President’s Message

What a year it has been to be President of Leadership Geauga. No one could have predicted what we were about to go through, starting on Friday, March 13, 2020.

Last August, I came into the presidency much like the start of my Leadership Geauga journey, with minimal confidence at best. I should be the poster child for Leadership Geauga, for I absolutely needed this organization injected into my life. My class was special, made up of superintendents, medical professionals, attorneys, and, well, a car guy. There were others that needed LG as much as it needed them. To my classmates, the current board, and the past board members I have served with: you all mean the world to me. I will do anything, any time for those who generously shared their time, effort, and especially, their WISDOM. I am truly blessed and there are few that can say this with complete confidence.

The challenges of this year have shown us that Leadership Geauga is adept and creative at re-framing our programs and services to meet current needs without losing momentum. While we value traditions, we demonstrated the ability to "keep it fresh" to the benefit of the Class of 2020. After 25 years, the organization’s reputation for the highest quality standards is appreciated throughout Geauga County – one of the reasons the Chardon Area Chamber recently awarded Leadership its "Organization of the Year" Award.

Now, more than ever, we must keep up the work that Leadership Geauga has come to be known for. Moving forward, we will need to continue building leaders within our community. Our focus needs to be on our programs and the content that we provide. We all can agree that Geauga County is the only place we want to live, work, and raise a family.

Although there were huge shoes to fill from the people who served before me, it has been an incredible pleasure to be your board president. I cannot wait to see what the coming years will bring as we continue to grow. For all the times I did not say, for time you spent, for the time we shared, and for the time we are about to have,

Thank you!

Matthew Emrick
President, Leadership Geauga Board of Trustees (2019-2020)

What a 25th Anniversary year!

When the board challenged us to create a 25th anniversary year-long celebration to remember, I don’t think they had a pandemic in mind. With times so uncertain and many of our friends and businesses struggling it can feel inappropriate to celebrate anything. But even with a pandemic, Leadership Geauga had an exciting year and there are many things we would like to acknowledge.

We secured our largest, multi-year grant from the Cleveland Foundation to create a new program for retirees. This program will build upon the knowledge and talents of the individuals who have built a life here in Geauga County and now have the time to give back and be involved in new ways.

We had an outpouring of generous financial support from the community during the Call to the Heart portion of the Emerald Ball auction, which will go towards continuing the Heritage Program once the two-year Cleveland Foundation grant ends.

And probably most importantly, we graduated our 25th Anniversary class and celebrated a quarter century as a leader in the community. The coming year will bring challenges but I remain confident in the quality of our programs, the strength of our alumni community and the commitment and passion of our Board and staff. We will get through this together and will come out the other side with the same commitment to the community that has been our foundation for 25 years. Together, we make Geauga better, and I look forward working together this coming year!

Melanie Scanlon, M.ED.
Executive Director, Leadership Geauga
Leadership Geauga:
For 25 years, Leadership Geauga County has been building bridges between the public, private, and non-profit sectors with annual programs that inform, educate, connect and inspire seasoned and future decision-makers of Geauga County. Program graduates serve as catalysts in building strong organizations and vibrant communities. LGC programs are a unique combination of relationship building, leadership development, personal and professional growth, and community education.

Leadership Geauga Staff
Melanie Scanlon, M.Ed
Executive Director
Liz McMahon
Alumni Outreach & Communications

Board of Trustees
Leadership Geauga is governed by a 15 person volunteer board

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Geauga Growth Partnership

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Joe Zulandt
Ten10 Design

Rebecca Klein
Geauga Co. Sheriff’s Office
2019-2020 Accomplishments

Program expansion

The Leadership Geauga 2016-2018 Strategic Plan outlined several areas of focus and potential growth for the organization. One area of focus was program expansion and, after years of deliberate planning and community needs assessment, Leadership Geauga is excited to announce a third program for individuals at or near retirement. Projected to launch in 2021 and supported through a multi-year Cleveland Foundation grant, the addition of this program will put Leadership Geauga in the top tier of cutting-edge leadership organizations.

