



LeadingAge™ CA

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Emerge 2014-2015
Action Learning Projects

LeadingAge California partnered with Sodexo and Masonic Homes to launch a fourth cohort of emerging leaders in the field of aging services. EMERGE is a comprehensive leadership development program specifically designed to better prepare future leaders within the LeadingAge California membership. The Class of 2014-2015 was comprised of high potential leaders across the state of California serving in different facets of Long-Term Care and who were seeking to transform themselves and their organizations.

The program was available to anyone who worked for a LeadingAge California member (including, but not limited to voting members as well as associate members), irrespective of position or work experience. It was far more important for Fellows to demonstrate potential within their organizations than it was for them to carry specific job titles. The Fellows chosen to participate met four times within the year which included visits to member communities, intimate conversations with leaders in the field of aging services and self- exploration of leadership styles through exercises and readings.

An important element of the program was the assigned Action Learning Project (ALP) in which fellows created an idea or acted upon an opportunity around the themes of change and innovation and brought that project back to their own organization or community. ALPs offer a chance to reflect individually and in groups where Fellows receive feedback and insight from their peers, mentors, and facilitators on how to successfully lead change through the work of their ALP. In the pages that follow, you will have the opportunity to view the work and learning process each Fellow took to cultivate or implement their project.

The Class of 2014-2015 Fellows were asked to explore the following questions related to their personal leadership skills, EMERGE program experience and ALP work.

- **Describe the capabilities you possess that make you an effective leader and your personal commitment to the field of aging services.**
- **Describe the perspective and knowledge you hope to acquire as a result of your participation in EMERGE.**
- **What is the title of your Action Learning Project?**
- **Briefly describe your Action Learning Project and why you chose it.**
- **What do you hope is the long-term impact of your Action Learning Project to your organization or the field of aging services?**
- **What leadership lessons were learned during the course of implementing your Action Learning Project?**



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Gayathri Amancherla

Assistant Controller
**American Baptist Homes
of the West (ABHOW)**
Pleasanton, Calif.

In Her Own Words...

I have been working in the senior living industry for eight years. As an immigrant from India, the concept of senior living was totally new. In the culture I am from, children take care of their parents, though slowly now it is changing in India and the senior living housing concept is gaining momentum. I appreciate the industry I am working for and my company's vision and philosophy to serve senior citizens.

I view leadership as continuous learning process. Knowing yourself, your strengths, and weaknesses are vital for a leader. Believing in yourself and clarity of vision are key attributes of a leader.

Leaders understand that each team member is different, with varied personalities, and accepting them for who they are. Leaders will motivate the team members toward common goals. A leader makes the team passionate about goals they are working towards, and communicates that the journey is as important as reaching the goal. Leaders do not lose perspective of the situation, are aware of the changes happening, and respond to situations in the best common interest.

The Emerge program has allowed me to broaden my horizons. It made me confident and has encouraged me to take risks and not feel bad about not being right. It is teaching me to take a step back and think through before jumping to a conclusion. Emerge exposed me to the vast field of aging services and depth of the industry and importance of this industry in society. It makes me think about how I can contribute to field of Aging Services

Key Reports for evaluation of New Business opportunities:

By 2040 it is expected that 14 million Americans will be age 85 or older, and the number of retirement age individuals at age 65 will reach 73 million by 2030. Older Americans would like to continue to live in the homes they are familiar with rather than entering retirement homes, known as “aging in place”. However successful aging requires modifications to the house, and many other factors may contribute to older citizens choosing to move to retirement homes. Currently there is a significant shortage of senior living homes.

With first set baby boomers entering retirement age, the senior living community market will continue to boom. Wall Street capital is chasing the senior living industry. My company operates in different business segments and one of them is to manage third party senior communities and also do financial reporting for those communities. With plenty of opportunities coming our way from various investors seeking our expertise and engaging our company to provide our insight about viability of these projects, I am developing a report to compare the key metrics of various communities we operate, and compare with industry benchmarks to meet the need of the growing demand.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

I hope that my report will be a powerful tool to help management make informed decisions on acquiring, managing or developing senior living properties.

Leadership Lessons Learned

My project is a work in progress and is not yet complete. A very important lesson I learned while working on this is how important it is to think through the process. The decision made could have long-term impact and to change course may require additional resources or have serious implications which could not be reversed. To understand the long-term implications of decisions is a very important attribute of the leader.



Jennifer Arent

Senior Resources Director -
Sonoma County

Episcopal Senior Communities
Santa Rosa, Calif.

In Her Own Words...

I have had the privilege of working for Episcopal Senior Communities for nearly seven years. I began my career at ESC as an Administrative Assistant at Jennings Court, one of our affordable Housing Communities. It was there that I found my passion, working with seniors. I'm now proud to be the Senior Resources Director for Sonoma County, and I'm equally as proud to work for a non-profit organization that has been providing services, resources, and housing for seniors in Northern California for nearly 50 years. I feel that I have changed so much during the course of this past year, I feel re-energized and confident. Through this program I have had the opportunity to step back and really examine my position and place within my community, discover my own personal and work confidence and have experienced exponential growth and perspective.

Senior Arts Coalition

I was inspired to bring about my ALP by a senior I met nearly a year ago. She told me that she worried about moving from her home and downsizing. As an established artist, she expressed to me a considerable concern about losing that deeply personal and crucial aspect to her life. This touched me deeply.

My ALP vision is to establish a Senior Arts Coalition. This will be a safe and comfortable place for seniors to allow their creativity to blossom and grow, by creating an environment where seniors would have access to adequate creative and storage space and the encouragement to use their imaginations, dexterity, and creativity!

Crucial and Key points:

1. Development of feasible program outline. Research other comparable arts coalitions, develop smart goal plan, and survey local senior artists for specific interests and possible senior specific needs.
2. Rally community support. Talk to local senior communities, non-profit organizations, and faith communities, senior based program directors and advocates. Instigate and facilitate committee(s).
3. Research and obtain financial stability through local fundraising and grant opportunities. Research and develop a financial plan that will allow the program to eventually become self-sufficient.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

I feel that the long term effects of bringing my ALP to fruition would be a renewed interest in senior art and artists within Sonoma County and a less stressful and more respectful transition for artistic seniors who are not able to age in place. The physical and mental benefits would be invaluable and keep our seniors healthier, more engaged, and more active! In addition the Senior Arts Coalition would fight isolation and discourage hoarding by encouraging friendships, supporting artistic camaraderie, and allowing space for personal artistic supply storage.

Leadership Lessons Learned

The Emerge Leadership program has given me the tools to reevaluate my time and my energy, and conceptualize the steps necessary to make small decisions and realize that programs such as this, are a slow process, albeit a wonderful one. In the process of putting this program together I will need to wear many hats, practice realistic optimism, and use my energy wisely in order to cement my personal leadership legacy and the continued legacy of Episcopal Senior Communities in Sonoma County.



Karina Barragán

Director of Resident Services Program
**TELACU Residential
Management Inc.**
Los Angeles, Calif.

In Her Own Words...

During the years I have worked in the field of aging, it has offered insight to the dire need there is for professionals to develop a passion to help the aging population and influence future leaders like myself. Emerge has allowed me to embrace qualities that exist within me, but due to fear and limited guidance, I was unable to see my full potential to identify myself as a leader. Participating in Emerge has allowed me embrace my talents and grow within my organization to transition into a leadership role as the new Director of Resident Services Programs. I am an educator at heart who sees others' great qualities and allows those qualities to shine and flourish in the field of aging. My passion and determination is embedded in everything that I do and demonstrate to the team by leading through example and giving others the opportunity to shine and grow. Identifying and knowing I am a leader has created an impact in my leadership style by bringing to light the influence I have on others and the impact I hope to project in the field of aging as I share my knowledge, passion and determination for the aging population. Through actions and leadership, I am changing the future by allowing others to find their inner leadership role to support the field of aging.

Emerge has given me the opportunity to identify as a leader and understand that everyone has a different leadership style they must embrace to successfully lead others in their communities. Leadership is more than holding a position within an organization. A true leader knows who they are and understands their actions impact more than one individual; for a true leader understand that their actions influence perspectives and actions in the community. Emerge is a program that offers an opportunity to truly know who you are as a leader and embrace qualities to flourish to the leader you are meant to be.

