



**LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE**
for ECOLOGY and the ECONOMY

VANGUARD

INSPIRING LEADERS *for* SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



OPENING A DIALOGUE ABOUT RACE & CLASS

Addressing social equity and green privilege

The Leadership Institute for Ecology and the Economy was founded on the concept that a balance is required between environmental sustainability, economic vitality, and social equity. A common image used is that of a three-legged stool, with each leg representing one of the goals. In its most abbreviated form, we call it “The Three E’s — Economy, Environment, Equity.”

A core belief of our founders is that no single aspect can be allowed to dominate, or the stool will get wobbly. Easier said than done. According to Institute founder and board chair Rick Theis, “the social equity leg is the weakest part of our stool, but we’re committed to making it stronger.”

Recently, the Leadership Institute has begun to investigate the concept

of “Green Privilege,” the idea that only members of a privileged class of people can afford to “be green,” and in Northern California, those people are often well-off and white. Members of the Leadership Training for a Sustainable Future, a core program of the Institute, don’t always fit that pattern, but Theis wants to do even more to reach out to a diverse group of people.

Stephanie Puentes is a partner in Equity Action, which offers training and consulting in the areas of diversity and cultural competence. According to Puentes, “Having the ability to worry about the planet is a privilege, having the wherewithal to buy a Prius, shop locally, buy organic clothing or volunteer your time... only certain people can do that. If we don’t

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friday, April 10

Deadline to apply for Leadership Training for a Sustainable Future Class of 2010

MORE INFO & APPLICATION:
WWW.ECOLEADER.ORG

Friday, May 8

SONOMA MOUNTAIN VILLAGE, ROHNERT PARK
Sustainable Enterprise Conference

MORE INFO:
WWW.SUSTAINABLEENTERPRISECONFERENCE.COM

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



WORD POWER

HOPE

Emily Dickinson likened hope to a bird (“the thing with feathers”) that “perches in the soul” and doesn’t flinch from hardship. Her charming metaphor of resilience resonates with us now, as we ponder our hopes for a sustainable future and leaven them with our concerns about social, economic and environmental injustices. Let us **hope** that our future brings joy and balance, and let us work to ensure it.

We are pleased to announce that the Leadership Institute for Ecology and the Economy is now accepting applications for the 2009–2010 class of its Leadership Training for a Sustainable Future program. This will mark the tenth year that our popular training program has been offered. To learn more about the program and the selection process, go to www.ecoleader.org

APPLICATION TIMELINE

Application Deadline

5 PM, Friday April 10, 2009

Applicant Interviews

Wednesday, April 29, 2009

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Selection Notification

End of May 2009

CLASS OF 2009–10 SCHEDULE

Class Retreat, August 20, 2009

Day 1 – Principles of Sustainability, September 3, 2009

Day 2 – Food Systems, October 1, 2009

Day 3 – Energy & Waste Management, November 5, 2009

Day 4 – Water Sources and Uses, December 3, 2009

Day 5 – Health, Education & Social Equity, January 14, 2010

Day 6 – Business & Economy, February 4, 2010

Day 7 – Smart Development: Transportation & Land Use
March 4, 2010

Day 8 – Smart Development: Planning & Community
Design, April 1, 2010

Day 9 – Leadership for Sustainable Communities,
May 6, 2010

Graduation Ceremony (evening), May 21, 2010

RACE & CLASS *cont. from page 1*

pay attention we’re going to end up with something like eco-apartheid.”

Theis agrees. “We just don’t realize how privileged we are, it’s just not part of our consciousness.”

Puentes and her partner, Laurie Lippin, recently held workshops for Leadership Institute board and staff members, and for the current Leadership Training for a Sustainable Future class. Tanya Narath, Executive Director and CEO of the Institute, says “The workshop helped us talk about how to better incorporate the “Third E” into our programs. It started a conversation.”

“When you realize what’s going on, it starts to change how you make decisions in everyday situations.” —Rick Theis

Discussions about privilege don’t center only around race. In the United States, we like to say that we’re a classless society, that everyone has equal mobility, but the details of the situation disagree. In the case of the Leadership Training for a Sustainable Future, Narath and Theis are realizing that the structure of the program itself might create barriers to participation.

