

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 4, 2017

TO: Mayor Stokes and City Councilmembers

FROM: Mike McCormick Huentelman, Neighborhood Outreach Manager, 452-4089
Julie Ellenhorn, Community Relations Coordinator, 452-5372
Planning and Community Development

SUBJECT: Bellevue Essentials Synopsis

For information only, no action is required.

Background:

Bellevue Essentials just completed year five of providing an opportunity 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 29, Bellevue Essentials welcomed 35 new graduates to its ranks which now includes 167 alumni, who now participate in *Bellevue Essentials Extended*, the formal 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 a 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 2017

- ◆ 23 female, 12 male
- ◆ Geographic representation of 14 of Bellevue's neighborhood areas (Bel Red and W. Lk. Samm. absent)
Age range from (20's- 70's) with 40% under age 50
- ◆ 20% of class members live in multi-family housing
- ◆ Professionally diverse, including those employed in tech industries, engineering, real estate, law, education, small business, non-profit and marketing arenas
- ◆ Ethnically diverse including people of Asian, African American, Latino, and Middle Eastern descent - 48% non-Caucasian
- ◆ 63 applications received, 35 class members graduated
- ◆ Priority was given to Bellevue residents and all class members are residents this year

Curriculum:

Bellevue Essentials is a nine-week program 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, arts, neighborhoods, economic development, planning, development services, utilities, finance, transportation and public safety.

What are Essentials graduates doing?

- The upcoming 2018 City Council will include the first Bellevue Essentials alumni.
- Four alumni are serving on the East Bellevue Community Council.
- 16 alumni have or are now serving on Council-appointed Boards and Commissions including Parks, Arts, Human Services, Planning, Environmental Services, Library Board, and Transportation.
- 10 alumni are or have served on City committees including Bellevue's Diversity Advisory Network, Bellevue's Network on Aging, the Affordable Housing Technical Advisory Group and the East Main Citizen Advisory Committee.
- Other City programs to which alumni are lending their leadership skills include our Neighborhood Mediation program, Community Emergency Response Team (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, and the Eastside Neighbors Network.

Bellevue Essentials Extended – a new alumni organization formed in 2015

- Bellevue Essentials Extended organizes quarterly educational and service events throughout the year.
- Bellevue Essentials Extended published the [Make a Difference Volunteer Resource Guide](#) to direct residents to volunteer opportunities within the City and community.
- Bellevue Essentials Extended alumni volunteered as a group at Jubilee Reach Day of Caring in 2016 and 2017, participated in the DSHS Foster Care Boxes program in January 2017 and will be providing volunteers for the Crossroads Community Center Holiday event this December.

Bellevue Essentials Employee Edition

Now in its third year, with over 200 new employees at the City, demand for the Essentials class grew. 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

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 and leadership of the Council to the Bellevue Essentials program.

Some comments from the 2017 class

"Our group is extremely diverse, by every definition and manages to work together, discuss ideas and work towards a common goal. We may not agree on all topics or issues, but certainly are on the same page when it comes to maintaining and improving Bellevue for the short and long term.

This has been such a phenomenal experience for me and really gives me hope and a positive outlook for our City!”

“The greatest benefit of the Bellevue Essentials program is that you get quality time with the actual representatives running the City. Everyone from elected officials to staff responsible for day-to-day operations. Within this time, you’re encouraged to question everything from budgets to decision making that directly impacts each and every citizen of Bellevue.”

The next Bellevue Essentials class is scheduled for September – November 2018.