Subsidize Housing – “Transition with Dignity”

The focus for my ALP is to create a dignified transition from subsidized housing without going through eviction, for those individuals who have lost functional and mental capacity to age in place within our housing facilities. Currently, some individuals living in our housing facilities have lost functional and/or mental capacity and they can no longer find the proper support systems within the community that would allow them to age in place. Our roles as Service Coordinators are limited, for we cannot evaluate and/or compel our residents to move out of the housing facilities. Currently HUD has no support to identify and provide the housing industry an avenue to transition these individuals to higher level of care, creating a gap within our industry. My ALP will focus on creating partnerships with organizations, programs and agencies to create a Professional Assessment Committee (PAC) that can support the evaluation of resident needs and make proper recommendations to successfully transition residents to the proper care they need and deserve.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

Subsidized housing was set in place to allow individuals with limited income and resources to age in place with dignity. The population served, move into our housing facility with the intent to age in place and live a dignified life until their passing. Unfortunately, due to funding and resources, many of the valuable agencies that allowed for the successful aging in place to occur have dwindled with budget cuts and lack of sponsorship. In working with the aging population where services are limited and housing that has no true identified way to transition individuals to higher level of care, it is my hope to provide a dignified way to transition to higher level of care. My ALP would allow us to build partnerships within the community that can influence a true transition to higher level of care without going through eviction or other means that are demoralizing and do not provide the individual the dignity they deserve. The creation of partnership and PAC would allow individuals a proper avenue to transition out of subsidized housing and continue to age in place in the proper setting. Proper execution of my ALP and partnership will be needed to create an impact within our organization, as well as other subsidized housing facilities facing the same issue.

The long-term impact I would hope this would create is to lower the cost associated with the eviction process to bring back more resources to the facilities and the residents to age in place. Secondly, I would like to bring to light the areas where the field of aging and housing need to meet and collaborate to bridge the gaps. My hope is to look to the future to provide all individuals a dignified way to age in place and transition them to higher level of care without the demoralized transitions that come with not having the proper support systems for the housing community.

Leadership Lessons Learned

At this time, my ALP is in the starting phase; for I have not started the legwork to successfully implement this. The idea was presented to my superiors and members of my organization who have provided insight and recommendations to carry out this ALP. Currently there is a need to narrow the scope for this project and start identifying the population and method to evaluate the individuals that need higher level of care to create the avenues and partnership to transition them in a dignified manner by including them throughout the process.



Marcela Castaneda

Plant Operations Coordinator
The Forum at Rancho San Antonio
Cupertino, Calif.

In Her Own Words...

Who I am as a leader is defined by my ability to support and care for others. I value knowledge, achievement and respect. As employees, we have the responsibility to provide excellent service to our residents. Empathy and connection are vital to create a calm and trusting environment for those who need us. I believe that if we, as a team, are able to project dedication, passion and meaning for what we do, not only will the organization benefit from it, but also our residents. Meaning in life is not about doing things because they are easy, what gives meaning to life is that even when things are not easy, you find a way to make someone else's life better.

Before Emerge I did not consider myself a leader because I did not know there were different leadership styles. I now embrace my personality and I understand that to be a leader I must be authentic. After this amazing Emerge experience, I no longer try to imitate other leadership styles. I consider myself a leader who is passionate about supporting and helping others feel proud of what they do and find ways to support their growth and success in the organization.

Create an Ownership Mentality

I have worked in places where I was only there to complete a task in an 8 hour shift. I did not feel connected to the organization's mission. My ALP is to create a Training and Education program for our Maintenance Team. Through training and education, our Maintenance staff will gain the skills and the right attitude to think like leaders and feel confident about their jobs. In order to be connected to the organization's mission, staff must feel they are contributing to a higher meaning. My goal is to change the attitude towards their job, to come to work knowing they are equipped with the right skills and attitude to provide excellent service to our residents. I will be responsible for investigating training and courses and determine if they are appropriate for the Maintenance Team. I would like to see all Maintenance staff at a Technician III level and have an opportunity to advance in their career within the organization.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

It is my hope that the "Create an Ownership Mentality" project impacts the quality of service we provide to our residents. It is my hope that I motivate and support the Maintenance Team to have a leadership mentality and attitude. With training and development classes, we can only expect a stronger Maintenance Team; a team with stronger technical skills, but most important, a team with leadership skills.

Leadership Lessons Learned

I have not implemented my ALP, but I have learned that I have to stay true to myself and do what I feel passionate about. There were many ideas that sounded great; however, helping my co-workers find meaning in their jobs helps me find meaning in my job. I have learned that in order to lead, I must be authentic. I have also learned that behaviors can be changed, and new behaviors become new attitudes.



Abigail Castillo

Director of Administration
Community Senior Services
Claremont, Calif.

In Her Own Words...

I receive great joy each day I arrive for work. I am energetic and deal well with all levels of stress and I display tolerance and patience no matter the situation. I am flexible and capable of changing to meet the needs of those I am serving. I love the versatility of senior services and my ability to “wear many different hats” often at the same time. I have learned and continue to enjoy the flexibility necessary to do my job and I have learned that no two days are ever the same and often plans do change in a moment’s notice. But, the most important and most enjoyable part of working at Community Senior Services is the rare and giving older adults that come through the door or call the agency. From them I have learned about life, love and I often get a glimpse into what life was like during kinder, gentler times.

Having lived in a multi-generational household for my entire life, my personal commitment to the field of aging started at a very young age. My commitment became even stronger when my family and I faced many challenges surrounding my elderly parents. Navigating the resources available for seniors has always been my forte but, I became acutely aware of the difficulties associated with finding appropriate senior services as my parents aged and their needs increased. I personally became a staunch advocate for my parents and professionally for so many other seniors navigating through the myriad of resources.

I believe that my participation in the Emerge program has helped me to understand, recognize and foster the right leadership qualities to advance my career in the field of aging. I have learned to prioritize tasks while dealing with new responsibilities and I am better able to receive and deliver feedback succinctly and in a professional manner. Most importantly, I believe I will be better able to lead effectively through situations involving conflict.

Caregivers Partnership: Creating Knowledge and Support Networks for Vulnerable, Chronically Ill Seniors and Their Caregivers

The “Caregivers Partnership” involves designing, testing and implementing chronic disease-specific education and senior+caregiver action planning, coupled with ongoing technology-based and disease-specific caregiver networking and peer support.

The project:

- Engages both the caregiver and the chronically ill senior to learn how to more effectively manage a disease together
- Combines senior+caregiver group education with ongoing individual and group support mechanisms for caregivers
- Provides caregivers with self-management strategies as well as critical knowledge of their patient’s disease-specific health issues so they can more confidently address those issues and reduce caregiver stress
- Focuses on chronic diseases that other caregiver programs do not currently address: congestive heart failure (CHF) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Collaboration with Hospitals and other medical groups (HMOs, Medical Groups), to provide support and care coordination for their patients

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

- Improve patient and primary caregiver knowledge and awareness of disease-specific and quality of life issues
- Enhance the senior+caregiver partnership and improve their skills and confidence in understanding and proactively dealing with/managing unique care challenges
- Reduce caregiver stress and social isolation through regular, technology-enhanced mechanisms for networking with healthcare professionals and peer support
- Assess program impact on seniors + caregivers; transferability to other settings & diseases
- Disseminate the “Caregivers Partnership” experience and lessons through a “toolkit” and assist two not-for-profit organizations to implement the program
- Long term relationship with local medical organizations to provide care coordination for their patients.

Leadership Lessons Learned

- Collaboration
- Listening with open mind
- Be Engaged at all times
- Patience
- Encouragement
- Take risks
- Be present at the moment



Joshua Delgado

Regional Maintenance Supervisor

TELACU Residential

Management Inc.

Los Angeles, Calif.

In His Own Words...

In my journey through LeadingAge California's Emerge program, I learned I was managing employees instead of being their leader. This transactional type of leadership is not who I am as a person. This program taught me that a leader is a person that has the talent to cause employees to subscribe to his or her vision and direction of where the organization is looking to going towards by increasing productivity, morale, and effectiveness. Additionally, this program has enabled me to understand that my relationship with my staff is constantly evolving. As a leader, I have chosen to invest my time and energy into them. As a result, I have seen my staff rise to the occasion! I see that they experience more autonomy in decision-making, feel empowered, appreciated, and committed to the organization.

