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Morris alumni from Stevens County complete Blandin Community Leadership Program retreat

Summary: The goal of the Blandin Community Leadership Program is to develop and train a broad base of local leaders to build healthy communities.

(March 11, 2011)-In late February, 22 local residents from the Hancock and Morris area completed a five-day leadership retreat, the first segment of an intense eight-day training that comprises the [Blandin Community Leadership Program](#) (BCLP). The team also will participate in follow-up workshops in May and July 2011.

Since 1985, BCLP has provided experiential leadership training for more than 5,700 community leaders from more than 380 rural Minnesota communities. This was the first cohort focusing on the communities across Stevens County it included the first cohort of residents from Hancock, and the fourth from Morris. Participants represent all facets of the community. Most recent BCLP participants were:

Stevens County cohort

Tina Didreckson '03, Donna Eul, Josh Fischer, Robert Frischmon '10, Kayla Hawkinson, Drew Israels, Becki Jordan '07, Barb Kill '97, Sue Lor '09, Yuri Machkasov, Katie Mckenzie '03, Krista Miller, Wayne Morford, Rose Murphy '10, Deb Newhouse '08, Don Reicosky, Dell Sanderson, Allan Saugstad, Michelle Scribner '10, Bennett Smith '10, Jackie Swinney '10, Holly Witt '83.

The goal of the Blandin Community Leadership Program is to develop and train a broad base of local leaders to build healthy communities. Topics covered during the retreat included: identifying and describing community issues and opportunities, effective interpersonal communication, building social capital, appreciating personality differences, managing interpersonal conflict, understanding community power, mobilizing community resources, and goal setting.

“A healthy community depends on leadership engagement of community members,” said Valerie Shangreux, director of Blandin leadership programs. “The leadership demonstrated by participants reflects their commitment to rural Minnesota.”

BCLP training programs are supported entirely by the Grand Rapids-based Blandin Foundation whose mission is to strengthen rural Minnesota communities, especially in the Grand Rapids area. The program is made available free of charge to participants because of an \$89,800 Blandin Foundation expenditure that covers all costs for food, lodging and tuition at the retreat and workshops.

Photo: Stevens County participants

Back Row: (Left to right) – Sue Lor, Dell Sanderson, Mary Jo Wimmer (trainer), Vic Klimoski (trainer), Rose Murphy

Middle Row: (Left to right) – Holly Witt, Jean Kummerow (trainer), Robert Frischmon, Bennett Smith, Josh Fischer, Yuri Machkasov, Wayne Morford, Tina Didreckson, Allan Saugstad, Drew Israels

Front Row: (Left to Right) – Kayla Hawkinson, Krista Miller, Donna Eul, Michelle Scribner, Don Reicosky, Katie Mckenzie, Becki Jordan, Barb Kill, Jackie Swinney, Deb Newhouse

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