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## Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership and Management Participants' Testimonials

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### **Lisa Barsumian '10**

*"This certificate program uniquely offers both the best practices and realities of nonprofit management. In this program of professional peers, there is exchange of perspectives, group learning and mutual support. The program raises the bar for nonprofit management, which benefits the sector, the individuals who participate and their organizations, and the volunteers and donors who support them. I received a thorough and very valuable education thanks to this program."*

### **Jessica Burkemper '10 – Student Life Assistant, Austin Community College**

*As a volunteer who wanted to learn more about the nonprofit community, I was a bit nervous to enter a group of nonprofit professionals. But the course of this program has educated me on the many aspects of nonprofit and lessened my intimidation. The structure allows for persons at all levels to become more knowledgeable and to enhance their skills in all areas of nonprofit.*

### **Christina Ceballos '10 – Founding Board Member, UpLift Austin**

*From the very first session, I have been able to apply content from the CNLM program to my current volunteer and professional work. I have developed an even better understanding of the sector here in Austin and have had the privilege to meet incredible leaders in the sector – including both the speakers who train us, and my fellow colleagues in the program.*

*Even the application process is beneficial – the questions are thought provoking and provide a medium to not only express yourself, but help you get clear on what you want out of the program. For instance, I knew that I wanted to meet allies in the sector and get applicable hands-on knowledge. After the first two sessions, I knew that was exactly what I was going to get, and so much more.*

*I believe that the best part of the program is the small size. It creates a community not only with your fellow CNLM colleagues, but also with the invited session leaders - who are the best at what they specialize in. They, in addition to TANO's and the Center's leaders, have been very open and generous with their advice in regards to and have provided support of my work in the sector.*

*I am incredibly honored to be a part of such a dynamic force in the nonprofit community here in Austin, Texas!!! The CNLM program has brought a remarkable amount of depth to my work, and my life, and I would suggest that anyone interested in expanding his or her knowledge of the nonprofit sector to apply.*

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**Spencer Duran '10 -**

*I served as an AmeriCorps\*VISTA member and Leader for the two years prior to being invited to become a fulltime staff member at the agency I am currently with. Very recently after beginning this new opportunity, I learned of the Certification class. I applied for the Association of Fundraising Professionals scholarship and was accepted.*

*I am new to the nonprofit field and a recent college graduate. I am so grateful to have such a great program available to help establish a broad foundation that will carry me throughout my career. The instructors have been above and beyond my expectations. Many of the instructors built their reputations with Texas nonprofit organizations while some are contributing to the field through their writing. Every month I am treated to an intense professional development workshop. As the sole employee of a grassroots organization, my board and consumers rely on what I learn. I take what I learn on the Friday and Saturday we have class and bring it all with me the following Monday. In addition to in-class instruction, we have been provided with materials to take with us. ACC's approach to continuing education has been really helpful in giving me the tools I need to serve others.*

**Debbie Levine '10**

*Excerpted from a letter to a friend: I highly, highly, highly recommend this program to you – it starts up again at the end of August and it's a Friday-Saturday chunk (830-430 each day) and the program is excellent. I can't say enough about it. The two sponsors of the program are a non profit called "TANO" – (Texas Association of Non Profit Organizations) and Austin Community College – and each session they have professionals in the field come in and teach different aspects of effectively running a non profit organization. It's not an academic program – while it does teach theory, it's mostly a professional development for the leader of the NP in whatever role that may be (board member or ED or potential founder or anyone else connected to a non profit) – one of the things that is a huge value is that every month you sit there with 35 other working professionals who are juggling their personal and professional non profit issues so the whole two days ends up being like a think tank where everyone talks about issues and about how things are done in their non profit, lessons learned, etc. And we ask questions of the presenters (we ask their advice) to apply their specific expertise to our own personal issues that we're dealing with running or starting our own non profits. It's great. Every month I walk away with new ideas based on current trends, current best practices and current tax and legal requirements. The folks who run the program are fun and personable, they really care about the program – they care about the quality of what they're presenting and about the folks taking the class. They have it designed so that there is a lot of interaction (active learning) which makes the time fly and it lets us really get to know the other participants so there is a group identity, and bonding that is very nice -- and valuable – it's a huge pot of resources basically for all of us working in the non profit world in Texas. And it doesn't matter if the non profit is focused locally or nationally – the program is still applicable to both. Every month I look forward to going to this program and every month I get so much out of it. I know it's a big chunk of time (a few people fly into Austin just for this class) – but really, really, when you're planning your professional development for the year, keep this program in mind. It's well worth every penny. And I'm done with my testimonial – which actually I'll send to them, now I understand the value of testimonials for a non profit!*

