

Carlisle Barracks, community leaders team up to help community

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June 22, 2010 -- Each year a handful of Carlisle Barracks and Army War College employees take part in a program designed to help make their community a better place by partnering with local counterparts through the Leadership Cumberland program.

Leadership Cumberland has helped more than 300 individuals develop their own leadership skills for more than 20 years. Each individual participates in a monthly seminar, intern on a non-profit board of their choosing, and conduct a public issue forum board.

Participants span the entire range of professions in Cumberland County and have included participants from Dickinson College, Orrstown Bank, the United Way, Embarq, Shippensburg University and the U.S. Department of Justice just to name a few.

“Leadership Cumberland and Carlisle Barracks have enjoyed a very unique partnership over the past two decades,” said **Merideth Bucher**, Leadership Cumberland director. “Carlisle Barracks utilizes the LC experience as a way to better integrate their employees into Cumberland County and acquaint them with the organizations and services that make up the complex fiber of our community. Carlisle Barracks is an important presence in the area and their employees have great capacity for leadership.”

Denise Bagby, Operations Security Program Officer, said the program is a great way for employees of Carlisle Barracks to give back and take an active role in their community.

“It was a wonderful experience,” she said. It’s a wonderful opportunity to learn about your own community, surrounding communities and no-profit organizations. It offers you an opportunity to ‘step outside the box’ and experience a different way of looking at the community in which you live and work.”

Pat Wickard, IT Specialist and 2010 graduate of the program, said she wanted to participate to learn more about local non-profit organizations in the community.

“I wanted to know more about their mission and to meet some of the people in our community,” she

said. “There are real needs right in our own community and many times we do not even know they are out there until we get involved. It was a wonderful experience.”

Kevin Bremer, deputy director of the USAWC International Fellows program is also a 2010 graduate of the program.

“I was a member of the 20 person class from truly all professions, federal and state government workers, lawyers, medical and health professionals, small business entrepreneurs, industry, and finance leaders all made up the eclectic mix of our class,” he said.

Bremer explained that the diverse background of the group made the experience enlightening.

“My classmates come from a very wide spectrum of professional experience, and each were able to enlighten me on not only the Cumberland County and all it offers, but a very different view of the world from non-military eyes,” he said. “I have spent 30 years either in uniform or as a government service employee for the Army and truly, I operate quite a bit differently than many of my classmates do. I found that working with folks who are not necessarily military-minded offered a very different take or solution to an issue. Therein lies the best reason to take part in a program like Leadership Cumberland, it forces one to look at issues from a completely different view point.”

“I wanted to participate to learn more about our community, make connections to know where I could help, to give back and represent Carlisle Barracks in my contributions,” said **Anne Hurst**, Family Advocacy Program Manager and 2003 graduate of the program. “I did learn a lot about how nonprofit organizations function, learned of the many needs they have and how folks, whether it was the LC classes or anyone in the community can contribute - time, energy, funding, or items - to help the organizations help the community.”

Hurst said the relationships are mutually beneficial.

“I think there's a win-win for everyone,” she said. “We represent the commitment of Carlisle Barracks to the community and we gain insight to the world on non-profit organizations and hopefully, continue to serve the community.”

Each participant also serves as a non-voting board member of a local non-profit and those relationships often continue after the program is over.

Tom Kelly, Public Works director, took part in the program in 1997 and is now the current Leadership Cumberland Board Director.

“I believe Leadership Cumberland teaches basic leadership skills you can use in any environment,

teaches you how to deal with diverse groups of people from all sorts of professions and back grounds, gives you a great education and appreciation of the local community, and we in turn educate others about the Army and our profession,” he said.

Hurst served on the board of the Cumberland County Historical Society during her time in the program and now serves on multiple boards in the community.

”I have served on the executive boards of the Humane Society for three years and for more than seven years on the Domestic Violence Services/Cumberland and Perry Counties board,” she said. “I am honored to be a part of such a wonderful organization.”

Wickard served as an intern on the United Way of Carlisle and Cumberland County board, and said she looks forward to continue helping by serving on the Community Investment panel where she help review requests for United Way money.

Mark Schatte, Installation Physical Security Officer and also a 2010 graduate, served his internship on the board of Safe Harbour. After his internship ended he was asked to serve as a full-time member and was voted to serve on the executive board.

“The mission of Safe Harbour is to provide housing and support services for individuals and families to help them achieve independent living by increasing their basic life skills,” said Schatte. “My involvement with Safe Harbour has changed me personally in many ways. I’m gaining experience associated with nonprofit organizations but more importantly to myself is the time I spend working with the clients. I had an inaccurate perception of the homeless. Now I have a better understanding of how a person can become homeless and how I can help them in their attempt to gain independent living.”

Other graduates who remained connected are Mary Anne Turnbaugh, Class of 2004, who volunteers with the Bookery at Bosler Library, Melody Irwin, Class of 2005, who serves on the Board of Carlisle Early Education and Jacqueline Schultz, Class of 2006, who serves on the Carlisle Area School Board.

Each class completes a service project design to tackle an issue or concern of the group or of the community. Bremer’s and Wickard’s class held a Public Information Forum entitled “Leadership Link”, with a goal to marry up potential community members with non-profit organizations.

“Non-profit boards are often searching for folks to serve on their respective boards,” said Bremer. “Whether they are short and have vacancies or try to infuse ‘new blood’ into their organization, non-profits are almost always in the ‘search mode.’ Our goal was to open up potential organizations with potential board members.”

The relationship is two-fold as the group often taps into post expertise to help lead some of the discussions.

“Leadership Cumberland takes advantage of the talent at Carlisle Barracks and the U.S. Army War College by utilizing subject matter experts to instruct some of our classes,” said Bucher. “We are enjoying a great partnership, one that we hope will continue into the future.”

Schatte recommend that others become involved in programs in their community.

“It’s important for employees to become involved in the community where they work and live, said Schatte. “Leadership Cumberland helps individuals develop the skills necessary to become effective, informed and involved community leaders. It takes people like us, employees of Carlisle Barracks to ensure that local nonprofit organizations and social service groups are never wanting for people to serve on their boards. It all starts with volunteering your time, skills and resources.”

Leadership Cumberland is just one of the many ways to become involved in our community. For a list of opportunities contact Jeff Hanks, ACS at 245-3684 or Kevin Small, MWR, 245-4069.