Preventative Maintenance Scheduling System (PMSS)

A maintenance technician performs custodial and maintenance duties in and around TELACU Residential Management's 33 facilities. Their job requires troubleshooting, working closely with the Resident Manager to meet the custodial needs of the facility, and resolving problems to ensure efficient and safe operations. Employees are the fuel that makes organizations run; however, it is difficult for employees to be effective if they do not have the necessary tools or resources. My action learning project (ALP) is to create a database called the Preventative Maintenance Scheduling System (PMSS) within the company's HUD software. The objective of the ALP is to create a system that targets the key problems corporate and field staff encounters. For instance, not identifying and coming to an agreement of determining the "problem" is, what are the root causes, impact, or how to integrate important stakeholders when designing an effective solution.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

The long-term impact of creating PMSS is enormous! The solution of this system would facilitate the following business results to our organization:

- Increase communication between employees and supervisors
- Increase accountability of all employees, Resident Manager, and Maintenance Technician, and completing all duties
- Enhance performance of the Maintenance Technician by completing all tasks to the satisfaction of supervisors, residents, and state, city, and federal inspectors
- Increase productivity of Maintenance Technician
- Increase employee morale of Maintenance Technician
- Reduction in overall operation costs
- Quality-management approach to improving the output

Leadership Lessons Learned

Leadership is the interactions the person has with his team. The quality of the relationship the leader has with their workers sets up the context in how employees will perceive the organization. The relationship will either be advantageous or a detriment to the organization.



Kim Delgado

Executive Director

Eskaton Lodge Granite Bay
Granite Bay, Calif.

In Her Own Words...

When we talk about leadership style, mine is a little different. I lead by being “hands on” and establishing a “family” team. My famous line is, “my team loves like a family and fights like a family”. This environment creates a strong unity, compassion for others and accountability among all members of the team. I have very high expectations of my team and expect them to meet those expectations. When they struggle, they know they can always turn to me for support, reassurance and brainstorming to help solve problems. I have to constantly remind myself that I need to support my team in doing their job, not do it for them. As a family, my team talks through any issues or concerns and comes to resolutions as a team. If resolution is not being met, then I jump in and have the final say. I find that I welcome feedback and give it as well. I give credit where it’s due and constructive critiquing when needed. Having open communication and respect for one another is also key to my leadership style. I feel that the stronger the communication the stronger the team and the success of the team. EMERGE has helped me to clearly see my strengths and develop them more. I have learned that as the leader don’t always have to have the answer but can lean on others strengths for solutions.

Eskaton Nursing Overview and Compliance Training (ENOCT)

The name of my Action Learning Project (ALP) is Eskaton Nursing Overview and Compliance Training (ENOCT). The materials will include all the leadership areas needed for an effective nursing staff. These materials will cover topics such as: the job description and all its' responsibilities, when, why and how to complete licensing forms and the extra aspects involved in being the Resident Care Coordinator, Wellness Nurse or Memory Care Coordinator.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

My hope for this project is that it will help the nurses of Eskaton have a true understanding and realization of the critical role they play in Eskaton Communities. The role of the nurses is integral to the smooth running of a building and the wellbeing of all its' residents. The hiring and on-boarding of nurses is also critical to ensuring we are hiring the correct people. I'm hopeful that by this tool being in place we can give the applicant a realistic and comprehensive view of the job responsibilities. Hopefully avoiding burn out and turn over. Giving every possible training opportunity so they have access to the most informational resources, so that they can be successful. I hope that this project will allow Eskaton to bring in new employees, as well as encourage current employees, to ensure their success and thus, avoid burnout.

Leadership Lessons Learned

Developing this project has shown me how vital it is to have the correct nurses in the correct spots for the continued success of the company. I've realized how vast the nurses' job is. I've learned that we need to train them in all aspects of their job so they do not become overwhelmed and burn out. I have learned that if we can help make them part of the "family" on the first day, they become more capable and comfortable in their leadership role. The insight gathered from this interaction between employee and Executive Director gives me the opportunity to encourage them to be productive and happy at Eskaton.



Neil Fancher

Director of Projects & Planning

Hillcrest

La Verne, Calif.

In His Own Words...

I came into Emerge with a leadership capacity for generating ideas and excitement, and for creating consensus within a group. Through Emerge I discovered four major areas in which I needed further development as a leader: 1) The imperative to mentor others in order to grow new leaders; to create a culture of leadership that empowers people within our organization to see themselves as leaders, as builders. 2) Emerge taught me to develop tools to help my organization navigate change. From communication strategies to engaging all constituencies so that change is embraced instead of forced upon the organization, Emerge initiated my development of a toolbox of strategies to help adapt to change. 3) The leadership skills acquired during Emerge disavowed me of any notion that a leader needs to have all the answers or go it alone. The idea that an effective leader uses a wide array of people and other resources and eagerly asks for help when needed was a liberating concept to discover and internalize. 4) Failure teaches. Fear of failure limited what I was willing to attempt before Emerge; I've since promoted projects that would have previously been left unsaid—I then embraced the results, success or failure, to inform future actions.

Food for Friends Community Garden

Many seniors at Hillcrest and in the wider community don't get enough fresh fruits and vegetables, either because of cost or transportation limitations. Additionally, the cost of fresh produce can make it a luxury for some associates at Hillcrest.

We will develop gardens in which vegetables are grown throughout the year. In addition, we will glean fruit from the over 100 fruit trees on our campus. Both will be done by a mixed work force of volunteers from the wider community, associates, and residents. A "free" farmers market will take place at which residents and associates can access fresh food they might otherwise go without. The dream includes operating in a co-op style, with the produce made available to seniors throughout the city--and for it to contribute to other food banks in the area, with the initial focus first being on Hillcrest residents then associates.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

This project has the potential to engage a wider constituency throughout the area in serving one crucial aspect of senior wellness: dietary well-being. A program of this type also echoes the mission of Hillcrest, "To serve and enrich the lives of older persons through quality services and facilities," and puts our mission into practice in a tangible way. The opportunity to use a multigenerational work force will break down barriers caused by ageism and dispel the notion of senior services as an isolated component of life, to be hidden or ignored. The integration of many social and institutional groups within our area will make for a stronger community.

Leadership Lessons Learned

I discovered that crazy, big dreams are sometimes embraced, not rejected. After engaging key constituents to get buy-in at the organizational level, I realized that my observation (that there is a need for fresh produce) was not an isolated observation; others echoed the sentiment. While I pride myself on being original and creative, I realized that I didn't need to reinvent the wheel. There are a multitude of organizations that have done this to varying degrees, so I might be able to achieve a successful outcome more easily and quickly if I study other versions of this community garden concept and create a hybrid based on best practices and lessons learned from similar programs. Starting small and getting it going was another aspect that I embraced. It's tempting to delay implementation out of desire for a perfect program, a perfect implementation. But in this case, I wanted to get *something* started and grow into the larger, idealized dream. Finally, I learned that the best program design doesn't depend upon a single, specific champion to carry it out. A structure that simply defines roles then seeks out champions for the roles puts fewer burdens on the organization to maintain the program.



Connie Garrett

Director of Resident and Social Services
**American Baptist Homes
of the West – Plymouth Village**
Redlands, Calif.

In Her Own Words...

I have been in aging services field for over 30 years. Throughout the years I have built a rapport with colleagues, continued education, and took on management roles. In 2005 I was asked to take a leadership role as the Director of Resident Services, with my career of helping families and residents, this was an exciting move. I had supervised a few employees in my career, but not to this extent, nor with such a diverse group and departments. I worked well with other team members being supportive, helpful and going the extra mile. Department leadership was a change.

During the Emerge journey, I found myself first. I had grown in my knowledge but somewhere I forgot to feed the soul. Through Emerge I have learned patience, and better listening skills with staff and others. I've learned to look closer at what people are saying guide and coach. Transparency – Team leaders must have this same vulnerability. I learned that people cannot really trust others if they do not know them, and it is not a sign of weakness. Team members must trust one another to have the true interest of the team or organization at heart. It is also important to build team confidence that the intentions of the team are good (even your NO NOs) and not threatening; therefore, it is not necessary to be protective.