Celebrating our past

In honor of our 25th anniversary we brought together past Emerald Leaders to celebrate their impact on the community. This distinguished group has left their mark on Geauga County and we couldn’t be more thankful for their service.


Organization of the Year

The Chardon Chamber of Commerce named Leadership Geauga as its 2019 Organization of the Year for service to the business community. Chamber Executive Director Stacia Clawson remarked, “Leadership Geauga is very deserving of this award as they do an amazing job of helping develop future leaders. People who go through the program leave with a huge motivation to act. Cultivating the skills and desire in a person to lead and make changes is probably more important now than ever, and the Chamber is grateful to have an organization like Leadership Geauga to help ensure that happens.”
Celebrating 25 Years
Leadership Geauga

It isn’t often that a non-profit organization marks 25 successful years. It was both humbling and exhilarating to celebrate Leadership Geauga’s own 25th Anniversary this year! The Silver Anniversary Adult Class began in September 2019 with a lively retreat and Alumni Dinner, with over 100 alumni from many classes welcoming the new Class of 2020. The “Best Class Trophy” made its inaugural appearance, and was given to the Class of 2019 for having the largest class attendance (pictured top left). A fun and unexpected side note was that the trophy was spirited away that night and spent the next few months, like the Stanley Cup, on display at alumni businesses and homes. (It has safely returned from its world tour).

Special efforts were made to contact and re-connect with alumni from the earliest years. Many shared valuable memories of Leadership’s founding days and agreed they began by thinking it was taking a leap into the unknown but then found such satisfactory results!

Media coverage was excellent, with stories in the print and electronic versions of the Geauga County Maple Leaf, the Geauga Times Courier, the News-Herald, Cleveland.com and Geauga Business Magazine. An anniversary video premiered at the Emerald Ball, which celebrated our past and provided a vision for our future.

Although COVID-19 interfered with the traditional end of year activities, class members took on the challenge and used their ingenuity and enthusiasm to keep the momentum going. Final survey results of this year’s class experience indicated 100% agreement in satisfaction with the program.

“The way our class came together in spite of world health, and the dedication of the instructors and guest speakers to "pivot" was amazing. So glad I could be part of that legacy.”

– Member, Class of 2020
Taylor Alvord- Company 119
Adam Beach- University Hospitals-Geauga Medical Center
Jolie Chapman- Chagrin Valley Auto Parts Co
Donovan DeLuca- lBold and O'Brien
Samantha Dreslinski- McCaskey Landscape & Design
Rebecca Gierman- Geauga Co. Public Library
Mary Glauser- Chardon Tomorrow
Andrew Golding- Kinetico Incorporated
Sam Greening- Pilgrim Christian Church
Terence Holland- Self employed
Christine Kloski- TKI Bookkeeping
Anthony Lignetta- Mar-Bal Inc.
Thomas Lombardo- Geauga Co. Sheriff’s Office
Lisa Luoma- Geauga County Public Library
Megan Mackura- Ravenwood Health
Matthew Montgomery- Exscape Designs
Mikala Morgan- Geauga Co. Engineer’s Office
Tim Munn- Industrial Tapes, Inc.
Judy Paternite- Kent State University Geauga
Richard Piraino- Howard Hanna Real Estate
Michelle Piscopo- Jennings at Notre Dame Village
Bill Preston- Preston Superstore
Thomas Quade- Geauga Public Health
David Ramsey- Taproot Yoga
Dr. Mark Rood- Cleveland Clinic
Sara Shininger- Geauga Co. Job and Family Services
Ryan Silbaugh- Junction Auto Sales
Elizabeth Simeral- Skills GAP Solutions LLC
Edward Slusarski- Regarding Your Systems, LLC
Matt Smith- RadioActive Electronics
Camille Travis- YMCA of Greater Cleveland
Sr. Virginia Turner- St. Helen School
Al Vontorcik- Geauga Co. Auditor’s Office
Mallory Wachob- Lake Erie College
Christine Ward- Geauga Park District
John Weber- Lake Health
ADULT PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

"In their own words"

The percentages below indicate how many Adult Program participants strongly agree or agree to the following statements regarding their experience in the 2020 class.