**Lisa McWilliams '10 – Executive Director, Mobile Film School**

*Every time we meet for class, I get reinvigorated by the information I learn and the passionate presenters. But just as inspiring are the amazing people in class with me. I am honored to be in such good company.*

**Amy Geltemeyer '09 – AISD Teacher**

*The Certificate experience gave me the knowledge and confidence I need to be a positive and ethically strong leader. The information I learned from both the presenters and my fellow classmates is something I will forever value.*

**Jake Gonzales '09 –**

*The Nonprofit Leadership and Management Institute (NLMI), sponsored by the Center for Community Based Nonprofit Organizations and the Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations, has been invaluable in providing the comprehensive training needed to operate as a key executive staff member of a nonprofit organization.*

*I've been to a lot of leadership development courses in my short career. Most of them focus on the repetitive and basic skills that I learned as a community organizer in college. Some have tried to create common frameworks for operational best practices in the nonprofit sector. Only NLMI has given me the practical tools I use every day in the pursuit of my organization's mission.*

*I remember being a child and knowing that when I grew up I wanted only one thing – the ability to go to bed every night knowing that I'd made the world a better place, even if it was for just one person. Working in the nonprofit sector allows me to make that kind of difference every day. But it's been the education and support provided by the NLMI program and staff that allows me to conduct my work in a more deliberate, thoughtful, and skilled manner.*

*I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to learn from NLMI and its training partners. They've helped me achieve my dream years before I thought I would!*

**Meg Goodman'09 – Executive Director, Multicultural Refugee Coalition**

*Enrolling in the Certificate program was the best decision I made when entering the non-profit field. It provided me with the foundation I needed as a new Executive Director and allowed me to explore the things that I would like to learn more as my organization grows. I enjoyed the networking and learning from the variety of students in the class as we were all at different stages in our non-profit careers. We continue to learn from and support one another after graduation and for this I am grateful, as well as to Barry and Candyss who continue also to guide and support. Highly recommended!*

**Maggie Miller '09 – Executive Director, Discover Hope**

*The Nonprofit Leadership Management Certificate was an amazing experience for me and has deepened my sense of functional knowledge and confidence about how to make things happen in the nonprofit field and within my own nonprofit. The comprehensive curriculum takes you on a tour of the competencies within the nonprofit field and gives you an absolutely extensive look at how all of the perspectives on nonprofit work function as a whole. As a young Executive Director who is building my nonprofit in its formative years, I walked away from this experience with incredible data and information about each facet of nonprofit work along with networking and sharing with colleagues about the practical application in our organizations. The curriculum is well thought out and challenging; the staff is approachable, absolutely knowledgeable, and willing to help beyond the borders of the classroom; the collegial experience with other nonprofit professionals from many different viewpoints is something that will feed me for the remainder of my professional life. If you are wondering if this is for you and want to be involved in the nonprofit field or have been for many years, this is an amazing starting point, refining point, and growing point for you as a nonprofit professional.*

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**Marisela Montoya '09 – Director of Education, Foundation Communities**

*I just wanted to let you both know that I recently received some exciting news. I received a promotion and will now be the Director of Education for Foundation Communities. We received a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center grant which I worked on earlier this year that allows for funding for several of our after school programs and gave my supervisor the opportunity to create this new position for me. I will now oversee all of our afterschool, summer youth, teen and Adult Basic Education programs, as well as the programs at our North Texas locations. WOW! Very exciting!*

*I wanted to thank you both, because I look back at the coursework from last year and I definitely feel that it was preparation for things to come. Thank you both for being so diligent to developing such a well- rounded course for us. I am sure I will need those giant binders for reference as things progress.*

**Juanita Budd '08 – Chief Operating Officer, Girl Scouts of Central Texas**

*Leading a Non- Profit agency comes with special challenges, such as limited resources and scare funding. TANO is a resource to help fill the gap that many non-profits face. One such resource is the Certificate of Non-Profit Leadership class. This class has been an amazing journey of knowledge. The class offered learning opportunities with experts in the field of Strategic Planning, Risk Management, Human Resource, Technology, Volunteer Leadership and more! The class is not only an extension of the resources provided by TANO and CCBNO, but it also creates an opportunity to view non-profit management as a viable profession. Providing a forum for learning, specifically designed to support non-profit management is long over due. The caliber of the course is equal to a master's degree level class.*