I have found that I want to help everyone grow by spending more time with staff and other team members. I had many mentors in my life that guided, supported and inspired me; I aspire to be the same to those who I meet through life. Emerge is a journey that has many lasting effects. I have grown personally and professionally. Thank you Emerge for this journey.

Today and Tomorrow – the Future for Seniors

My ALP is taking a look at our community. What will happen as we continue to have more and more seniors? Taking a look at the variety of care and having a community and company adapt to the changes. Taking a look at our redevelopment coming up in a few years: What do we do well now? What do we need to look at for the redevelopment and in the future? Currently, I am working on an action plan to implement over the years the many stages of our redevelopment. I plan to incorporate the ABHOW advantage culture and give team members the opportunity to be a part of this process.

As we look at our community, we need to recognize the needs and expectations of the seniors we serve now and in the future. We need to be flexible in order to understand the changes and needs within our community. Also, we need to look at having levels of care within levels of care.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

It is my hope that this process would be something that all retirement community's staffs see as a way to work with seniors. My vision would be that communities like Plymouth Village would also become an intricate part in the communities they are in such as working with affordable housing and sharing the wonderful programming and support services offered. We all need to work together. Our senior population is continuing to grow and their income will need to be addressed. I believe that all people should be afforded a quality of life. I hope to see companies and communities working together to achieve this. This would indeed change some of the old thoughts and ways people do things. I believe that our mission working within the retirement and senior population is to continue to look for new and intuitive ideas. I believe that working together should be part of our core and that all employees should feel they have an impact and a say.

Leadership Lessons Learned

My ALP is a long term project. I am hopeful that the ground work and input of my ALP will help establish a path towards assisting the needs of seniors not only thru ABHOW, but also in the aging community.



Christine Hanson

Director of Wellness and
Therapeutic Activities
Laguna Honda Hospital
San Francisco, Calif.

In Her Own Words...

I came to California in 1991 and started working at Laguna Honda as a Recreation Therapist. Health care and aging services in San Francisco have changed a lot in 24 years. I am now managing the department in which I started my full-time professional career 24 years ago. I see myself as a leader who continuously evaluates the impact of services and how to improve the delivery of those services to more efficiently and effectively meet the hospital's mission and goals for the residents we serve, while supporting personal and professional growth of employees. I couldn't have started the Emerge program at a better time. I was in the process of attempting a reorganization of the department. In Emerge my group presented on the concept of managing change. It helped me to better organize steps for the group to move in the new direction. In addition to learning to better manage change, I've also become aware of the importance of engagement. The concept that is critical to staff satisfaction is engagement. With Wellness as a priority for staff and residents at Laguna Honda Hospital, it will be important for the Wellness and Activity Therapy Department to become increasingly engaged. This March the department is creating committees to improve engagement among all staff. If these committees are successful, we will continue to use them as a tool for improved engagement and increased job satisfaction.

Action Learning Project

GOAL: Improve the hospitals reputation within the greater San Francisco community.

OBJECTIVE: Coordinate a series of activities that integrate the community into the hospital milieu or integrate the hospital into the community.

The first event was to facilitate 4 residents attending the local housing association block party. In addition we brought a few of our animals to the event to share with the kids. This event was a success. The residents had a great time. We even saw one of our long time spiritual care volunteers at the event. The bunnies and guinea pigs were a big hit with all the kids at the party.

Second event was to host the Art with Elders Annual Exhibition. This event was held on a Sunday and brought residents from all over San Francisco to the hospital to celebrate their art work and have lunch. Our residents are also part of the artists being invited. The event was a success and is likely to continue to be held here at LHH going forward.

The third project was to work with a non-profit kids Broadway play production company to start using the hospitals facilities to run their classes and productions. This would have allowed residents to see rehearsals. It would have also provided an intergenerational opportunity where middle school children could be exposed to folks in an institution. It may have planted the seeds for the next generation of care givers. Unfortunately, after some negotiation, the group determined that the stage was too small and the acoustics would not accommodate their needs.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

The biggest and currently ongoing project is the projection labyrinth being planned for the theater. The “Friends of Laguna Honda” offered to financially support a project in the theater that would benefit the residents. The CEO recommended a focus on wellness. My department has been experimenting with labyrinth programs. After gaining support from executive staff, a labyrinth was the project. The San Francisco labyrinth society recommended an artist in Scotland for the project to create a projection labyrinth. The only other projection labyrinth in North America is the Children’s Hospital in Calgary, Canada. This is a great opportunity for the hospital to provide a Wellness activity to the greater community in conjunction with the residents. Once the space is prepared, the labyrinth is designed and installed and workshops are completed, which can be a resource for everyone. The labyrinth will promote wellness, meditation, spiritual renewal and hospital/community integration. So many things can grow from this project; resident programs, staff programs, community open hours, volunteer docent support hours for workshops, and the list goes on. Currently, the project is in the contract phase. As a city and county facility, the contract process is long and complex.

Leadership Lessons Learned

The most valuable leadership lesson I’ve learned during this project is to use softball questions to engage others in the process. Open ended questions that allow others to speak, help get many questions answered, which can avoid confusion, limit unnecessary time spent finding information or repeating steps and can help me better support others when necessary. I’ll be employing softball questions in many situations going forward as a form of engagement. I energetically will continue to work on the project to being a wellness opportunity to the community.



Heather Harris

Activity Director
The Tamalpais, NCPHS
Greenbrae, Calif.

In Her Own Words...

Since age 2 1/2 I have always had a love and affinity for the “chronologically enriched.” After being a professional entertainer for 16 years I finally “settled down” and began working for the Tamalpais part time as their physical fitness instructor. Having been in the industry for 15 years my job has morphed many times finally settling on my current position as Activity Director. I have been able to use my life experiences and skills to create wonderful programming. From early on I was always a leader. I believe in an open door policy and encourage others to come to me with their concerns, ideas and opinions. I am a true people person and thrive off of interacting with others by encouraging them to be the best versions of themselves.

Emerge has empowered me to truly find my authentic voice and reiterates the importance and responsibility that comes with being a leader.

Through intentional reflection and by not being afraid to ask tough questions, I have come to recognize that perhaps my high energy, passion and enthusiasm could possibly be misunderstood in certain business settings. I have taken this as a major growth opportunity. I practice active listening, and am acutely aware of my vocal tone and speed as well as my level of participation in group discussions. I work on having clear, concise messages and clarity of goals. Through Emerge, I have come to understand it is imperative to have buy in from my staff before a project or change occurs, and that I need to invite others in to be part of the solution, process or vision. I must be vigilant with my communication while being aware of not excluding anyone from the process. Previously, I would have done everything myself. Today I realize that recognizing others strengths and utilizing them are signs of a great leader.

Emerge challenges me to ask..am I the person I want to become or am I in between? Am I living my values? Am I creating the legacy I desire? By having this opportunity, I am on a journey of self discovery and self improvement that will stay with me forever.

“Let’s Talk About…”

People are living longer, often times bringing with them challenges which can create emotional and social isolation. In alignment with NCPHS strategic goal of intergrating our Wellness and Inclusion initiatives as well as our core purpose of enriching the Experience of Aging, I will be implementing a pilot program entitled “Let’s Talk About …”.

This will be a one year long program that will tackle subjects such as loss in later life, low vision, hearing loss, forgetfulness, death, and intimacy. The goal is to empower residents to talk about their concerns, not to be restricted by the thought of unacceptance or the unknown.

Each two month section will focus on providing practical information as well as emotional support. This will be accomplished using different formats such as movies, speakers, informational handouts, aps, open forums and when appropriate, support or discussion groups.

By bringing such topics to the forefront, it will dissipate the fear and possible shame surrounding them, allowing the residents to be authentic; to voice their feelings and concerns, to take action and to practice self care. Hopefully open, free, creative conversation will act as a forum catalyst for advanced, optimum wellness. We will get solutions through communication.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

Overall, my desire is the “Let’s talk About” program helps to solidify a culture of open communication and acceptance as well as showing The Tamalpais as an industry leader when it comes to taking on at times difficult subjects and in breaking through ageism stereotypes I would like to expand the awareness of the issues facing our residents by letting them know they are not alone on such subjects being faced with every day aging. And that although the obstacles may be there, they do not have to be defined by them.

