HAMILTON'S NEIGHBOURHOOD LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

HAMILTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Hamilton NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION STRATEGY

mohawk COLLEGE

Hamilton's Neighbourhood Leadership Institute:
A Framework for Leadership Development in the Resident Stream

Acknowledgements

The Neighbourhood Leadership Institute (NLI) would like to express gratitude to the NLI participants and alumni who, in their selfless dedication to and willingness to take risks for their communities, inspire us to support leadership development in Hamilton. A special thank you to the alumni who provided the 'Words of Wisdom' and whose stories contributed to the narratives featured throughout this report. It was truly a privilege to walk alongside you for part of your journey. Not only have you impacted your communities, but you've also impacted us; showing us what it means to be brave, vulnerable, tenacious, and compassionate.

As well, many thanks to the individuals at our partner agencies and institutions for their memoirs on how the NLI has been shaped into what it is today. It is our hope that this report captures the thoughtful processes behind the creation and operation of the NLI.

The NLI would also like to acknowledge our partners – Hamilton Community Foundation, Mohawk College, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy and the various community-based organizations who work closely with us. It is because of your continuous support and guidance that the NLI is able to nurture emerging leaders to transform their neighbourhoods and communities.

– The NLI Staff (2016)

"Remember… Pyramid!"

One man thought of a monumental concept that would last the ages and become an unshakeable mark on a community of people, history and the world. He was a king, but also just a person like you and me.

Think in terms of how you (the pyramidal summit) can bring positive change to a few; how you can lead a project and incite changes that can spread and multiply and become something that stands the test of time.

When speaking about your project, deliver three key influences that grab the attention of your audience - a triangle is the strongest architectural form: be factual, be personable, be positive.

Design a solid base and work toward your goal (also the summit of the pyramid). Lean on your connections and let them also rely on you and you will form strong sides that will shed inclement situations.

Threes are easy to remember - build your conversational pyramidal formulas, make them your mantras and use them to graduate understanding in others: respect ideas, deliver innovation, incite communication.

As the summit, you ARE the project! But remember, you must openly rely on and include your teams of support and together you can create lasting sustainable community initiatives.

Be strong; be the pyramid!

Words of Wisdom from an NLI Alum

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To the Reader:

To illustrate how participants exemplify the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute's seven core values—collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, and citizenship – alumni narratives are featured throughout this report. In addition to narratives depicting the values, alumni narratives are also used to highlight three significant outcomes of leadership development programs identified by research: self-confidence, transferability of leadership skills to different contexts, and the development of new perspectives (Earnest, 1996; Brown, 2002; Bush, 2012).

1| Hamilton's Neighbourhood Leadership Institute

What is the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute—Resident Stream?

At Hamilton's Neighbourhood Leadership Institute (NLI) people put their ideas into action.
In the resident stream, participants receive leadership training while growing a local project idea. The program consists of 10 learning sessions, which focus on areas such as project management, conflict resolution, communication, community awareness, research, grant writing, public speaking, working with others, self-advocacy, self-discovery and team leadership. The city is the classroom for the NLI, as students engage in hands-on activities in neighbourhoods, learning from each other and from their wider community.

The NLI works with several Hamilton organizations, agencies and educational institutions (Figure 1). Graduates of the NLI's resident-stream receive one post-secondary general education course credit for their work . Community partners lend their expertise during the leadership training sessions. Through Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF), projects may be eligible for a small grant to support implementation in neighbourhoods. As well, the City of Hamilton's Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS) supports the work of the NLI and its participants.

Our Mission

Hamilton's Neighbourhood Leadership Institute nurtures engaged, reflective people to transform their neighbourhoods and communities.

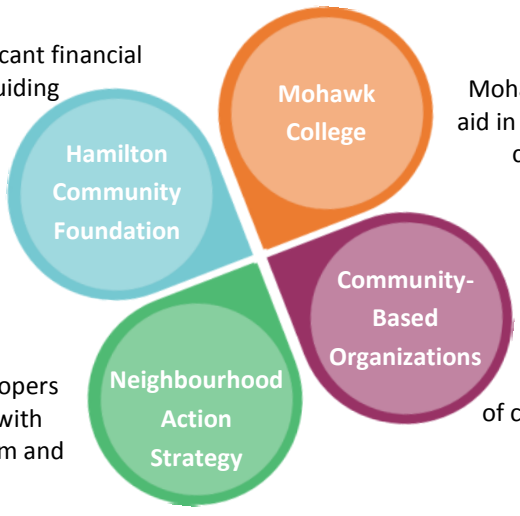
Our Vision

A vibrant, inclusive Hamilton enriched and sustained by engaged community leaders.

Our Values

Inclusiveness	Practicing community-led leadership in a way that honours the importance of dignity, where all people feel valued and are recognized as potential leaders.
Authenticity	Engaging in community work with a genuine passion; remaining true to one's values, beliefs, strengths and limitations.
Equity	Being aware of the different needs in the community and advocating for the fair and just treatment of all people.
Commitment to Act	Demonstrating a high level of dedication to one's actions, plans or ideas for change.

Figure 1. Community Partnerships – The NLI works with a number of organizations, agencies and educational institutions. This collective approach to leadership development training exemplifies the values and assumptions that underpin the NLI's leadership development model.



Along with their significant financial investment, HCF is a guiding source of support for the development of the NLI-Resident Stream and for participants' projects.

Mohawk College faculty members aid in curriculum development and co-facilitate learning sessions.

NAS Community Developers and staff work closely with the NLI-Resident Stream and its participants.

Staff members from a number of community-based organizations co-facilitate learning sessions.

We have long viewed leadership as a solitary activity, the province of the individual. [This is] a new model of leadership for social change – one that celebrates both individuality and collaboration.

(Astin, 1996)

Our Approach to Leadership Development

Hamilton's NLI follows the Social Change Leadership Development Model (SCLDM), an evidence-based and widely evaluated model developed by Helen Astin (1996). The SCLDM is a re-imagined approach to leadership that is non-hierarchical and embedded in clear values. Shared power and collective action (synergistically sharing responsibilities and tasks according to each group member's unique strengths) are the cornerstones of this leadership model.

Hamilton's NLI has two interconnected goals:

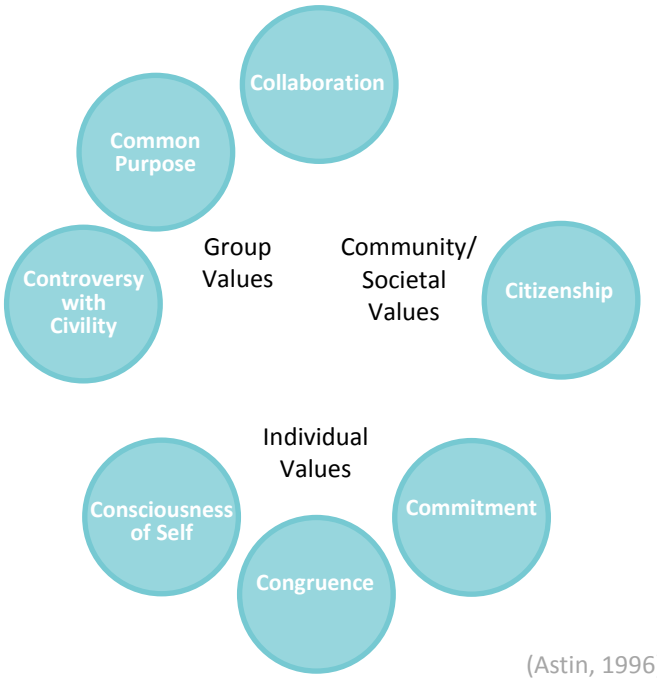
1. Self-Knowledge: understanding one's talents, values, and interests, specifically as they relate to the ability to provide effective leadership and build leadership competence (the capacity to mobilize oneself and others to serve and work collaboratively); and,
2. Facilitate positive social change at the neighbourhood, community and/or institutional level.