100% Agree or Strongly Agree

"I experienced valuable personal/professional development"

"Leadership Geauga was one of the best things I have done for my professional and personal growth. Not only am I more aware of my personality and leadership styles, I am also more aware of the needs of other styles, which is extremely beneficial on a day-to-day basis."

- Member, Class of 2020

100% Agree or Strongly Agree

"I will be a better employee at my place of work"

"Leadership Geauga exceeded all of my expectations! The year included building new relationships with classmates and leaders throughout Geauga County and was filled with interactive sessions and activities that enhanced our own leadership styles and abilities."

- Member, Class of 2020

100% Agree or Strongly Agree

"I built stronger connections in the community"

"I am proud to be a Leadership Geauga graduate"

"I learned how important it is to give back and help your local community. One person can make a difference."

- Member, Class of 2020
ADULT PROGRAM
Transitioning beloved traditions

Creating Virtual Connections

When the pandemic hit and we were unable to operate "business as usual" we were almost stopped in our tracks. How do you take 25 years of beloved tradition and create valuable, personal experiences when you cannot meet in person?

Thankfully, our board and committee members aren't easily deterred and, through several conversations, new and innovative approaches to the program days resulted. We held virtual sessions to explore Business, Agriculture and Arts & Leisure Day and were even able to offer some small, socially distanced excursions. Pictured to the right is a virtual tour and cookie decorating experience with Denise from D is for Delicious. We shipped cookie kits to each class member and virtually met to receive a tour and decorating lesson from Denise.

The Reverse Graduation Parade:
Graduating the Class of 2020

The Class of 2020 reverse graduation parade was something far different than the usual graduation dinner and ceremony. Over 100 individual cars came out to drive through and celebrate our Class of 2020 and the live Chardon Polka Band music provided the perfect amount of fun!

There were many lessons learned from adapting traditional elements of the Class experience to meet public health guidelines, but the one consistent take away was that rethinking traditions isn't always a bad thing. Something new, fun and creative can happen, even if what it replaces wasn't broken to begin with.

Tuition Assistance:

Through the generosity of the Leadership Geauga Community, we have been able to offer partial tuition assistance to those who express a need. We have worked hard to keep program costs affordable and our tuition is lower than similar programs in neighboring counties.

Scholarship dollars requested from adult applicants: $10,900
Total scholarship dollars awarded to 2019-2020 adults: $6,800
Understanding their strengths

Students took the StrengthsQuest assessment and part of the institute was used to help the participants better understand their unique talents and strengths.

"I had the opportunity to ride along with Mr. Rick Warner. He gave great insight regarding my future career in law enforcement. He was supportive, yet gave constructive criticism when needed."
Anthony - Chardon High School

Individual meeting with an Adult Program alumni

Institute participants were matched with a Leadership Geauga Adult Program alumni based on career interest and participated in a meeting to learn more about their mentor's career and leadership philosophy.

"I don't want to forget the amazing boost Leadership Geauga gave me with knowing my strengths and understanding how I can use them to become a better leader."
Raegann - NDCL

Virtual presentations & behind the scenes tours with business leaders

Students learned from leaders at local organizations such as University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center, Kinetico, Junction Auto, Exscape Designs, the Geauga County Prosecutor’s Office, PuroClean, Geauga Growth Partnership, and Geauga County Municipal Court.

