

Answer the call to lead

By Willis M. Watt

Fayetteville

UnCLE Sam wants you! OK, this is not a call for you to enlist in the United States military.

It is a call to urge you to step up, to answer the call to be a leader in Fayetteville, N.C. Will you answer the call? Will you step up? Will you provide



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the leadership needed to guide the citizens of this community?

Perhaps your response to these questions is the common refrain — “I’m not a leader. I wouldn’t know how to lead.” Well, the fact is leaders are not born. They emerge from seemingly very unlikely places with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Leaders come from various genders, races and ethnicities with different life experiences and educational backgrounds. They are women and men just like you.

Keep in mind that leadership is a learned skill. One you can possess. And, just so happens the Institute for Community Leadership is looking for a few good women and men to participate in the next class of its leadership development program. We are looking for ordinary people like you with

extraordinary determination to provide effective leadership in our community.

But, why me, you ask? When decisions are being made, are you the person explaining what needs to be done? When you see a chance to lead others, do you seize the opportunity? Do people trust your ability to make good decisions and follow through to complete projects? Do others come to you for advice? Do you make yourself available to serve the needs of the people around you at home and work?

If you answered yes to these questions, you have the potential to be an effective leader in our community.

Molding visionaries

The ICL vision statement is: “To identify, develop, and empower community members, especially those not previously identified, who are able and willing to commit to leadership roles in addressing the issues of the Fayetteville/Cumberland County area.”

The institute is a unique partnership between government and educational institutions of higher education in our community. The institute sponsors include the city of Fayetteville, Cumberland County, Cumberland County schools, Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville Technical Community

College and Methodist University.

ICL sponsors host training sessions focused on leadership enhancement activities and discussions with some of Fayetteville’s and Cumberland County’s leaders. Topics covered include skills training, community issues, and service opportunities on a variety of commissions and voluntary boards. Each session focuses on one area for community involvement including such aspects as arts and culture, city and county government, education and not-for-profit human services.

The schedule includes seven monthly training sessions running from September to April (excluding December). Each session is conducted at the location of the sponsor providing the training. This feature brings citizens like you into places and facilities where they have not ever been before, thus broadening exposure to the community.

You receive many benefits including: (a) development of opportunities to participate in key community decisions, (b) participation in discussions concerning local issues and solutions with community leaders, (c) opportunities to find volunteer leadership positions that best fit their skills, talents, and interests,

(d) building relationships with others who are committed to self- and community-betterment, and (e) a chance to polish leadership skills and abilities.

The institute seeks to empower community members like you for civic leadership. Through your participation, you will become a candidate for appointment to local boards or commissions or leadership positions in other community organizations such as a church or civic organization.

ICL provides clear evidence civic leadership is not the sole prerogative of the rich and famous, or the powerful in our community. Yes, it is true. You can be one of our next community leaders.

So, will you answer the call?

There is no charge to you to participate in the program. To be a member of the 2011-12 class, call Carl Mitchell at 678-8373 or go to leadership4us.org to download an application form. Applications are being accepted, and space is limited. The deadline for applications is July 11.

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