I would love to use this template at other NCPHS communities (making adjustments when needed to fit their clientele) and down the road to invite the community to hear some of our presentations and possibly attend an open forum. I foresee creating a bimonthly “Let’s Talk About…” article for our local paper. Sharing knowledge to not only help The Tamalpais but to illuminate the community at large.

Leadership Lessons Learned

Projects such as mine need to be collaborative and presented in the correct way. This takes time. Rushing into something or being attached to “my way” would be futile. I need to keep the integrity of the vision while being open to others thoughts and viewpoints. Compiling all the various perspectives into a solution that will lead us to our common goal!

A leader never loses their passion. Whenever I would get frustrated I would remember my “Why” and allow my purpose to reframe and reignite my project.

I recognize the importance of reaching out to others, discovering and utilizing resources and yes, even asking for help. By brainstorming with various groups I now have “buy in” from an ad hoc group of residents, management, hospice and physical therapy!

I still have a long way to go with implementing my ALP. I know by trusting the process I will learn much more. I have discovered that if you aren’t making some mistakes then you aren’t taking risks. Risks take us out of our comfort zone and push us to higher levels and that is exactly where I want my project and myself to go!



Jennifer Marlette

Director of Staff Development
Paradise Valley Estates
Fairfield, Calif.

In Her Own Words...

Looking back upon the leadership journey I have experienced with Emerge, I can say that I am not the same person today that I was one year ago. I applied to Emerge because I wanted to better understand what it means to be a leader and how I can be a more effective leader in my work life, home life and community. I wanted to understand what defines an effective leader. I wanted to understand how to motivate others around me, find my personal leadership voice, understand what change is, and how to motivate others to change. I believe these goals have been accomplished through the Emerge Leadership Program. I now understand what my leadership voice sounds like. Through the readings and tools provided by the facilitators, as well as support from my coach and fellows, I have found the courage to speak up at meetings, provide input, including opinions which may contradict others (in a gentle way), and also learn how to listen to other leaders around me. I now understand the process of change and the steps which take place to motivate change in others. I have participated in helping to change systems and processes at my workplace. I feel equipped to dive into change more readily rather than shy away from it or avoid it all together. I am one who does not like change, but I have learned that change is the only constant in my environment. Nothing stays stagnant. If it does, it does not survive. Change is all around and the more readily we accept and work with it the better prepared for the future we will be. Motivating and inspiring others helps them to find their inner leadership voice and become part of the change process. When we invest in others it becomes a win –win situation. It has been said that, “to get what you want out of life, the best thing to do is to help others get what they want.” (Zig Ziglar). How simple and yet profound this is. When we invest in helping others to become motivated and successful it is a win for both parties. I find that today I am in a better place physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually than I was one year ago. Emerge has been a large part of that process. I am so appreciative for each moment and session and person who has helped me to become the leader I am today.

Action Learning Project

My ALP is still a work in progress. Initially I had hoped to create some form of communication to help families understand the world of Skilled Nursing. My original idea was motivated by a conversation with my CEO. As I have thought about and talked with other department leaders, (COO and Marketing Director), it is becoming more clear that this project may become more of information supplied in small doses over time. As I continue to drill down to what I hope to accomplish, it truly is to provide a way to support families as their loved one transitions to a different level care. It is through education and communication that I believe this can best be accomplished. The means by which the education will occur has yet to be determined and will most likely take a few different approaches. After meeting with the Marketing Director, I am considering collaborating with her to create an annual informal seminar to review with independent residents the “what if” scenarios should they ever need the skilled nursing facility. Additionally I am working on providing a short note in our weekly newsletter which is sent electronically to our community which would contain small informational bullets about skilled nursing.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

The Long Term hope for this project for my community is to improve communication between families, residents and staff. Through improved communication I hope to achieve the goal that families will have less anxiety as their loved one is transitioned to a higher level of care.

Leadership Lessons Learned

Through the Emerge leadership program, I know I will need to think about the change process and how that will affect others (stakeholders). Transitioning to skilled nursing is a huge change for people and creates a new world of anxiety, fear and misunderstanding. I will also use my leadership voice to help others understand and take part in the change process. I have learned about inspiring and motivating others. As people transition to different levels of care, they and their families can still be inspired to be active members of our retirement community.



Meagan McClellan

Philanthropy Officer

Monte Vista Grove Homes

Pasadena, Calif.

In Her Own Words...

My passion for being a leader in the senior care field started long before I obtained my Master's degree in Gerontology at the University of Southern California. Volunteering through the meals-on-wheels and other programs like Project S.H.I.N.E. (Students Helping in Naturalization of Elders) planted a seed for a long-term career with senior adults. The past four years at Monte Vista Grove Homes has empowered me to grow in the organization and in the field. I often find myself being the 'youngest' in the field and learned quickly that my passion at a young age is fairly rare. I feel the need to rise to the occasion and be a leader not only for today's seniors but also for future generations to come. This made Emerge the ideal program to further my growth in the field of long-term care. Emerge has given me the tools to be an effective leader and to empower other people in the organization to be leaders themselves. Just as seniors are often labeled as incapable, younger people, like myself, can also be looked down upon and seen as inexperienced and not as knowledgeable. However, my fellows, coaches and facilitators in Emerge have shown me how to find the courage and power to overcome those obstacles. I will continue to be a leader in this field and to pave the way for other emerging leaders.

Person Centered Care – “I’ll Be Me” inspired by the Glen Campbell Film

I have been given a unique opportunity at Monte Vista Grove Homes. This year we have embarked on an exciting journey by beginning the process of a capital campaign in order to build a Memory Care Residence. My ALP is designed around the program model that consists of: structural, operational and personal care. This model is designed after a concept from Dr. G. Allen Powers who promotes a transformational model of care. These three aspects of dementia care are further broken down into seven different areas known as “The Seven Well-Being Domains” derived from The Eden Alternative Domains of Well-Being™. The seven well-being domains are: Joy, Meaning, Growth, Security, Autonomy, Identity and Connectedness. Focusing on the seven aspects of well-being and making them a priority, provides the resident an opportunity to age-in-place, encourages independence, growth and respect regardless of their stage of dementia.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

My hope for my ALP is that staff, residents, and the surrounding community are empowered to see residents living with dementia as people regardless of memory loss or cognitive impairment. My hope is that the “I’ll Be Me” program will give each resident an opportunity to thrive and grow in their environment. Ultimately, my hope is that this program will have a rippling effect that reaches far beyond this campus community.

Leadership Lessons Learned

One of my favorite leadership lessons in the Emerge program has to be ‘CHANGE’. I have always welcomed change and I am rarely opposed to it. Emerge has brought a whole new meaning to the concept of change and highlighted its importance. Change should be seen as a good thing and embraced by an organization. I have noticed working in this field that several organizations board, staff and residents fall into the same patterns. It is common to hear organizations say “but, we have always done it this way!” I was fortunate enough, during the Emerge program, to implement what I learned and make a change in my community. We had an event called the “Fall Festival” which was an annual event during the fall months. There are multiple aspects of this event that were not working. After testing different ways of operating this event, in my mind it came to a point that it just was ‘no longer working’. I proposed to change the concept of this event to focus our full attention on the section that was actually producing revenue. First, I had to get buy-in from my event team, next the management staff, then from our residents’ Auxiliary. Once everyone understood the positive aspects of the change, they could accept it and, I successfully created CHANGE! I now look forward to future opportunities where I can implement change to make the organization stronger and to continue to provide residents with a wonderful place to live.



Richard Nordsiek

Executive Director
Rowntree Gardens
Stanton, Calif.

In His Own Words...

During my twelve plus (12+) years of experience in aging services, I have been responsible for numerous departments and operational tasks including our Support Services Department and related facility renovations. I always made sure that operations were both efficient and effective, that projects were completed on time, and most importantly that the needs of residents and staff were met. I was known as one of the key people who could make sure that projects were accomplished.