Hamilton's NLI is guided by the following assumptions about leadership:

- Leadership is socially responsible; it impacts change on behalf of others
- Leadership is collaborative
- Leadership is a process not a position
- Leadership is inclusive and accessible to all people
- Leadership is values-based
- Community involvement/service is a powerful vehicle for leadership

As part of the NLI, participants learn and practice seven core values – also known as the 7 C'S – which fall into three groupings: individual values, group values, and community/societal values (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Seven Core Values of the SCLDM



(Astin, 1996)

To illustrate how NLI participants exemplify these core values, alumni narratives are featured throughout this report. In addition to narratives depicting the 7 C's, alumni narratives are also used to highlight three significant outcomes of leadership development programs identified by research: self-confidence, transferability of leadership skills to different contexts, and the development of new perspectives (Earnest, 1996; Brown, 2002; Bush, 2012).

Alumni Narratives: Citizenship

Citizenship is more than simply membership; it implies active engagement in one's efforts to serve and care for others. Active citizens are responsibly connected to their community and acknowledge that all members interdependent.

Many alumni can attest to the unique sense of community present in Hamilton. These two participants were transformed by Hamilton's appreciation for residents who want to make a change in their community:

"It was so hard in [where we used to live]. For me, [Hamilton] saved me. It really makes me feel like I have a reason for being here. Hamilton needs you. It needs people to do stuff and to care. And it's going to make a big difference."

Alumni Narratives:
Confidence

Hamilton is home to many newcomers. Almost 25% of the population is born outside of Canada (City of Hamilton, 2013). This diversity is reflected in the residents who participate in the NLI. Settling into a new country can be difficult, and one NLI pair described how the program has helped them feel more comfortable in their community:

"I'm not scared when I speak English. [The NLI] makes me more confident. I'm shy when I speak. Now, it's okay. If it's wrong, it's wrong. You have to speak. You have to bring your opinion."

How the Journey Began

The NLI was launched in 2012 by Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF) in partnership with the City of Hamilton's Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS). The NLI has evolved and changed since conversations to create a community leadership program first began. Many factors at the level of HCF, City and community have played key roles in shaping what the NLI is today.

HCF is a charitable organization who supports initiatives that benefit the local needs of the Hamilton community (Hamilton Community Foundation, n.d.-a). Through significant research and social and economic statistics gathered in 2001, it was identified that poverty was an increasing issue in the community (Johnson, 2006). As such, in 2002, HCF developed a poverty reduction strategy with three grant-making programs: Growing Roots…Strengthening Neighbourhoods, Tackling Poverty Together, and the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (Community Foundations of Canada, n.d.). The commitment to poverty reduction was subsequently renewed in 2007 with Tackling Poverty Together II: Building Stronger Communities, a second phase dedicated specifically to low-income neighbourhoods (Figure 3). The goal of this neighbourhood work was to develop communities with an asset-based approach, and through small grants, build resident capacity, nurture local leaders and facilitate grass-roots change (Johnson, 2006).

The Neighbourhood Leadership Institute emerged organically from HCF's work in poverty reduction and prevention in local neighbourhoods. HCF was working closely with residents and service providers who formed neighbourhood 'hubs' in five of the City's neighbourhoods. Appointed to each hub was a Community Developer, whose role was to work collectively with residents, businesses and organizations to improve their communities and develop future plans for their neighbourhood ("Neighbourhood Action Strategy," 2015). As more people were connected to their hubs and as projects saw success through small grants, a new challenge arose: residents needed more support to build their capacity and lead their change efforts. To support this need, it was identified that community development professionals (within neighbourhoods and in the City at large) would benefit from additional skill development training. However, a lack of such training opportunities existed at educational institutions. Thus, HCF began to explore the idea of developing formal training opportunities for community developers.

To enhance their efforts, HCF and the City of Hamilton work in complement with each other. In 2011, the City established the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, which is focused on 'helping neighbourhoods be great places to live, work, play and learn' ("Neighbourhood Action Strategy," 2015). The NAS identified six more neighbourhoods as priority areas in addition to the five neighbourhoods HCF had already been investing in. Neighbourhood Planning Teams were formed and integrated with the existing 'hubs'. Furthermore, the concept of 'neighbourhood action planning' was introduced: residents and service providers were to work collectively with Community Developers and city staff to create resident-led Action Plans. Each neighbourhood developed an Action Plan to outline a clear vision for the future of their neighbourhood and specific projects that work toward that vision. Additionally, part of the NAS's work in building healthier communities is to enhance community development work ("Neighbourhood Action Strategy", 2015); as such, the City echoed the need identified by HCF to establish formal training opportunities for workers who practice community development in Hamilton.

Lead with your convictions and don't be afraid to stand alone, to show the way.

Words of Wisdom from an NLI Alum

Figure 3. Historical Timeline of the NLI's Development

2002

Growing Roots… Strengthening Neighbourhoods is launched as part of the HCF's poverty reduction strategy.

A five-year commitment to community development and capacity building to improve the quality of life in some of Hamilton's most challenged neighbourhoods (Community Foundations of Canada [CFC], n.d.).

2004

Tackling Poverty Together (TPT) Initiative is launched as part of the HCF's poverty reduction strategy.

A four-year commitment to poverty reduction and prevention in Hamilton (CFC, n.d.).

2005

The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (HRPR) was formed to tackle poverty in Hamilton.

The HRPR's role is to build understanding about the need to invest in poverty reduction to create a healthier, inclusive and more prosperous Hamilton (Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, 2015).

2007

Tackling Poverty Together II: Building Strong Communities is launched as part of HCF's renewed commitment to poverty reduction.

Phase Two of *TPT* focused specifically on poverty in local neighbourhoods (Johnson, 2006).

2009

Initial conversations begin to develop a formal training program for community development professionals in Hamilton.

2011

The City of Hamilton's Neighbourhood Action Strategy is established.

2012

The NLI is refocused to target residents instead of community development professionals.

The NLI is launched and Year One is facilitated by David Derbyshire.

2013

Research is conducted by Sarah Glen to deepen the NLI's foundation in evidence-based leadership development models and adult learning principles.

2014

Based on the research conducted, the NLI is re-designed and piloted by Sarah Glen in Year Two.

2015

The pilot is adopted in Year Three of the NLI.

2016

The frameworks continue to be adopted in Year Four of the NLI and changes are made based on yearly evaluations and feedback from participants and alumni.

David Derbyshire, a Community Developer and HCF's Neighbourhood Coordinator at the time, was contracted to operationalize these training opportunities for community development professionals. His vision was instrumental in shaping the current iteration of the NLI. David had been working in neighbourhoods as HCF's Neighbourhood Coordinator years before the NAS was launched, thus his experience and strong belief in resident-led neighbourhood planning informed the decision to shift the NLI's target from community developers to residents. After careful consideration, HCF and the City supported the idea for a resident training program, acknowledging that engaged resident leaders are critical to cultivating a sustained sense of citizenship and ownership in neighbourhoods.