“Those who have 9–5 jobs may find it harder to be involved in our programs, so we need to look at how we can package them differently, maybe offer evening programs,” says Narath.

Puentes says she’s impressed with the Leadership Institute’s commitment to change to accommodate a more diverse population. “The Leadership Institute gets it,” Puentes adds, “They’re looking at the organization, and at themselves.”

Theis said that the workshop encouraged him to look at his own life as well as the Institute, “When you realize what’s going on, it starts to change how you make decisions in everyday situations.”

What’s next? While the Leadership Institute has been recognized for its commitment to social equity, more can be done. “We’ll be looking at how we recruit people into our programs, and how we reach out to people who might be underrepresented,” says Narath. “To achieve our mission of a sustainable Sonoma County, we need to include people from all segments of our community. We need to involve all voices and groups.”

For Theis, “the cat is out of the bag. Our question now is: what positive steps are we going to take to be inclusive of people of all classes and colors?”

FELLOW PROFILE: A JOURNEY OF THE HEART

In this newsletter, we meet **Evelina Molina**, a Fellow of the Leadership Institute for Ecology and the Economy.

On the day she was interviewed for this article, Evelina Molina was preparing for the first board of directors' meeting of the North Bay Institute of Green Technology.

It might seem like a long way for an East L.A. human rights activist to come, to help create a youth jobs program linked to principles of environmental sustainability. For Evelina, it was a journey of the heart.

"I came to this area in 2005, to volunteer with United Farm Workers. I wanted to learn more about organizing," Evelina recalled. "I had been an activist and organizer already, working with day laborers and farm workers around housing and drivers' license issues."

As she made friends and got to know other community organizers, Evelina heard about a leadership training program that focused on the principles of social justice, economic vitality and environmental sustainability. In early 2006, she applied for and was accepted into the Leadership Training for a Sustainable Future.

"I had never in my life been around a group of people with that much professional experience," she recalls. "I felt like I was among giants."

If Evelina was intimidated, it didn't show. She quickly became a class leader with her outgoing and outspoken manner. "I never saw myself as a leader until I took the training. I began to see myself differently."

Evelina had been successful as an activist, but "as an activist you lead in a populist way, dealing with emotions. This (the Leadership Training) was more purposeful, more thoughtful. I got a much better understanding of leadership."

A year later, when Evelina heard about a program called Green For All, "it made sense. I was ready."

She immersed herself in the Green Collar Movement, a national effort to lift people out of poverty by training them to take advantage of a shift towards green technology. Millions of jobs are being created in fields like green building, renewable energy and sustainable agriculture.

“ I had never been around a group of people with that much professional experience. I felt like I was among giants. **”**



Locally, Evelina saw an opportunity to help at-risk youth learn marketable skills and avoid economic and social hardships. A job training program called Youth Green Jobs Sonoma is part of a larger vision, the North Bay Institute of Green Technology, which will launch its first 8-week training program this summer.

Evelina recently visited Washington, DC for a Green Jobs conference, and came back buzzing with ideas, energy and inspiration. Her journey of the heart continues.

NORTH BAY INSTITUTE OF GREEN TECHNOLOGY

Our mission is to train and prepare low-income, unemployed, under-employed, unskilled workforce for a career in the field of the emerging green-collar jobs industry with an emphasis on practices such as sustainability, natural resource conservation, and environmental technologies. www.northbayinstituteofgreentechnology.org

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WHY "VANGUARD?"

Its origin is Late Middle English, and was a shortening of the Old French "avant-garde"—literally, "going before the army." Nowadays, Vanguard refers to those who are in the forefront of new ideas, who lead new intellectual or political movements. We named our newsletter Vanguard to acknowledge that being out in front of change can be exhilarating and rewarding.

THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE FOR ECOLOGY AND THE ECONOMY WISHES TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE GENEROUS DONORS WHO SUPPORT OUR PROGRAMS:

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