

# NEWS

## VOLUNTEER CENTER OF BERGEN COUNTY, INC.

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### **Bergen's Civic Leadership Program Moves Into Sixth Year**

Applicants Sought for Class of 2014

Bergen County: The Bergen LEADS Class of 2013 has reached the halfway mark in its 10-month curriculum. Bergen LEADS, sponsored by the Volunteer Center of Bergen County, is a civic leadership program that focuses on preparing local leaders to tackle the unique challenges and embrace the opportunities in Bergen County.

The 27 members of the Class of 2013 were chosen through a competitive process in 2012. The group represents a cross section of industries, and a wide range of experiences, backgrounds, ethnicities and ages.

Under the guidance of former Bergen County Executive William "Pat" Schuber, the LEADS Seminar Director, participants are immersed in a stimulating curriculum that not only introduces them to topical issues of local importance, but also enables them to explore their leadership styles, enhance their leadership capacity and become meaningfully engaged in helping to solve some of the challenges facing Bergen County.

Since the September Opening Retreat, the class has met monthly to dissect issues, debate viewpoints and get a first-hand look at Bergen County's infrastructure. Using this newfound knowledge, members of the class are continually challenged to explore new approaches to community problems.

The first Issue Day seminar, in October, examined Government. The class met at Bergen Community College and learned about the role and operation of government from several guest speakers.

In November, the class looked at Healthcare in Bergen County. Holy Name Medical Center hosted the seminar, and CEO Mike Maron spoke at length about healthcare. Mike Azzara, healthcare consultant and former CEO of Valley Hospital, also spoke. Class members visited a variety of venues to see firsthand how healthcare is delivered in Bergen County, including three of the County's hospitals, a Federally-Qualified Health Center, a mental health organization and an educational setting for health professions.

In December, the class focused on Education, beginning with Hal Kwalwasser, author of *Renewal: Remaking America's Schools for the Twenty-First Century*. Teams of class members visited seven different schools to witness education options: public, private, charter and special needs, as well as a Head Start site. The day concluded with a lively presentation from Dr. Carol Fredericks, Business Administrator of Franklin Township Public Schools.

Future topics include the Arts in Bergen County, Law and Public Safety and the Environment. The seminar year will conclude on June 11, 2013 when the class presents its project results at a Public Forum. The Forum will be followed by the Class of 2013 graduation.

Alumni of the program enjoy the Bergen LEADS experience well beyond the seminar year. Participation in ABL (Alumni of Bergen LEADS) enables them to stay informed and connected through special alumni events, forums, and other networking vehicles.

William "Pat" Schuber, Bergen LEADS Seminar Director, sums up the program this way: "The future of Bergen County is being readied now. Bergen LEADS is producing leaders who will take our businesses, non-profits and government entities into a new era of strength and prosperity. Leadership makes the difference in whether our County meets the challenges it faces. Bergen LEADS is the organization that is providing the vision and training which will make that difference."

Bergen LEADS is now accepting applications for the Class of 2014, which begins in September 2013. The program seeks individuals from all ethnic, racial and socio-economic backgrounds who espouse different political, religious and social views for future classes. Visit [www.bergenleads.org](http://www.bergenleads.org) for more information. Applications for the Class of 2014 are due by April 12, 2013

For more information on Bergen LEADS, contact Amanda Missey, Bergen LEADS Director, at 201-489-9454 x119 or [amissey@bergenvolunteers.org](mailto:amissey@bergenvolunteers.org)

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