"…the journey into deeper leadership is facilitated by action (practicing leadership and engaging with others) and by reflection (thinking about your experiences and making meaning about your observations)…. This cycle expands the individual's capacity to learn more effective ways of thinking about and engaging in leadership"

(Komives & Wagner, 2012, p. 17)

Alumni Narratives:
Consciousness of Self

Developing the self is an essential first step in the leadership process. It is a challenging first step; it forces us to stop and reflect on our beliefs, values, attitudes and emotions. Self-knowledge is critical, however, because it allows us to uncover the reasons behind our motivations. It also enhances our ability to be mindful and aware of others (Astin, 1996).

"I'm not a mom, but I feel like I am a mom in here. I am [a] woman. I look and see [that moms] have a lot of responsibilities. They need child care because [there are] many immigrants in this area. I feel I don't want these women to [be staying] at home."

Two of our participants are developing a project to reinstate child minding for a local ESL program. Without someone to look after their children, many women are not able to attend classes.

Evolution of the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute

Year One of the NLI's Resident Stream, facilitated by David Derbyshire, focused on Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). ABCD is a model of community engagement developed by John L. McKnight and John P. Kretzmann as a reaction against the needs-based approach to community development, which has a tendency to highlight the needs and problems of a community when generating solutions. ABCD instead recognizes the strengths, skills, talents and assets of people and communities in order to drive change (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003).

While a community development approach can provide opportunities for leadership to emerge, leadership development itself is not a specific focus of ABCD. Thus, in Year Two, it was important for the NLI to identify evidence-based models specifically focused on leadership development (Glen, 2013, p. 15). Sarah Glen, the current director of the NLI, introduced the Social Change Leadership Development Model (SCLDM) to guide the re-design of the NLI. The SCLDM aims to instill in future leaders a sense of civic responsibility and a passionate commitment for social change. Fundamental to this approach to leadership are interdependence and collaboration, and the development of self (Astin, 1996). The SCLDM model is flexible enough to offer opportunities, not just for residents, but for community development professionals, service providers, and youth (Glen, 2013, p. 17) – as such, the SCLDM model is transferable to the NLI's future directions (refer to Future Directions in Section 3).

Over the past three years, there have been improvements to the NLI. Foremost, participants' perceived effectiveness has increased every year. There was an increase in the number of participants who would recommend the course to others and an increase in the NLI matching participants' expectations. The NLI did respond to participants' comments and suggestions for improvements. Overall, from the evaluations conducted every year (See Section 2c for more information), it is evident that the NLI has responded appropriately where possible to make the NLI a positive experience for the vast majority of participants.

2a| The Neighbourhood Leadership Institute's Resident Stream
Our Approach to Education

For a sense of belonging and purpose, initiate a project in your community about something you are passionate about. This will make an invaluable contribution and you will meet and work with lots of like-minded people. For us it was a wonderful introduction to Hamilton's community spirit.

Words of Wisdom from an NLI Alum

Inquiry and Project-Based Learning

The Neighbourhood Leadership Institute (NLI) has a unique approach to facilitate the learning of emerging resident leaders. During learning sessions, facilitators aim to not only provide a knowledge base relevant to community leadership, but also provide a space where participants can engage in purposeful and reflective evaluation of their learning within the context of their neighbourhood work.

The NLI has based its model for Leadership Development on a concept of education and learning that is rooted in thinking about how and why individuals learn. It draws upon a body of research that supports the Project Based Learning (PBL) movement, it incorporates ideas taken from an Inquiry Approach to learning, it builds upon self-directed and spiral learning strategies that are effective with adult learners, and uses a popular education model often linked to Paulo Freire (Larmer et al, 2015). All of these learning influences have come together in the creation of a unique and effective model that we refer to as The NLI's Model for Leadership Development in Neighbourhoods (refer to page 15 for more information).

The NLI's approach to leadership development also incorporates experiential learning, reflection, collaboration and participatory education.

Experiential Learning

The primary source of learning to lead is experience (McCall, 2004). As such, the NLI's Resident Stream nurtures leadership development by providing participants with experiences they can grow and learn from (Guthrie & Jones, 2012). To implement experiential learning, a project component was introduced in Year Two of the NLI. Research demonstrates that anchoring one's learning to something tangible, such as a project, is effective in helping participants practice their newly acquired skills (Earnest, 1996). Thus, interested residents are required to apply to the program with a local project idea they believe will benefit their neighbourhood.

The project component also gives participants an opportunity to learn within the context of their neighbourhood; this is important given that many participants draw their passion from improving the communities in which they live (Edwards & Turnbull, 2012). Furthermore, participants can better appreciate the complexities that exist in community work, which are often not realized in a classroom environment (Eyler, 2009). For example, participants can develop plans for their project but may have to adjust if there is a loss of

Alumni Narratives:
Transferability

Many residents who engage with the NLI are actively engaged in their own neighbourhoods, particularly with their Neighbourhood Planning Team. It is the NLI's hope that participants take the strategies and skills they have cultivated in the program and share them back with neighbourhoods.

As part of the Neighbourhood Action Plans, residents outline specific 'action items' to work on in order to achieve their shared neighbourhood vision. When action items need to be modified, removed or in this case, added, how do residents go about making decisions? This participant adopted the strategies of group decision-making used in the NLI to ensure all voices could be heard:

"We're going to break up into groups and I'm going to give you 5 topics [that are discussed the most on our social media], plus a wild card. Discuss among your groups … Pick two of the top things that stand out to you. Then we [will come] back and one person [will be] chosen to defend the two things chosen out of each group. Out of that [list], each resident has two votes….
I had many different ways of how to do it.
But Sarah helped me figure out how to make it as inclusive as possible."

Alumni Narratives

Collaboration

A collaborative process multiplies the group's collective effort by capitalizing on each other's strengths and encourages the exploration of diversity to inspire creative solutions. At the NLI, participants are encouraged to see the value of and practice working with others.

"At the NLI, sitting around the table and listening to [others'] reasoning for the things they were doing… It made it clear to me that people do have a contribution to make. And because I don't think it's necessarily what it should be and how it should be… doesn't mean it shouldn't be. In these volunteer positions, the fact that people are different is a good thing. Because you need all sorts of talents and abilities and personalities to make this all work."

timelines, and/or volunteer attrition. Experiential learning allows participants to anticipate these complexities, think critically about how to apply their knowledge and skills, and practice problem solving collaboratively with their partner and the larger group (Eyler, 2009).

Experiential education is learning by doing. The application of knowledge to a specific context deepens participants' understanding of the concepts presented, which better equips them to transfer their learning across multiple contexts. This is important given that many participants are active members of their community and are involved in a myriad of community initiatives in addition to their NLI project. As well, the NLI believes transferability of knowledge and skill is critical because leadership development is a life-long learning process (Earnest, 1996).

Reflection

Learning from experience does not happen automatically. Reflection is integral to the process of learning and growing from one's experiences, and as such, is a significant element in the NLI's approach to leadership education. Through reflection, participants are able to connect their learning to what they already know and the specific context (or project) they are operating in. Reflection is what makes experiences meaningful (Guthrie & Jones, 2012).