"Learning more about the legal system and how a Grand Jury works & meeting with UH were two of my favorite parts"
Elena - Kenston High School

100% Agreed: I learned more about my community

100% Agreed: I learned more about myself as a leader

100% Agreed: I explored different careers and professions

Participation by school

- Chardon - 7
- Kenston - 5
- Notre Dame Cathedral Latin - 3
- West Geauga - 1
- Chagrin Falls - 1
- Beaumont - 1

Youth Program Sponsor

University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center
Alumni Impact
Helping improve the community we love

Geauga on Board

A three part training series for individuals wanting to learn about board service was held for the second time this past fall. After the final workshop, local non-profits met workshop participants in an Open House format, a perfect conduit between an organization’s need and those with enthusiasm and skills to help.

"Thank you for coordinating last night’s event. Claudia, Adam, and I enjoyed the event and met several great prospects"

- Gretchen Faro, Director- Foundation for Geauga Parks (pictured left)

Giving Back

At the December Holiday Mixer over 100 alumni from all class years raised $1,500 in two hours for Hope for Kids. This donation was used to send 15 Geauga youth to summer camp. In addition to the monetary contribution, books, toys and backpacks were donated.

Chris Steigerwald (pictured right), Hope for Kids Board Member, said “Leadership Geauga is a great organization! Thank you to staff and volunteers for all your support – we are grateful for the donations and opportunity for more community awareness.”

Being prepared

In January, alumni worked hand in hand with the Middlefield Fire Department in a simulated crisis exercise on-site at a local business. The simulation gave EMT practice responding to a mock active shooter at a business. Following the event, an expert panel shared their impressions and valuable information on how to be best prepared in that type of emergency. All left with renewed appreciation of our First Responders and a gratefulness for the opportunity to help prepare.

799
Total Number of Leadership Geauga Adult Alumni (1995-2020)
25 years ago was the start of the Adult Leadership Program and 12 years ago was the first Youth Leadership Program. As part of Leadership Geauga’s year-long anniversary celebration, we were proud to receive the endorsement and multi-year grant support of The Cleveland Foundation to design and implement an innovative new Heritage Program for adults who are retired or are approaching retirement. With enthusiasm for this new addition to Leadership’s program portfolio, the Call to the Heart portion of the Emerald Ball Live Auction raised over $25,000 to serve as matching funds for the Heritage Program grant. This is the largest amount ever raised by the Call to the Heart for Leadership Geauga—what a vote of confidence!

The Heritage Program will leverage Leadership Geauga’s strong network of community leaders and partner organizations while identifying intentional ways to harness the wisdom, experience, and connections of those who find they have the time and interest to learn more about Geauga County and become involved, perhaps for the first time, in the community.

The Heritage program will provide a broad scope of learning experiences introducing class members to challenges and opportunities particular to Geauga County. They will be inspired to connect, take personal action, and become a positive part of the solution. Each person’s participation will link the identification and achievement of their personal goals with efforts supporting the greater good of the county. A new staff will start in August to design the program. Care to be involved in the program creation? Please reach out!

“Congratulations to Leadership for earning the grant funding to put this together! I think this program is needed and will be very welcome to those thinking about next steps and ways to remain vital while contributing to this tremendous community we live in.”
-Bari Oyler-Stith, Ph.D., former Geauga County Archivist, and Director, BA/MA Historic Preservation Programs- Ursuline College)
On Saturday, March 7, Leadership Geauga warmly welcomed a full house of alumni and community leaders to the 2020 Emerald Ball. Unique decorative touches, live music, and the presence of alumni from the earliest classes showed this annual event was pivotal to the celebration of Leadership Geauga’s 25th Anniversary. The buzz in the room was full of favorite stories, mini-reunions of classmates, anticipation of special announcements, and pride in a quarter century of success in educating, involving and opening doors for the benefit of our community’s current and future leaders.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the 2020 Emerald Leader Award to Mr. John Epprecht, Senior Vice President of Great Lakes Cheese, for his years of dedicated service to schools and organizations throughout the Geauga County community. Since Mr. Epprecht was out of the country, he accepted electronically, saying, “Thank you for selecting me for the 2020 Emerald Leader Award. This award means so much to me as this organization has just been the succession plan within Geauga County. The Board of Directors – I know so many of you – are truly the leaders of Geauga County.”

