essentials welcomed 34 new graduates to its ranks which now number over 200 alumni, who participate in *Bellevue Essentials Extended*, the alumni group that hosts several community service and educational events each year.

Key program goals

- Expose participants to the structure and inner workings of City government.
- Have class members build familiarity with government process and decision making and achieve a comfort level participating in city government.
- Create a network of engaged, educated individuals who serve the City, and the broader community.
- Expand diverse learning community that will be accessible to the City for future civic engagement opportunities.
- Foster an alumni group that participates in community service opportunities in Bellevue.

Bellevue Essentials Resident Class Profile 2018

- ◆ 19 male, 15 female.
- ◆ Geographic representation of 14 of Bellevue's neighborhood areas (Factoria and Bel Red absent).
- ◆ Age range from (20's- 70's) with 56% under age 50 (16% increase from 2017).
- ◆ 29% of class members live in multi-family housing.
- ◆ Professionally diverse, including those employed in software, engineering, real estate, law, finance, education, small business, and non-profit arenas.
- ◆ Ethnically diverse including people of Asian/SE Asian, African, Latino, and Middle Eastern descent. Class is 1/3 non-Caucasian.
- ◆ 61 applications received, 34 class members graduated.
- ◆ Priority was given to Bellevue residents.

Curriculum

Bellevue Essentials is a nine-week program held on Wednesday evenings. Class sessions include a light dinner, and a combination of speakers, tours and interactive exercises. Session topics include history, demographics, diversity, public process, parks, human services, arts, neighborhoods, economic development, community development, development services, utilities, finance, transportation and public safety.

What are Essentials graduates doing?

- The current City Council includes the first Bellevue Essentials alumni.
- Four alumni are or have served on the East Bellevue Community Council.
- 34 alumni have or are now serving on Council appointed Boards and Commissions including Parks, Arts, Human Services, Planning, Environmental Services, Library Board, and Transportation. Five have served on two different bodies and six currently chair the group they serve on.
- Many others have served on City advisory committees and regularly attend public meetings and events, such as the Neighborhoods Conference and Neighborhood Leadership Gatherings.
- Other City programs that alumni are lending their leadership skills to include our Conflict Resolution Center, CERT, the Police Academy, Bellevue Youth Theater and several neighborhood associations.
- Alumni are also volunteering throughout the Bellevue community serving with non-profits that include the Bellevue Chamber, Hopelink, Lifewire, Eastside Baby Corner, VIBES, ELLA, Eastside Heritage Center, Congregations for the Homeless, Backpack Meals for Kids and the Eastside Neighbors Network, and more.

Bellevue Essential Extended – alumni organization formed in 2015

- Led by an active alumni committee of about 15 graduates, Bellevue Essentials Extended organizes quarterly educational and service events.
- Bellevue Essentials Extended recently published the second edition of the Make a Difference Volunteer Guide to direct residents to volunteer opportunities within the City and community, available on the city website at <http://www.bellevuewa.gov/volunteering.htm>
- Alumni volunteered as a group at Jubilee Reach Day of Caring in 2016, 2017 and 2018 and volunteered at the City of Bellevue holiday event at Crossroads Community Center in 2017 and will do so again in 2018.
- 27 alumni continued their learning at the Bellevue Neighborhoods Conference in April 2018 and remain a networking group who meet periodically for social connection fostered by their relationship with the City of Bellevue. Networking gatherings included several socials, a 5th Anniversary celebratory picnic with over 100 attendees, and two coffee and conversation morning events, with a third planned for December 2018.

Bellevue Essentials Employee Edition

Now in its fourth year, employee interest remains strong, with 41 employee participants this year. Employees place a high value on the opportunity to build relationships interdepartmentally and to gain a holistic vision of the City. Evaluations reflect that employees gain both understanding and pride in the services the City provides, improve cross-departmental collaboration and overall job performance.

Evaluation

Evaluative comments from both resident and employee class members consistently praise the high level of curriculum, overall organization, and the expertise and passion of staff presenters. Participants are impressed with the commitment of the Council and leadership to the Bellevue Essentials program.

Some comments from the 2018 class

I saw Bellevue and all of its inner workings like any mechanical item in my life that I take for granted... Just like my phone or an elevator, it's this faceless complex process that I just EXPECT to work and do it's job. My commute should be easy, the water should be clean, when I call 911 help should arrive... it was all these things that I took for granted and only cared about when it stopped working. Bellevue Essentials did a good job of putting the faces back into the process. It made me realize we're at this point because of the hard work from people; City Council, City employees, residents... I'm still awestruck at the amount of genuine love that each employee from each department had for the City of Bellevue, it's people, and what they did. (Guys, remember the guy who's job it was to unclog poop from our pipes so that our toilet wouldn't back up... he LOVED his job or the 911 call center manager or the Parks director....list goes on). Essentials made me realize it's pretty selfish that I just free ride on the hard efforts of these very genuine people without caring or investing in the process. So even with things going as right as they are, I feel motivated, more than ever to become civically engaged. In that way, I think Bellevue Essentials was a huge success. - Ralph Ahn

The more informed and activated citizens we have in our community, the richer our community becomes. As graduates of the Bellevue Essentials class, it's our responsibility to share what we've learned, and it's our responsibility to help our neighbors who don't have the time, resources, and opportunity to take this class themselves. We're ready to be advocates, mentors, and leaders for all who live and work in this City. - Sonia Doughty

The next Bellevue Essentials class is scheduled for September – November 2019.