The opportunity to reflect encourages participants to step back and carefully think about what an experience has taught them and what that learning means for them. The process of reflection challenges participants to observe their thoughts, question their assumptions, view issues from different perspectives, understand relationships and interconnections, and uncover the reasoning behind their beliefs (Brown, 2004; Guthrie & Jones, 2012). This thoughtful consideration of experience leads to a deeper understanding of oneself and inspires further action (Guthrie & Jones, 2012).

Throughout the program, participants engage in a number of reflective activities that challenge them to consider their leadership style, strengths and limitations, level of confidence, social location, contributions to community work, motivations to develop their local project, and role within their project partnership, NLI cohort and broader community.

Collaboration

Traditional conceptualizations of leadership include a hierarchical, leader-follower relationship. However, within the context of communities working toward social change, research shows a shift in how leadership is now viewed: current perspectives describe leadership as distributed or shared among a group (Astin, 1996; Edwards & Turnbull, 2012). This perspective underscores the NLI's assumption that leadership is collaborative; collaborative leaders recognize the diversity of skills and knowledge in their community, and are willing to engage in dialogue and develop partnerships with other stakeholders. By working together, participants are able to leverage collective resources when making decisions and problem solving (Edwards & Turnbull, 2012). The idea of distributed leadership also reinforces another assumptions guiding the NLI: leadership is a *process* not a position.

To facilitate collaboration, the delivery of the Resident Stream incorporates small group activities, group decision-making, relationship building between project pairs and among peers, group connections outside of

the learning sessions (e.g. via online forums), and the exploration of project allies in the broader community. Collaborative practice is also modelled in the way the NLI operates its program – the NLI, along with its partners, share a vision for the future of Hamilton and together, take steps toward that vision by supporting the leadership development of the local people.

Participatory Education

Part of the NLI's goal is to inspire people to participate in the on-going creation of a vibrant Hamilton. Resident engagement is essential to the success and sustainability of healthier communities because residents understand their communities more deeply than organizations or institutions (Eversole, 2010). To encourage active participation, the NLI aims to be an space that is co-created by all those who engage with it – staff, facilitators, participants and alumni. Thus, the NLI has adopted a participatory approach to education, a "learning/teaching process wherein all participants are involved in and committed to defining their own learning needs and wants, working out an approach to address them, and evaluating that process as they live out of and into it" (Sauve, 1987, p. 11).

To ensure the NLI is a co-created space, participants are encouraged to be active agents in their education. They share in the decisions around what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. For example, participants are encouraged to make decisions regarding how they want their learning session to be structured, how they want their group to operate, how they want to measure their progress, what topics they want to learn more about, etc. To support this decision making, NLI staff and facilitators challenge participants to ask questions, gather information, give feedback, clarify issues, and explore the implications of a proposed solution. Lastly, NLI staff and facilitators respect and accept group decisions once they are made and aid in the execution of those decisions (Sauve, 1987, p. 25).

Alumni Narratives:
Controversy with Civility

Differing viewpoints are inherent between diverse groups such as those in Hamilton. NLI participants are encouraged to operate with the recognition that multiple perspectives enrich and bring value to the group. Differences that do arise can be resolved respectfully, with open and honest dialogue, understanding, and a commitment to work cooperatively. This participant described how the NLI has them develop multiple strategies in how to communicate with others.

"I used to communicate only concerned about what I needed. [This method] is more about the results at the end. It's not about the journey to get to that. The NLI made it possible for me to have a more open mind on how I approach things....
It opened my mind to the fact that there are other ways to do things."

The Rubric

The essential elements of the NLI's Model for Leadership Development are grouped together in a rubric for recruiting, analyzing and evaluating program effectiveness with the use of different assessment tools to measure success. The model includes: Self Reflection, Critique and Revision, Public Product, Voice and Authenticity – all of which are important elements in the development of leaders.

In keeping with the NLI's philosophy of evaluation and improvement, all elements are (and will continue to be) evaluated and modified as necessary. The NLI will therefore remain fresh and flexible with a growing capacity to support participants while they are in the program, and also when they become program alumni. The NLI Model represents our belief and our approach to creating successful and supportive learning environments. The ultimate goal is to build and support neighbourhoods and the leaders that reside in them (refer to page 14 for more information).

When the best leader's work is done
the people say, "We did it ourselves."

Lao Tzu
Words of Wisdom passed on by an NLI Alum

The NLI's Model for Leadership Development in Neighbourhoods (Resident Stream)

Essential Elements

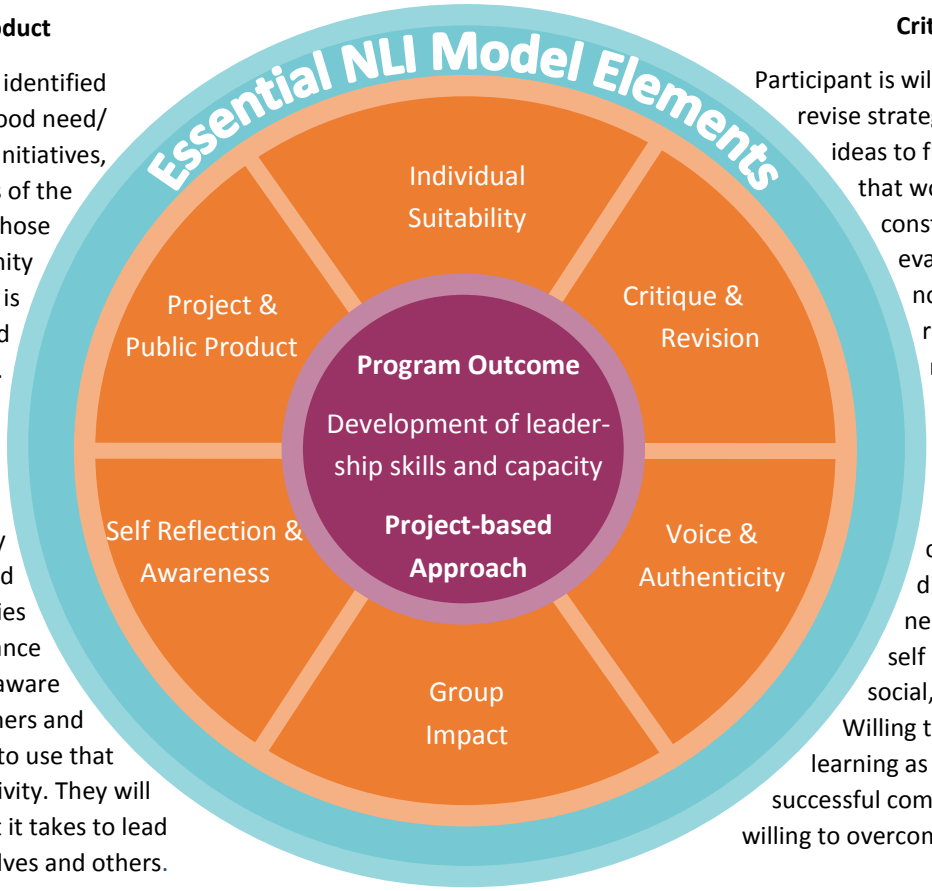
The essential elements are characteristics that we look for in prospective participants who seek entry into the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute. The openness to grow and the curiosity to explore these characteristics will contribute to a good fit between prospective participants and the program, and will also provide a greater likelihood of success in the program.

