

Community Leadership Principles and Values

The Heart of the Brushy Fork Community Leadership Program Journey

At the heart of the Brushy Fork Leadership Institute's work are six principles articulated by John B. Stephenson, former President of Berea College and the program's founder. Brushy Fork also advocates for a set of leadership values in communities. The Brushy Fork Community Leadership Program is built upon the following foundation.

Six Principles of Leadership

First, community leadership is a group phenomenon that employs diverse talents and traits of individuals. Effective community leaders band together with people who may look or think differently than them. They combine individual strengths to accomplish what they cannot do alone.

Second, leadership has to be for something. Without purpose, leading has little value. Brushy Fork believes that the proper use of leadership is to improve communities and the lives of all people.

Third, goals for the future of a community can unite people to rise above the differences that divide and block progress. Brushy Fork believes that everyone has something they want to leave better than they found it, so that children and grandchildren can benefit.

Fourth, our communities are filled with leadership potential. Every new generation spawns new energy, talent, ingenuity, and intelligence. Community leaders can build the confidence to exert that talent, share skills to bring ingenuity to action, and forge connections that apply intelligence and ideas to challenging community issues.

Fifth, because the talent and the ideas already exist in communities, local leaders are poised to deal with both opportunities and challenges. Nothing can strengthen communities better over the long haul than locally grown leadership. Effective community

leaders need not depend on people and agencies from outside. They can adopt useful ideas and make them their own—or say no when outside ideas don't fit.

Sixth, developing leadership and solving problems together takes time and shared commitment. Taking the long view and building a shared vision lays the groundwork for major change. The journey may happen in small steps, but each step leads toward a defined destination.

Leadership Values

Values are central to leadership, and Brushy Fork expresses six values for leaders to consider.

ETHICAL: Leaders work for the common good rather than personal gain.

COMMUNITY-BASED: Leaders lift up local voices and are accountable to the community's vision.

COOPERATIVE: Leaders work as a team and make space for others to contribute.

INCLUSIVE: Leaders value all people, embracing diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

DEVELOPMENTAL: Leaders pursue their own lifelong learning, nurture new leaders, and share power.

EFFECTIVE: Leaders recognize that results matter and fuel their vision with commitment, action, and performance.

As you participate in the Brushy Fork Community Leadership Program, you and your team will explore these principles and values and share your own perspectives. Brushy Fork looks forward to joining you on this leadership journey!