When I became Executive Director, my new role required new responsibilities requiring effective leadership. Through my involvement in the Emerge program, I learned that I had been successfully functioning as a manager, whereas I now need to learn to function as a leader to be effective as the Executive Director. As a manager, there were times when I personally endured long, frustrating work hours dealing with issues and employees, trying to solve all the challenges myself, instead of relying on my team. Effective managing gets work done through people. Emerge has shown me that leading is preparing, guiding, and empowering people to excel. Most people do not want to be managed, they want to be led. I have learned to spend less focus on details, and now am able to step back and take in the entire view.

Having this “whole-picture” perspective has allowed me to begin improvements in the culture of our community. I have found myself in a position similar to that of an orchestral conductor, unifying the different departments to work cooperatively for effective, life-enhancing goals, programs, and resulting products in serving seniors. I see the need to break down the departmental silos keeping employees distant and defensive, and am working to create better communication and a collective same-vision environment. In addition, the need for a safe but accountable workplace environment has come to light, a culture in which all are employees work industriously, cooperatively, safely, and with assurance of being heard. To address this, we have partnered with a Risk Management Corporation to educate and strengthen relationships between all employees and departments. All this has led to the creation of my ALP: “Refining, Redesigning, and Redefining”.

“Creating the Three “R”’s Culture: Refining, Redesigning, and Redefining”

In grade school, we are taught the three “R”s: Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. These are the foundations of building our academic careers. Without these essentials, it should be near impossible to be academically successful. In like manner, organizations in aging services need strong foundations. My ALP is the creation of “The Three “R”’s of Aging Services: Refining, Redesigning, and Redefining.

At Rowntree Gardens, we have found that numerous amenities, programs, and prevailing ideas had great foundations. However, these amenities, programs, and ideas had become dated, or non-benefitting, or non-functional. **Refining:** To make these needed proponents or our community (amenities, programs, ideas, etc.) relevant and sustainable for the future, we are focusing on keeping the parts that function well and work, and work on refining how they are implemented and expressed. **Redesigning:** When refining does not suffice, redesigning may be needed. Redesigning involves significant changes. In Redesigning, new concepts and physical expressions of those concepts are implemented realized. **Redefining:** We often feel the solution to problem is to start over entirely. Such may be the case when refining and redesigning are not the solution. The challenge comes when a tradition, an established activity, or any existing non-benefitting function or idea needs to be completely changed.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

The long term impact of the Three “R”’s of Refining, Redesigning, and Redefining is to create and maintain a culture of constant improvement and excellence. Employees, residents, families, and other stakeholders will feel engaged as they participate in discussions affecting future decisions. Maintaining this type of culture will not only fulfill, but expand our mission to serve seniors. Our seniors will have access to more quality and life enriching services. Moreover, I believe we can reach seniors that could have been unreachable before. We are and will continue to be in the process of educating and empowering our stakeholders (staff, residents, families, others), and particularly engaging frontline employees to participate in discussions. All this will continue to improve our strength as an organization. Compared to other industries, the aging services industry has not been known for innovation, for creating a culture to fully empower employees to break away from the status quo and redefine services. We desire to be on the cutting edge of bringing new and the most appropriate senior services possible. Refining, Redesigning, Redefining. Through genuine transparent communication, education, empowerment, and engagement, a culture of continual improvement can be established; thus, obtaining our mission beyond prior expectations – to be a daily blessing, one resident at a time.

Leadership Lessons Learned

In this process, I have learned that leaders must lead associates along the path of change. As change comes, some will kick and scream, some will refuse, some will embrace it, and others will find they actually can change. At this point, it is the responsibility of the leaders to recognize those who are able to grow with our developments and nurture and guide them; and to recognize those that are unable and re-direct accordingly. Another important lesson I have learned is that not everything happens as quickly as I would desire. It takes time bring about change. It takes time to bring others into understanding and embracing new concepts and systems. It may take changing “the change”, revising our goals, strategies, etc. if we find they are not as ideally aligned with our original plans and models. Trying to change the culture of an organization is challenging. A culture change cannot occur through dictation. It is a collective work that requires a leader to move the group into a new standard. As we continue to Refine, Redesign, Redefine, educate, empower, and engage all involved in our community and processes, I look forward to continuing to learn needed skills, sharpened observations, appropriate focus, and effective leadership.



Leticia Ontiveros

Director of Security
Casa Dorinda
Montecito, Calif.

In Her Own Words...

As the current Director of Security at Casa Dorinda I can look back and recognize that I was provided a tremendous opportunity and challenge to step into a role that at times took me out my comfort zone where I navigated new waters as a leader by managing and directing staff to oversee the safety and security of this facility. As I've grown and evolved over the years as a leader and supervisor, I've tried to maintain the "lead by example mentality" and "it's for the good of the whole" to my staff and I feel it has led to positive results. I see the importance and value of modeling, mentoring and empowering staff to look within at the abilities and resources we all possess in one form or another, but just need developing and refining.

The Emerge leadership program has made a significant impact and growth in giving me the added confidence, knowledge and capabilities that have enriched my leadership style and abilities in a professional and reassuring environment. Emerge provides you with leadership principals and models that make you reevaluate, reshape and transform you to be an improved, compassionate and honest leader, supervisor, colleague, mentor and person, and thus being a valuable asset in your professional and personal life.

Casa Dorinda Security Department Services and Emergency Response Guide:

My Action Learning Project is to create a book that outlines and describes all the Security Department duties, services, emergency preparedness training and emergency equipment provided that will better inform and educate the residents at Casa Dorinda in an accurate, concise and efficient manner. When new residents move in they are given a tremendous amount of paperwork, a wealth of information and not to mention coping with the stresses of moving that many times items may get stored away or simply forgotten. So my hope is by providing a book which can be looked at, studied and kept readily available which highlights and explains the services provided as well as educate on different emergency scenarios and the basic response recommended during those times of crisis, will better serve and reach all residents.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

My hope would be that the Casa Dorinda Security Department Services and Emergency Response Guide would reach and educate all current and new coming residents with a complete and concise resource that gives basic day to day information as well as critical and possible lifesaving steps during times of emergencies or disasters. The long term impact of the guide book would provide imperative information that they can easily reference and study all in one place and would be a valuable tool on different levels to residents.

Leadership Lessons Learned

I've learned and experienced several leadership lessons throughout my journey in deciding what my ALP would be listening to others ideas and that time was not of the essence. I try to keep an open mind when listening to suggestions and ideas that really don't resonate with me, however, by taking time to process, and reprocess those ideas it would untimely give me a better experience and final product.



Frances Prochilo

Program Coordinator
**San Francisco Senior
Center (NCPHS)**
San Francisco, Calif.

In Her Own Words...

I think one of the biggest impacts Emerge has had on me as a leader, in both my personal and professional lives, is that I can actually sit here and write that I see myself as a leader. Prior to Emerge, I had great confidence in my abilities to get my work done to the highest of standards and be a reliable, efficient, empathetic colleague to my teammates in whatever position I held. But I had many doubts around my role as a “leader,” as someone who could affect deep and meaningful change in my organizations’ culture, systems, and direction.

I can remember the first day I returned to work after the inaugural Emerge session in Palm Springs, feeling the exhilarating new weight of responsibility as a leader. With each interaction--with the seniors attending the center, my colleagues, over the phone or via email--I watched myself as I chose carefully to respond as a leader in the ways that we had learned about over the three days. My “why” for doing what I do was at the forefront in every decision I made. I had entered into the field of aging services to, well, be of service to older adults. And while that value was still a part of me, it had receded into the overwhelming feeling of working in an understaffed, underfunded setting. Emerge reconnected me to that value, it helped me tap into strength I didn’t know I had, willingness to sacrifice and be present for all of the challenges (and challenging people) I encounter on a day to day basis. Because it is my job as a leader to set the tone for my team, to find a way even in the face of adversity, and be authentic and honest while doing so.