Individual Suitability

Participant has met the required qualification criteria for NLI projects in terms of age, residence in priority neighbourhood, partnership and community engagement, and commitment. Participants are expected to provide references who will be contacted.

Project and Public Product

Participant is connected to identified community/neighbourhood need/ action item/community initiatives, and supports the values of the NLI, and will support those values within the community and neighbourhoods. It is the product of, and represents the NLI Model.



Critique and Revision

Participant is willing to seek answers, revise strategies, and explore new ideas to find appropriate solutions that work. Will offer and take constructive criticism and evaluations, and be nonjudgmental and respectful when giving and receiving feed-back.

Self-Reflection and Awareness

Participant has the ability and desire to understand their leadership abilities and explore ways to enhance those abilities. They are aware of themselves and others and recognize how to use that awareness with sensitivity. They will understand what it takes to lead themselves and others.

Voice and Authenticity

Participant is genuinely concerned about making a difference for neighbourhood/community/ self (not motivated by political, social, financial, business gain). Willing to embrace life-long learning as critical element to successful community leadership and is willing to overcome barriers and challenges.

Group Impact

Participant is inclusive and empathetic, appreciates an Anti Racism Anti oppression (ARAO) framework and is able to work in partnership with others and contribute to a positive group dynamics. Interested in building group cohesiveness and learning how to use a conflict reduction approach to engage with others.

The Rubric

One aspect of the recruitment strategy is to conduct interviews with prospective participants. The Measures and Look-fors suggest areas for dialogue and conversation so that prospective participants are given opportunities to explain, describe or demonstrate how they align with the NLI Model essential elements.

Measures and Look-fors	
Participant will have met the criteria outlined in the application form and have a partner for their project. In an interview, they will be able to:	
Individual Suitability	• Explain what they want to do and learn, and commit to the timelines for the NLI activities • Demonstrate or articulate a passion for their idea or project • Provide information about who supports them and their project in the community
Critique and Revision	• Talk about how they respond to criticism • Describe strategies they would use to find solutions and evaluate their progress • Describe how they provide and respond to feedback • Indicate that they have a flexible approach to working in groups
Voice and Authenticity	• Demonstrate a good sense of self and have a clear idea of what they want to do. • Discuss the challenges and/or barriers they could face in participating in program and consider possible solutions • Discuss the challenges and/or barriers they could face in presenting their project to community • Talk about concerns, cultural and social expectations, and interests, and what they could contribute to the program
Group Impact	• Describe how they handle conflict and strategies they use to resolve or reduce conflict • Describe what they like about working by themselves, working in a small group and working in a large group • Describe what they fear most about working by themselves, working in a small group and working in a large group • Indicate the degree to which they trust others
Self-Reflection and Awareness	• Talk about themselves and what they can contribute (give to and take from the NLI) • Describe areas in their skill/ability set that they would like to develop or improve • Describe areas in their skill/ability set that they could use to help others • Indicate the degree to which they trust themselves to complete tasks and learn
Project and Public Product	• Explain their project and how they would bring it to the community and what they would do • Demonstrate an ability to listen to others and participate in community dialogue • Identify areas where they need more information and greater inquiry in order to bring their project to life

2b| The Neighbourhood Leadership Institute's Resident Stream

Structure of the Resident Stream

The Neighbourhood Leadership Institute's (NLI) Resident Stream consists of 10 learning sessions held throughout the spring months. Learning sessions typically run on Saturdays from 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM; however, the NLI is open to adapting the program's schedule based on the changing needs of residents. To address common barriers that preclude participants from attending session, transportation (bus tickets) and child minding is provided. Refreshments and lunch are also provided for participants and their children. The NLI's Resident Stream is free of charge.

Criteria for Participation

1. Participants must have a project partner. Both partners should support the project idea, be committed to attending the learning sessions, and to developing the project as a pair. Participants can form pairs with residents in their neighbourhood or across neighbourhoods.
2. At least one of the project partners must reside within one of the 11 neighbourhoods Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF) and the Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS) currently support.
3. Both partners must complete the application process as a pair: this includes a written application and an in-person interview where elements of the rubric (refer to page 14) will be looked for.
4. The project must be endorsed by the neighbourhood In some way (refer to *Project Component* within this section for more details).
5. The project must be piloted in one of the 11 neighbourhoods.

Learning Session Locations

The NLI believes it is important to be physically immersed in the neighbourhoods that inspire our participants to create change (Brown, 2002). Thus, learning sessions are held in various locations within the 11 neighbourhoods the NLI works closely with; this gives participants the opportunity to explore, learn about and connect to nearby communities. To facilitate these connections, a Planning Team representative from the host neighbourhood is invited to share with participants some of the changes they are working toward in their neighbourhood Participants can then exchange information and share ideas with the Planning Team representative and with each other, in order to enhance the efforts of their own neighbourhoods and/or collectively drive City-wide change.

How do residents get connected to the NLI?

- Community meetings (e.g. Neighbourhood Planning Teams)
- Community Developers
- Local community or city-wide print media
- Personal accounts from NLI Alumni
- Word of mouth within the community
- Community agencies or organizations
- Community-led social media (e.g. neighbourhood Facebook pages)
- City Housing Hamilton
- Hamilton Community Foundation website
- City of Hamilton's Neighbourhood Action Strategy

Learning Session Topics

Learning sessions focus on areas such as project management, conflict resolution, communication, community awareness, research, grant writing, public speaking, working with others, self-advocacy, self-discovery and team leadership. The number of topics included in each learning sessions is limited to allow more time for participants to engage in fruitful discussion of the concepts presented. The opportunity for discussion greatly enriches learning: it allows participants to develop a holistic view of an issue, practice their ability to respect differing perspectives and work cooperatively, engage in out of the box thinking, and reflect on how concepts relate to themselves, their neighbourhoods and their projects (Earnest, 1996; King & Cruickshank, 2010).

Alumni Narratives: Commitment

It is truly an inspiration to witness participants' intrinsic passion and energy, and to learn what motivates them to become involved and work toward action:

"My kids. I was trying to change my life."

"[The NLI and the Planning Team] helped me to make a commitment because people were counting on me and supporting me."

"I see lots of potential [in our neighbourhood]. And I see the improvements. There really is a light at the end of the tunnel. That is what keeps me going."

"A feeling like I wasn't heard; I didn't have a place or forum to be heard."

Furthermore, in diverse communities such Hamilton, the NLI believes it is important to develop leaders who strive for social justice, equity and inclusion. Thus, leadership topics are explored through an anti-racist, anti-oppressive (ARAO) lens. ARAO is a framework that aims to eradicate all forms of oppression by confronting injustice and inequity based on race, class, gender, ability, sexual orientation, age, religion, and so on (C. Gately, personal communication, June 8, 2015).

Through this lens, participants are challenged to recognize the power differences and forms of oppression embedded in society's structures and institutions. ARAO practice helps to empower people who experience oppression by reducing the negative effects of these social hierarchies. The NLI works from an ARAO perspective to build safe and respectful environments within the NLI, as well as to encourage emerging leaders to foster inclusive environments in their own communities.