Generous bidding during the Call to the Heart portion of the Live Auction raised over $25,000 – the largest response to Call to the Heart in the history of the Emerald Ball! This will be used as our matching funds for the Cleveland Foundation’s multi-year grant in support of the research, development and launch of our new Heritage Program.

**Past Emerald Leaders**

- 2020 - John Epprecht
- 2019 - Susan Juhasz & Geauga Hunger Task Force
- 2018 - Geauga County 4-H
- 2017 - Scott Hildenbrand
- 2016 - Kevin O’Reilly Sr.
- 2015 - Geauga Humane Society - Rescue Village
- 2014 - Daniel McClendland
- 2013 - Kathy Leavenworth
- 2012 - Jim Patterson & Tracy Jemison
- 2011 - Thomas Benda & Fieldstone Therapeutic Riding Center
- 2010 - Kimm Leininger & The Interact Club of Chardon
- 2009 - Chuck Fowler & Paul Newman
- 2008 - Deborah O’Connor & Richard Frenchie
- 2007 - Howard Bates & The Burton-Middlefield Rotary
- 2006 - Junction Auto Family & Dick Moss
- 2005 - Alice Sems
- 2004 - Sr. Sandy Nativio, SND
- 2003 - Gordon Safran
- 2002 - Bill Prior
- 2001 - Jeff Keener
Thank you!

Our thanks to Emerald Ball sponsors and prize donors for their generosity! The support of these individuals, businesses & organizations led to another outstanding event, while ensuring that we achieved our annual goals.

Emerald Ball Event Sponsor

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Waste Management

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Kent State University, Geauga
Preston Superstore
Richard & Christie Frenchie
Thrasher, Dinsmore, Dolan

AMETHYST SPONSORS
State Sen. John Eklund
Sheoga Hardwood Flooring
Ten10 Design

Class Baskets:

Donors:
7 Ladies Tea Parlor
Achilles Running Shop
Advance Auto Parts
Akron Rubberducks
Aladdin's Alpine Valley
Alvord’s Yard & Garden Equipment
Anonymous
Apollo Products, Inc.
APT Electric
Arby's Chardon
Artisan Gallery
Auburn Career Center
Auburn Fire Dept.
Augie's Pizza
Avanti Salon
Bainbridge Fire Dept.
Bass Lake Tavern
Beaches & Dreams Travel Beans
Ben Franklin/Debords
Berkshire Board of Ed Athletics
Bertram Inn
Blazin’ Bills
Briggs Farm, Rick and Lisa Briggs
Brighton Jewelry
Brockway Bond Insurance Agency
Buckeye Chocolates Cafe
Burton Chamber of Commerce
Burton Fire Dept.
Cain Park
Camp Hi Canoe & Kayak Livery
Carol Matchinga - Mary Kay
Carriage House/Rosepoint Tea Room
CCM Rental
Century Village
Chagrin Arts
Chagrin Documentary Film Festival
Chagrin Falls Popcorn Shop
Chagrin Pet and Garden
Chagrin Valley Chamber of Commerce
Chagrin Valley Little Theatre
Chagrin Valley Roller Rink
Chagrin Valley Times
Chagrin Yoga
Chardon Athletic Boosters
Chardon Family Eyecare
Chardon Fire Dept.
Chardon High School
Chardon Municipal Ct., Judge Supica
Chardon Salt Cave - Salty LLC
Chardon Smile Center
Chester Fire Dept.
Chip's Club House
Chris Scanlon
Geauga County Sheriff's Office
City of Chardon Recreation Dept.
Class Axe Throwing
Cleveland Art
Cleveland Auto Dealer’s Assoc.
Cleveland Cavaliers
Cleveland Metroparks Zoo
Cleveland Monsters
Cleveland Orchestra
Cleveland Play House
Cleveland Whiskey Distillery
Colonial Beverage
Company 119
Connie Babcock
COSI
Covia
D is for Delicious
D.S. Cakes & Sweet Café
Dan Klagg
DeBord One-Hour
Dennis Gallick for Commissioner
D’Marie Gourmet Foods
Emeth Gymnastics
Eric & Jennifer Wachob
Exscape Designs, LLC
Fairmount Center for the Arts
Fast Lane Truck Accs.
Fig Tree Bulk Foods
Four Green Fields Garden Center
Foundations Health Solutions
Fowler’s Mill Golf Course
Fowler’s Milling Company
Geauga County Maple Leaf
Geauga County Sheriff’s Office
Geauga Door
Geauga Family YMCA
Geauga Growth Partnership
Geauga Park District
Geauga Pawn
Geauga Times Courier
Geauga Vision
Gervasi Vineyard
Glidden House
Good Times Cruise
Gotta Groove Records
Graeter’s Ice Cream
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Great Lakes Cheese
Great Lakes Outdoor Supply
Greater Cleveland Aquarium
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Kent State University Geauga
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Osso Farm Restaurant
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Paul & Judy Hederstrom
Payne & Payne Builders
Perfect Occasions Costumes
Petitti Garden Center
Pioneer Waterland & Dry Fun Park
Playground World
Precision Orthopedics
Preston Superstore
Punderson Manor House
Rabbit Run Theater
Ramble Inn
Rambo for Judge Campaign
Red, White and Brew
RE/MAX Rising - Blair, Chambers
Rescue Village
Richards Maple Products, Inc.
Robert Wanz
Roediger Chiropractic
Ronak Paving
Russell Twp. Fire Dept.
Sapphire Creek Winery
Sharon James Cellars
Shaun Woolard - Junction Auto
Sheoga Hardwood Flooring
Sheriff Scott Hildenbrand
Sim’s Farm Fresh Kitchen
Square Bistro
St. Mary’s Banquet Hall
Sugar Pines Farm
Susan Kruger
Sweet Southern Charm Bakery
Ten10 Design
The Flag Store
The Golf Dome
The Lodge at Geneva on the Lake
Thompson Fire Dept.
Tim Frank Septic Tank Cleaning
Tom Cardaman
Troll Hole Museum
Troy Fire Dept.
Two Cafe & Boutique
Ultman Electric
Ullman Inn & Pet Resort
Urban Growers Greenhouse
Valley Art Center
Vinny's Italian Kitchen
Welsfield Inn
White Flower Cake Shop
White House Chocolates
WKYY 104.7 radio
Yoder Bargains
Yours Truly Resturants
Financial Overview

Revenue

Gift support for LG has grown significantly over the past four fiscal years. The biggest increase to revenue this year was the Cleveland Foundation grant restricted to funding for the Heritage Program.

Expenses

Our 2019-2020 operating expenses reflect a small decrease. This was a result of canceling programs due to public health guidelines.

Financial management is provided by the Board of Trustees Finance Committee, chaired by Treasurer Andy Bushman.

Leadership Geauga County is a 501 (c) 3 organization. Our Federal EIN is 34-1794467.
Thank you!

Leadership Geauga extends our deep appreciation to the individuals, alumni and businesses who contributed to Leadership Geauga over the past year!

Alan Van Zeeland
Alice Munn
Allison Gudanovic
An Apple a Day- Lisa Johnson
Andrea Pollock
Andrew Bales
Andy Bushman
Angela Daugherty
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Anthony Podojil
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Thomas Clark
Thomas Lombardo
Thomas Rowan
Todd Coolidge
Tom Blair
Tom Radtke
Tom Ross
Tracy Solan
United Way Services Geauga Co.
University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center
Upward Solutions Coaching & Consulting
Valerie Sweeney, SND
Vicki Clark
Victoria Pate
Virginia Reesing, SND
Wendy Radtke

If you were inadvertently left off this list please contact the office so we can update our records.
THE COMMUNITY IS IN OUR HANDS.
TOGETHER,
WE MAKE GEAUGA BETTER!