Aquatic Park Center Community Presence & Engagement

The challenge entailed in my project is to increase Aquatic Park Center's visibility amongst adults 50+ in the Bay Area via online and print media, create connections with local media sources and relevant partner organizations for more consistent event coverage/promotion, and to successfully leverage online fundraising tools for special events. My project is threefold and includes: increasing Aquatic Park's online presence (our SFSC website, Facebook page, email communications, and online fundraising sites such as IndieGoGo); scouting and solidifying potential partnerships with local print, web, and radio media (such as the Marina Times and KQED), as well as neighborhood partner organizations (like the Villages); and taking advantage of internal support from our parent organization, NCPHS (including their Marketing Director), and volunteers (both seniors and local school children). Each quarter, I will aim to create a strategy brief that looks at our upcoming quarterly schedule of events and outlines a timeline for updating our online presence, which neighborhood media outlets we should contact for promotions, which neighborhood *partners* we should loop in, and what kind of staff and volunteer support will be necessary to optimize our community outreach and engagement.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

I hope that by creating a strategic approach for Aquatic Park's visibility in the community that we will:

- 1) Draw more participants to the center;
- 2) Increase funding for the center from individuals and businesses;
- 3) Better support for Bay Area older adults with our services and resources.

Leadership Lessons Learned

Though I have yet to implement much of the above due to having just returned from maternity leave, I already feel as though I have applied some of the leadership lessons I learned through Emerge in the planning and development stages. First, I had to take a step back and ask myself what kind of project would impact the center on both a small and large scale, be in line with our core values, and be *doable* given my capacity and our center's resources. I had to be able to communicate my vision effectively to my supervisor and get her buy-in, and eventually will need to bring in NCPHS support with a compelling description of the project as well as train my colleagues and volunteers in their pieces. And because we are already such a small staff, I know that I will have to prioritize and make some personal sacrifices (some longer hours, for sure), to make sure this project gets off the ground and stays running. I am excited to take the lead to bring the SFSC more into the consciousness of Bay Area older adults, and to fight the erroneous notion that senior centers are "dinosaurs" in the world of aging services.



Adrian Quinones

Manager of Security and Transportation
St. Paul's Towers
(Episcopal Senior Communities)
Oakland, Calif.

In His Own Words...

My commitment to the field of aging services began in high school. I was in the 12th grade when I started working in the field of aging services as a dining room server at a CCRC. For the past twenty year I've continued to work in this field and have had first-hand experience working with different levels of care. As a leader, I enjoy learning from others; I am a firm believer in team work and being conscious of other people's needs. These traits have allowed me to work effectively with staff and residents. As a leader, I work alongside with my employees so we can tackle every situation together effectively and learn from each other. We are only as strong as our weakest link and contributor to each other successes.

Emerge has given me the desire to do more in the field of aging. The tools provided by our mentors, coaches, and fellows were remarkable. Site visits, group collaboration, class exercises and the encouraging environment allowed us to have open and honest communication. It was rejuvenating. Emerge has made me appreciate and respect the organization (Episcopal Senior Communities) even more for giving me this opportunity and it has motivated me to move towards the next step of my career during this transformational experience. Emerge guided and opened so many new doors for me in the aging services industry. This experience has given me new insight and motivation to explore the field of aging and continue growing by doing meaningful work that improves the quality of life for seniors.

Residents on the Move (a car share program)

My ALP is to create a *Residents on the Move* (a car share program) for the St. Paul's Towers' residents. The benefits of car sharing are: it saves money, time, and gives our residents peace of mind not having to worry about registration, maintenance, gas, parking, insurance, and car cleaning. The average person spends at least \$500 each month on their car. With the help of our existing transportation program, the average resident in our community who owns a car only drives once or twice a week. Since our residents don't drive often, the *Residents on the Move* will save our residents money as opposed to owning their own car and dealing with extra unneeded expenses. The ideal vehicle that will be used will be a low emission vehicle such as a Hybrid or Hybrid Plus. The *Residents on the Move* will decrease air pollution and energy dependency, which will be an added bonus for our Resident Green Action Committee.

The vehicle will also serve as a backup to our existing vehicle. As of now, the limousine that we use for our daily trips averages 15,000 miles per year. With the help of the vehicle from *Residents on the Move*, we can reduce mileage and deterioration of our existing limousine.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

By giving our residents the freedom to drive a car without the hassle of owning it, we will improve the quality of life for our residents in the long run. I hope *Resident on the Move* will help attract current and future residents with cars to join the program and encourage them to give up their own cars. By giving up their cars, parking spaces in our community will open up and those spaces can be used by our staff. There will be fewer cars on the road which is good for the environment.

Leadership Lessons Learned

The leadership lesson I learned while developing my ALP was the importance of thinking outside the box to better serve our residents. The leadership requires patience, courage, having the right people around that will support you, and to reach out and actively listening to the people we are serving to better improve our services to them.



Neal Talman

Director of Facilities and IT
Solheim Lutheran Home
Los Angeles, Calif.

In His Own Words...

I am the Director of Facilities and IT for Solheim Lutheran Home. I oversee IT, Maintenance, Housekeeping, Laundry, Transportation and Gardening. I also serve as Chairman of the Safety Committee.

As a Leader at Solheim, I am a representative of management and I strive to deliver exceptional service by knowing my customers and discovering their current and possible future needs. I love the challenge of creating the delivery of services that bring the highest possible level of satisfaction. On my team I work to create an open, honest, collaborative environment that the front line staff can feel a part of. Instead of doing all the talking, my team feels safe to share their real concerns and real needs. . My staff knows that **I** am here to serve **them**. Emerge has helped me to refine how I serve and has given me a larger “bag of usable tools” to facilitate the development of my team and the individuals on it.

Solheim Scoop

When I listened to Organizational, Departmental and Managerial issues around the facility the word that always arises is communication, communication, communication. CCRC facilities are a 24/7 operation, having multiple shifts with lots of staff having more than one job and/or outside responsibilities. Under these circumstances, it is not feasible to have mandatory all-staff meetings. This means that information from management often does not reach the entire staff, particularly those who work second and third shifts. In order to solve part of this issue I have decided to create a newspaper titled the *SOLHEIM SCOOP*. This medium will be used as a tool for communication for all shifts, all departments and all positions. It's a fun, insightful, possibly entertaining newspaper that will come out when there is news, happenings, updates, events, training concepts, etc.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

In order to create the content for the “scoop” I will recruit an internal editorial and reporting team that will be comprised of front line staff from each department. This will ensure that the information in the paper stays relevant and will not be seen as a management communication vehicle. Staff reporters will have to seek out the members of the Executive team and Interview them so that relevant information from management can be included. The submissions will be edited and compiled into a rough draft. The Executive Director will be given the opportunity to approve the final draft. My responsibility will be to coach the team from concept to print.

Leadership Lessons Learned

There are many different areas this paper can lead to. I believe that having a well-informed staff is paramount to the success of any organization. Done correctly this platform could bridge the communication gap while providing interesting and pertinent information that should result in a better informed employee group.



Megan Thomas

Administrator, St. Paul's Villa
Assisted Living & Memory Care
St. Paul's Senior Services
San Diego, Calif.

In Her Own Words...

My commitment to serving seniors developed from a very young age when I would accompany my mother and volunteer at the CCRC where she was employed. My passion to serve seniors has continued to develop over the last five years through my own career within St. Paul's Senior Services. In my roles within Admissions and Resident Services I felt capable and confident in the difference I was making for our residents, their families, and my teammates. In the last year my professional journey has taken me to the role of Administrator and I have now come to understand that although my leadership style has been one of leading by example, I have primarily been managing rather than leading. Completing the Emerge program has been invaluable to helping me identify what it means to lead and has enabled me to develop a skill set to create my own authentic leadership style. I'm grateful to feel empowered and capable as I continue in this lifelong journey in the field of Senior Services.

Cultivating Resident and Family Engagement through Awareness, Education, Involvement and Accountability

This program will ultimately provide a culture of meaningful relationships, communication, and support to not only aide in the transition of new residents but throughout the many transitions they'll experience down the road. This program will be ever evolving but some of the practices that have been implemented are:

- A detailed Resident and Family Handbook (also serving as a guide to staff for consistency in communication)
- Expectation meetings before moving in and continued transparency
- Volunteer opportunities within the community to include residents and families, with encouragement of continued involvement beyond residency.
- Monthly educational opportunities
- Monthly support groups

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

In this servant industry we are inclined to take on responsibilities of Residents and Families but as the experts we need to foster a culture of inclusiveness and teamwork to provide a culture in which residents can thrive!

My hope is that the strategies and processes implemented in this program will be adopted organization wide and will serve as a resource to Leading Age members and Senior Service providers.