Learning Session Co-Facilitators: Multiple Sources of Expertise

Knowledge is traditionally seen as belonging to experts at institutions. While institutional knowledge does have advantages in terms of accessibility to resources, objectivity and quantifiable measures, the NLI also recognizes the value of 'local' or 'community' knowledge i.e. the expertise of citizens, communities, and organizations. Community knowledge is based on lived experience and is deeply rooted in the context of the neighbourhoods participants live in and hope to transform. Through the transfer of community knowledge, participants are better able to understand the rich history of their neighbourhoods, interconnections and relationships within the community, how the community functions, and the feasibility of proposed ideas (Eversole, 2010). Both institutional and community expertise is valuable to the development of emerging leaders.

As a result, each NLI learning session is co-facilitated by a Mohawk College faculty member and a staff member from a partnering community organization, both of whom hold expertise in the present topic area. Additionally, in Year Three, NLI Alumni were invited to participate as a third co-facilitator. NLI Alumni hold a unique set of expertise and are able to relate to current participants on a deeper level because of their experience having already developed a local project through the program (refer to Alumni Engagement in Section 3c for more information). With these multiple sources of expertise, participants are able to gain a fuller perspective of the curriculum's topic areas.

Neighbourhood Leadership Institute Staff

NLI staff also contribute as co-facilitators at learning sessions. NLI staff include the Coordinator and the two Educational Leads. The Coordinator is a position occupied by a professional whose experience and skills include logistical planning, thoughtful community development, and an understanding of the process of inquiry-based learning in order to fulfill the day-to-day operations of the NLI. The position of Educational Lead was introduced in Year Four and is designed to support the Coordinator in all NLI activities with special focus on participant/ alumni support and learning session support

Learning sessions are co-facilitated by a(n):

1. Mohawk College faculty member
2. Staff member from a partnering community organization
3. NLI Alumni
4. NLI Staff

While the co-facilitators described in the previous section alternate, the Coordinator and Educational Leads are present at each session. As such, staff are able to help participants bridge their learning between sessions, and are closely connected with the growth and progress of each participant and their project.

NLI staff and co-facilitators work as a collective – jointly contributing to the development and execution of each learning session, and growth of participants as individuals and as a group.

Outside of learning sessions, NLI staff provide one-on-one support to participants and alumni, operate the logistics of learning sessions and alumni workshops (refer to Alumni Engagement in Section 3c), manage the development of the resident stream and other emerging streams (refer to Future Directions in Section 3), promote and raise awareness for the NLI, work closely with Hamilton Community Foundation, Mohawk College, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy and the NLI's other community partners, etc. Given the multifaceted roles of NLI staff, a dedicated team who embodies the NLI's values and believes in the residents and communities they work with is integral to the success of the NLI. Refer to page 18 for the governance model of the NLI's Resident Stream.

Project Component

The NLI's approach to education incorporates experiential learning, where participants *'learn by doing'* (Guthrie & Jones, 2012). As such, a project component is included in the NLI's curriculum. To apply to the NLI, participants are required to identify a specific project, project idea, or thematic area they believe will benefit their neighbourhood. Projects are accepted regardless of its developmental stage: some participants apply with fully formed ideas and some apply with a broad issue they would like to focus on.

To encourage participants to share their ideas with their community and to ensure that projects address a community need, participants' projects must be supported by their neighbourhood in some way; this can include an endorsement from a community partner, service provider, Community Developer or Neighbourhood Planning Team member. Participants are encouraged to nurture a project they are passionate about, which can include but is not limited to: the environment, transportation, arts, culture, human services, education, or entrepreneurship.

Project Pairs and Group Cohort

Approximately 24 participants are successful in their application to the NLI's Resident Stream. The cohort is limited because research shows that a group of 25 is ideal for learning. Smaller cohorts allow participants to develop closer relationships with their peers and facilitators; as well, NLI staff and facilitators are better able to attend to the needs of the group (Basom & Yerkes, 2001). This is important given that the NLI is guided by the assumption that leadership is collaborative, inclusive and accessible to all people.

Long-standing, sustainable change in neighbourhoods requires the collective action of people who share a common vision. To encourage community leaders to practice building relationships and working collaboratively, participants are required to attend the NLI with a partner. Pairs can be formed within neighbourhoods or across neighbourhoods. Both partners must be committed to developing their project and attending the learning sessions together. By working as a pair, participants can pool their resources, combine their efforts, develop relationships and be a source of support for each other (Basom & Yerkes, 2001).

For successful completion of the NLI, participants must:

1. Attend eight of 10 learning sessions, and/or
2. Complete 75% of the tasks assigned.

The required level of commitment and percentage of completed tasks is high because this process has a tangible impact on the community. Additionally, the NLI aims to ensure that leaders are engaging with the material in a lasting way.