Leadership Lessons Learned

The most significant lesson I have learned in the development and implementation of my ALP has been the importance of establishing a shared vision. Each department in an organization takes pride in their contribution and creating a new program leads to additional responsibilities that may not be accepted comfortably. Developing a shared vision will create a compass that allows each member of the team to function out of their comfort zone by focusing on the end goal. It has been empowering to reinforce that the challenges ahead are merely opportunities for growth and that there is no victory too small to celebrate!



Therese Wellington

Senior Financial Analyst
**American Baptist Homes
of the West (ABHOW)**
Pleasanton, Calif.

In Her Own Words...

I consider myself an effective leader and I use approaches that promote authentic communication, encourage open conversations, develop trust, anticipate problems, and support a positive environment that sustains optimum performance over time. Once these elements have been established, I find it easier for the team to elevate “into the zone.”

Through the EMERGE program I have begun to hone my skills from learning fresh new ideas which strengthened my leadership style. The books and the articles along with sharing with the other fellows have assisted me in becoming a better leader. The eight steps in Kotter’s “Our Iceberg is Melting,” the pyramid of the five dysfunctions in Lencioni’s, “The Five Dysfunctions of a Team,” and the five skills in the HBR article entitled, “The Innovator’s DNA Skills” (Associating, Questioning, Observing, Experimenting and Networking) and my favorite by Loehr and Schwartz, “The Power of Full Engagement,” are just a few of the materials that were introduced to me during the program that I find myself utilizing often as I lead. Like all new concepts, this takes practice, practice, practice.

I own being a leader and recognize that leadership is a process that is much bigger than just me. Sometimes it depends on who is ‘first on scene’ that will determine who is the leader and who will be the follower. A good leader can be a good follower too. The best leaders that I know are those who get others involved in having a “common sense” in addressing issues for the common good.

“Harnessing the Dynamic Energy of the People within the Organization in Service of the Mission”

The goal of the ALP is based on communication where instead of a “top down” approach there is a “horizontal” approach. This is about a shared vision that includes those on the front lines who will be carrying out the vision of the mission and, at some point, each of us is on the front lines (it is a matter of degree however that reality exists). This approach needs to be nested in the culture of the organization for it to be successful. American Baptist Homes of the West has implemented a culture change recently which is fertile ground for this type of communication style to thrive for the common good.

Long Term Organizational and/or Field Impact

The long term impact of the ALP will be to create conversation for action. A corporation is simply a reservoir of potential energy. Loehr and Schwartz said, “Just as every cell in the human body is important to the overall health and vitality of the “body”, so every individual is important to the overall health and vitality of the corporate body.”

The conversation is based on supporting the mission and vision of the organization by supporting each other, thus creating a thriving “body” where we *all* thrive. Once best practices have been developed, this will be a model to be shared in the industry (and beyond).

Leadership Lessons Learned

In preparation for implementing my ALP I have had several conversations with some who have launched corporate strategic objectives at their organizations. I learned that the “elevator speech” as well as the “soft ball questions” really served me well. I also learned that it helps to embody the change that you want to see. For instance, I spoke openly to some team members about my project to get their feedback some positive and some negative. My goal was not to change the negatives but to be open to all perspectives and asked: “Why?”, “Why not?” and “What if?”

The one thing that seemed clear, in every case that I met with resistance was that it was based in fear. Surprisingly, I noticed resistance from myself as well, when I decided to mention my ALP to those who are often the “naysayers” in the group. I remembered a quote from Marianne Williamson that starts off, “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure....We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be?.... As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

This quote resonated with me as I am preparing for the ALP development because it encapsulate my big “take away” from the EMERGE leadership program; it takes courage and perseverance to initiate change and it must start with me (with us as leaders). Leadership requires ongoing learning, ongoing doing and re-doing. It is all part of the journey and as leaders we need to use emotional intelligence.

My biggest lessons learned: remember who you are, be authentic and live from that place. Who am I not to?

Sponsoring Organizations

LeadingAge California appreciates the following member organizations that sponsored Fellows to participate in the EMERGE Class of 2014-2015:

American Baptist Homes of the West Pleasanton, Calif.	Rowntree Gardens Stanton, Calif.
Casa Dorinda Montecito, Calif.	San Francisco Senior Center (NCPHS) San Francisco, Calif.
Community Senior Services Claremont, Calif.	Solheim Lutheran Home Los Angeles, Calif.
Hillcrest La Verne, Calif.	St. Paul's Senior Homes San Diego, Calif.
Laguna Honda Hospital & Rehab Center San Francisco, Calif.	St. Paul's Towers Oakland, Calif.
Monte Vista Grove Homes Pasadena, Calif.	TELACU Residential Management Los Angeles, Calif.
Paradise Valley Estates Fairfield, Calif.	The Forum at Rancho San Antonio Cupertino, Calif.
Plymouth Village - ABHOW Redlands, Calif.	The Tamalpais (NCPHS) Greenbrae, Calif.

Site Visit Hosts

LeadingAge California extends its gratitude to the following member communities for hosting the Class of 2014-2015 site visits and panel discussions.

Mt. San Antonio Gardens
Pomona, Calif.

Masonic Homes of Union City
Union City, Calif.

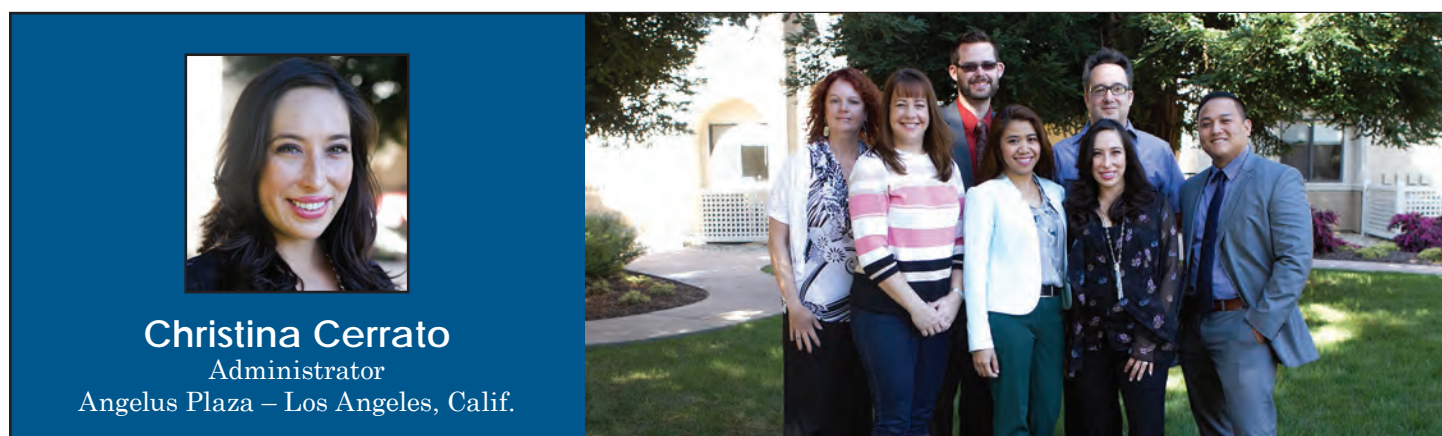
The Meadows of Napa Valley
Napa, Calif.

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From top left: Joshua Delgado, Jerry Brown, Therese Wellington
From bottom left: Frances Prochilo, Heather Harris, Marcela Castaneda, Jen Arent, Leticia Ontiveros



From top left: Connie Garrett, Richard Nordsiek, Neal Talman
From bottom left: : Kim Delgado, Abigail Castillo, Christina Cerrato, Adrian Quinones



From top left: Jennifer Marlette, Neil Fancher, Doug Kaplan, Gayathri Amancherla
From bottom left: Meagan McClellan, Christine Hanson, Megan Thomas, Karina Barragan

Facilitators

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Michele Holleran - Facilitator

Founder
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CEO/President
Hillcrest
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Kevin Tuuaga - EMERGE Program Staff

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EMERGE 2014-2015 Sponsor

A special thanks to our EMERGE 2014-2015 Sponsor, for their shared vision in cultivating high-potential leaders who will inspire, innovate and educate other members in the field of aging services.





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