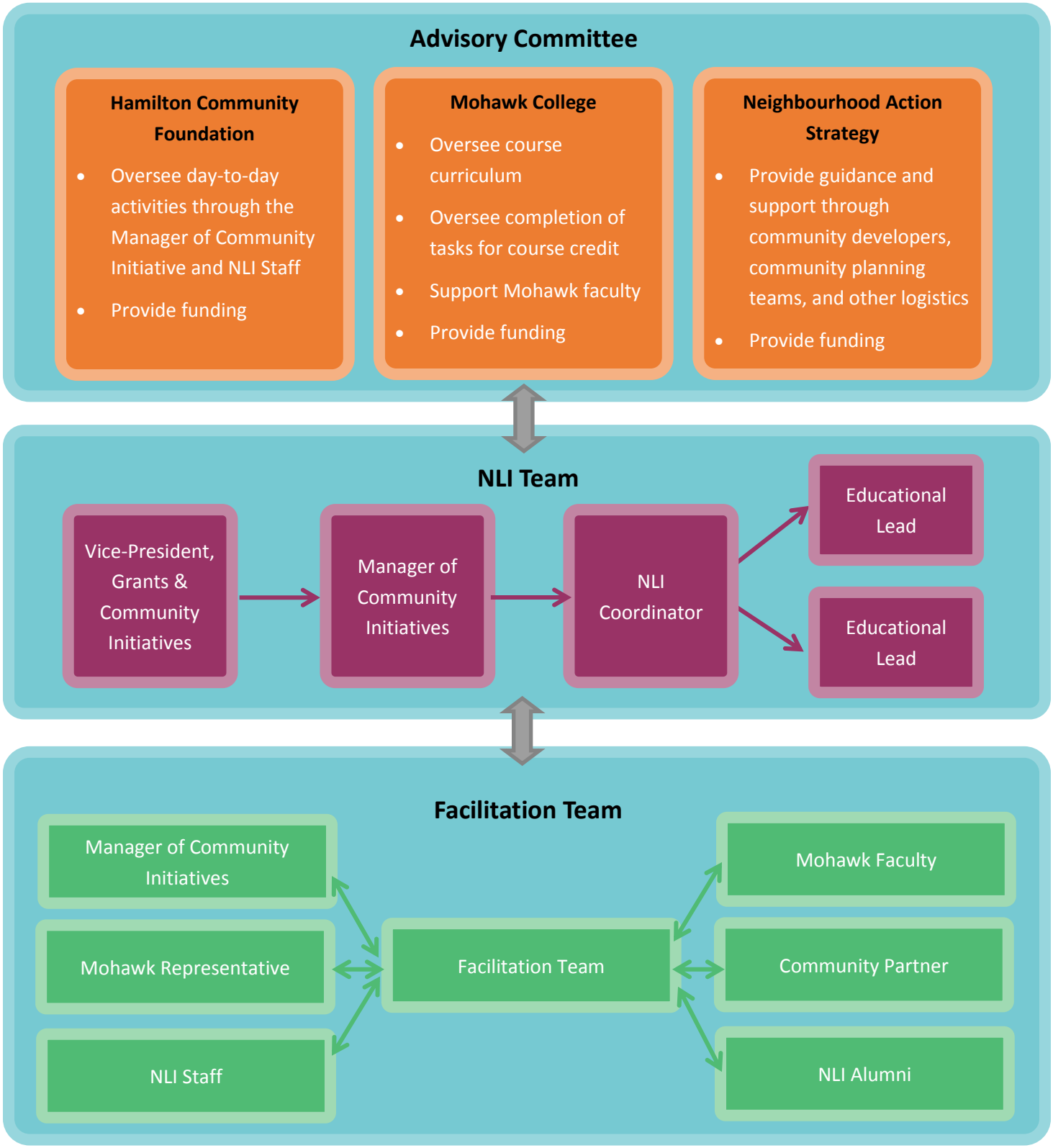
College Credential

Upon successful completion of the NLI, participants receive a college level, General Education course credit as formal recognition for their work throughout the program. The opportunity to receive a college credential from a recognized educational institution offers participants the possibility of connecting their community leadership training with broader educational and employment goals; this is especially important for participants who traditionally experience barriers to education (Glen, 2013).

Hamilton Community Foundation's Neighbourhood Leadership Institute Grant

In addition to the college credential, participants are also eligible to apply for an up to $500.00 grant from HCF to implement their project plans in their neighbourhood(s). Since each project develops on a different timeline, participants are able to apply for the grant whenever their project is at a stage where funds are needed.

The Neighbourhood Leadership Institute—Resident Stream Governance Model



The governance model of the NLI—Resident Stream

The Resident steam of the NLI is steered by 3 main groups; the advisory committee, the NLI team, and the facilitation team. The advisory committee provides overall vision, guidance, and support (financial and otherwise). The NLI team oversees the logistical planning, day-to-day activities, support for learning sessions, and support for current participants, alumni, and their projects. The Facilitation team plans the learning sessions and ensures that the curriculum objectives and learning goals are achieved.

2c| The Neighbourhood Leadership Institute's Resident Stream
Analysis of Program Evaluations (2014—2016)

Following the re-design of the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute 's (NLI) Resident Stream in 2014, a program evaluation was conducted by partners at McMaster University. Results of the evaluation were used to guide the NLI's decision making for subsequent years, as well as provide evidence to donors, sponsors and future potential partnerships of the value and impact of leadership development training in Hamilton (Glen, 2013). To assess overall satisfaction of the program, participants were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statement on a scale of 1—10: "Overall I found the course to be effective" and "I would recommended this course to others." Trim, 2014).

Each year hence, a program evaluation is conducted on the last week of sessions with an external independent researcher with an expanded version of the 2014 questionnaire and a focus group discussion. The results of the questionnaire and discussion are confidential and the NLI Staff only use the aggregated results to enhance the next iteration of the program.

Over the past three years, there has been noticeable improvement to the NLI program. Foremost, participants' perceived effectiveness has increased every year. In 2014, the average effectiveness rating was 8.2, then 8.29 in 2015, and finally 8.88 in 2016. This demonstrates that, on average, participants' belief that the course achieves its goals is steadily increasing from year to year with more of a consensus between participants.

There was an increase in the number of participants who would recommend the course to others, with 86% saying they would in 2015, and 100% in 2016. In addition, there has been an increase in the NLI matching participants' expectations. In 2015, only 50% of participants' expectations were matched, but then this number increased to 95% in 2016. These increases are likely due to the implementation of the interview process and program launch session in 2016 in response to the feedback from the 2015 evaluation. This allowed participants to have a better idea of what NLI is before making a commitment, increasing their enjoyment overall.

The NLI did respond to participants' comments on the scheduling of the course, which has led to increased satisfaction. In 2015, 50% of participants were completely satisfied with the irregular schedule. With the 3 weeks of learning sessions followed by 1 week off schedule, 70% of participants were completely satisfied. The NLI also improved upon many of the topics that participants wanted more of a focus on. This included conflict resolution skills, grant writing, and research.

Finally, the NLI addressed some of participants' suggestions for improvements. The number of facilitators was reduced to increase bonding with participants; certain activities were removed after participants shared negative feedback; and additional support was offered to those who needed it.

Overall, the NLI continuously strives to respond appropriately to participants' comments and suggestions. As well, the NLI Staff build on the feedback as they plan the next sessions. It is our hope that the NLI continues to grow and adapt to serve the community and fit the needs of the participants and alumni.

Leadership is faith in people.

Leadership is recognizing strengths where others see weaknesses.

It is sharing; it is bringing people on board; it's focusing on assets and common ground, it's connecting people.

Words of Wisdom from an NLI Alum

2d| The Neighbourhood Leadership Institute's Resident Stream
Alumni Engagement

Continuing Support for Neighbourhood Leadership Institute Alumni

Participants' projects will, more often than not, take more time to develop than the number of weeks the Resident Stream program operates. The Neighbourhood Leadership Institute (NLI) is invested in helping participants and their projects thrive, therefore NLI staff are committed to continue supporting NLI Alumni in the development of their projects beyond the 10 learning sessions.

Ongoing contact with graduates is beneficial because it encourages participants to maintain and enhance the networks and relationships they have built, and it motivates alumni to continue being active members of their communities (Fredricks, 1999).

Alumni Narratives:
Congruence

The process of self-development is to not only become aware of one's values and beliefs, but to also think, feel and act in ways consistent with those values and beliefs. A congruent individual is genuine, authentic and honest about his/her strengths and limitations. Often times, this leads participants to question themselves, their assumptions, and their decisions.

"My strength isn't dealing with volunteering organizations. And [the NLI] was an opportunity to figure out where I fit or if I fit…. So it was interesting and it kind of helped me decide what I'm going to do next in terms of volunteer type of work."

Additional Opportunities for Neighbourhood Leadership Institute Alumni

Leadership development is a life-long learning process. Thus, the NLI believes it is important to sustain the learning community fostered among participants in the program (Earnest, 1996). Additional workshops are available for NLI Alumni in the fall and winter months. These workshops are free of charge.

As part of the NLI, participants/alumni are encouraged to be active agents in their education; as such, the topic of each workshop is determined by the group. Alumni have the expertise to better understand which topics would supplement their leadership education because of their deep involvement in their communities. Approximately three workshops are offered to NLI Alumni each year, which typically run for full- or half-days. Similar to the regular learning sessions, refreshments, bus tickets and child minding are provided. Attendance is not mandatory, but all alumni are invited to partake.

In addition to facilitating workshops, NLI staff also present other learning opportunities to participants and alumni as they become available (e.g. conferences, media events, co-facilitation of NLI learning sessions, etc.). All this information, opportunities, and updated are presented to the NLI alumni in an electronic newsletter that is open for collaboration and sharing between alumni from all cohorts.

Start where you are.
Use what you have.
Do what you can.
And never give up!

Words of Wisdom from an NLI Alum

3| Future Directions

Professional Development Stream

When initial conversations began to create a community leadership program, the intent was to target community development professionals in Hamilton. Community Developers are on-going sources of support to residents, businesses and organizations, and as such are instrumental to building healthier communities. Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF) and the City's Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS) recognize the potential that exists to enhance community development work in Hamilton, however there is a lack of professional training opportunities in the community and at educational institutions.

To address this need, the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute (NLI), HCF, NAS, and McMaster University have formed a collective partnership with the shared aim of providing professional development opportunities for people who practice community development in Hamilton. Preliminary research has been conducted to explore the wide variety of skills required of a community development position and interest in further training. Over 70 community development workers and six managers were surveyed. Results of the survey showed a strong interest in professional skill development among community developers.

The NLI will be launching a professional development stream in October 2016. Developed in partnership with McMaster University's Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), the NLI's professional stream offers another opportunity for community skills building in Hamilton. The academically recognized Certificate in Leadership in Community Engagement is the first of its kind in the region and aims to support professionals working in a community development capacity grow the necessary skills, capacities and networks to undertake this complex and nuanced work.

Youth Stream

HCF has a long history of involving youth in their organization. In the past, youth have been present advisory committees alongside adult members, and a Youth Advisory Council (involving youth across the City between the ages of 13 and 25) was established to grant to youth-led community projects. Creating change in communities is a long-term investment that must also be sustained; HCF recognizes the importance in of engaging youth in order for change to be carried across generations. These opportunities also allow youth to learn about social change, grow in their self-confidence and leadership skills and make a difference in Hamilton (Hamilton Community Foundation, n.d.-b).

Youth who have traditionally been involved with opportunities such as the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) are diverse in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, education etc.; however youth were limited in their economic diversity. HCF was challenged with engaging youth who may face multiple barriers to being involved in their communities. In order to expand their membership and establish a group that represents *all* of Hamilton's youth, the HCF is exploring the possibility

Alumni Narratives:
Common Purpose

A common purpose is developed when all members of a group actively participate in building a shared vision and identifying group goals.

The participants that form this NLI pair are from different neighbourhoods. They came together for the first time at the NLI to reform a provincial policy that gives landlords incentive to keep properties vacant in Hamilton. This is an issue that has affected both their neighbourhoods and thus, both their lives. Advocating for this change would greatly strengthen residents' efforts to revitalize their neighbourhoods.

[Participant 1]: When I first moved to Hamilton, most of my friends were very afraid for me. I wasn't sure about the neighbourhood. There was a huge stigma about it.

[Participant 2]. You could see that there were a lot of vacant properties in Hamilton … Both of us saw depressed neighbourhoods.

Alumni Narratives:
New Perspectives

"I'd like to change the word leader into the idea that anyone can be anything. It doesn't matter whether you have a disability, whether you're short or tall, big, what colour or race you are. Anyone, no matter how disadvantaged you were in your upbringing, given the capacity and the skills can do anything. That's re-defined as leadership."

of expanding the NLI to include a youth stream because the NLI operates directly in areas that historically have limited contact with HCF on a youth level. Developing a youth stream fits naturally at the NLI because the NLI values inclusiveness – a belief that all people, regardless of age or background, have the potential to be leaders.

Currently, research is being conducted to support the development of a youth stream, which would work with youth between the ages of 12-15 years old from the following neighbourhoods: Davis Creek, McQuesten, Riverdale, Rolston, Keith, Stinson, Beasley, Jamesville, Crowpoint, GALA and Sherman. The program is still being shaped by the research, but it will aim to support youth in realizing their potential as community leaders for social change through developmentally appropriate training and engagement opportunities. It will also work to inspire the generation of self-perpetuating enthusiasm for ongoing and effective civic engagement/community change among youth. Specific details will be made available as programming takes shape.

Expansion of the Resident Stream

The NLI's Resident Stream is currently available to residents who live in the 11 neighbourhoods HCF and NAS work closely with. However, there is a growing need and interest for the NLI to expand its membership across the City. Thus, the City of Hamilton and HCF have invested in the expansion of the NLI's Resident Stream.

Plans for the format and target audience of the Resident Stream's expansion are still in the early stages. It is certain, however, that expansion will not include an increase in the current cohort size. Research shows that learning is optimal in a cohort of 25 participants; this allows participants to develop closer relationships with peers and facilitators. It also allows NLI staff and facilitators to better attend to the needs of the group (Basom & Yerkes, 2001). Expansion may instead include multiple cohorts moving through the 10-week learning sessions, one or two day intensive workshops, broadening the membership to include a few more neighbourhoods or increasing to a City-wide audience. Further research and community consultation must be conducted to determine best practices for expansion.

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

John Quincy Adams
Words of Wisdom passed on
by an NLI Alum

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Appendix
Description of Participants' Projects—2014 Cohort

Beasley

Showcase heritage in Beasley through the development of brochures and walking tours.

Crown Point

Produce a documentary about the gentrification versus revitalization of Kenilworth Avenue.

Crown Point and GALA

Create a community publications toolkit to share among other community groups.

Crown Point and GALA

Advocate for reform of the property tax rebate for vacant commercial/ industrial buildings along Barton Street and Kenilworth Avenue.

Crown Point and Sherman

Condense the Transportation Master Plan into a more accessible toolkit for residents.

Jamesville

Create a recreation program for Asian youth in the downtown core.

Keith

Generate an exciting buzz around the unveiling of *The Keith Kestrel*, the Keith community's first mascot.

McQuesten

Establish *Our Community Closet,* a free drop-in for individuals and families in need.

Riverdale

Re-introduce child care for immigrant women attending the ESL program at St. Charles.

Rolston

Create a program for young Arabic girls at the Al-Mustafa Islamic Centre.

Stinson

Amend a policy that will re-purpose unused green spaces to a series of dog parks called *Leash LinQ.*

Stinson

Transform the Cathedral Boys School into a much needed community space for Stinson by first completing a needs assessment with community partners.

Appendix
Description of Participants' Projects—2015 Cohort

Appendix
Description of Participants' Projects—2016 Cohort

Beasley

Develop the "Filigree Tree" organic and vegan bath products with seminars for young parents on creating business and products

Jamesville & Ward 8

Run transformative writing sessions as a healing technique for women who experience trauma

Jamesville & Durand

Create a training program to support women in the African and Muslim community in terms of settlement, employment, and specific language skills

Crown Point & Homeside

Create a space for youth to express themselves through skate boarding, roller skating, and art

Davis Creek

Run events to promote cultural awareness, language support, and training for newcomers as a part of the Colombian Refugee Association

Sherman & Crown Point

Create "My Free Hamilton", a peer-led safe space for residents to explore Hamilton's free resources as a part of mental health, emotional well being, and community engagement

CityHousing Hamilton

Raise awareness about supportive social cooperative housing

Riverdale & Crown Point

Create a culturally inclusive food bank centre where residents can learn how to cook and learn English, starting with Conversation Cafes

Gibson/Lansdale

Start a community garden for the benefit of the housing building and the neighbourhood

CHOICES

Expand and raise awareness about the Meeting of the Minds advocacy group for persons with intellectual disabilities and drafting a bill of rights

Davis Creek & Ward 6

Create a children/youth group n the neighbourhood to learn about and promote dental health (HKCC)