*If non-profit professionals want the same respect and creditability as other industries we must support the training and learning of our craft through the media of formalized education. It could take years to identify and network with all of the wonderful non-profit leaders that you will meet in the class. Monthly, we discuss issues specific to non-profit's and determine how to resolve through brain storming sessions, research and discussion. I am eternally grateful for this incredible opportunity! If non-profit leadership is your passion, you owe it to yourself and your agency to invest in your future today!*

**Gloria Cueva '08 – Executive Director, Literacy Williamson County**

*I have truly enjoyed the class structure and variety of topics. I've learned some important new information about nonprofit operations and am gaining new insight into board policymaking. The topics, which we have covered that I already have experience in or had taken professional development courses in was not boring. I'm sure you can relate to hearing something again that perhaps you'd forgotten to apply or just hadn't had the time to devote to it.*

*The center was generous and offered me a partial scholarship. I might not have been able to attend otherwise, but I do believe that the \$2,500 is worth every cent. You will get even more out of the class if you actively participate in discussions and the project group. I love that we always have the opportunity to ask questions and even problem solve issues that we are concerned about within our own organizations.*

*The class is challenging me to work on some of those areas that I know need fine tuning at my agency, but that I haven't felt prepared to address. It's also validating the expertise I do have and making me feel more secure about my role as director. In short, I highly recommend the class.*

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**Ann Dowdy '08**

*At the writing of this testimonial I am halfway through the class. It is an investment and commitment of time and money, but one that I think you will be pleased that you made. The class content and presenters have been outstanding. I especially like the additional reading materials and other resources we have received that relate to the session (i.e. additional hand-outs, web site sources and books). Even a seasoned professional will glean new information, ideas and trends from the presentations and class content.*

*The class participants are a real plus and you will learn a great deal from your interaction and class work with them. They will become friends, colleagues and great networking support for the future.*

*Don't miss out on this opportunity for a program that is tailored so specifically to our field of work. It is a rare find!*

**Ana Fernandez Frank '08**

*I have been a volunteer for a long time but only recently I finally decided to make a career change to the non profit sector. Looking for some continuing education to build upon my graduate studies in Public Policies I found this flexible yet rigorous, well rounded program. Having two consecutive intensive days a month makes it possible for me to participate even when living in Houston. The instructors are experts in their respective fields, we have access to a wide array of resources and my fellow classmates are as diverse and smart as one can hope!"*

**David Gaddy '08 – Executive Director, Imagine Art**

*I want to thank you for allowing me to be a part of the Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership and Management. The men and women that you have enlisted to come along side us as instructors have not only great information but come with the experience to back up what ever they are teaching on. As qualified as they are to teach I must point out I have never seen a higher percentage of people that feel so passionate about their area of expertise.*

*Thank you also for the printed resources that I will have to refer to after the class is done as well as the continued access to experts in the field outside of class time.*

*One unexpected benefit that I received just by being a part of the class is the chance to connect with 30 other professionals that work in the non-profit sector that are taking the class along side me. It is hard for me to imagine another setting where so many capable and passionate people are gathered together in one place for the purpose of making a difference in the world in which they live.*

**Michael Hurewitz '08 – Learning Service Coordinator, Round Rock ISD**

*Often in the hustle and bustle of life in a nonprofit organization, we don't find the time to learn and reflect. The Certificate program is a great opportunity to learn with other professionals who really understand life in a nonprofit organization.*

*So many of us choose to work for nonprofit organizations because of our dedication to their missions, not our experience running businesses. The Certificate program provides caring professionals with training in sound business practices that they can take back to their nonprofits and apply right away.*

*I've worked for various nonprofit organizations over the past twelve years, but I have never wanted a business degree. What I have learned has been picked up piece by piece along the way. The Certificate program has been a great opportunity for me to study, in a comprehensive way, many of the things that I never had the chance to learn on the job. It has also given me a much richer understanding of the work I have been doing all along. It is enlightening to see the big picture as taught by experts in the field. I have also been very impressed with the other class members, who bring with them a wealth of experience in a range of organizations. Learning from each other has been very helpful.*

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**Tassie Howell '08**

*The NLM Certificate class has brought tremendous growth to me. I have spent most of my career in “Corporate America” and never quite felt like it was the place for me, I was blessed about a year and a half ago to find a grassroots non-profit organization that I could volunteer at and then became an integral part of the very small staff. I really didn't know that much about how a non-profit should be run, no one in the organization really did. When I signed up for the NLM Certification class I wasn't really sure what to expect but hoped it would help the non-profit organization grow. However, the NLM Certification class has given me something that I didn't expect, it has taught me that the non-profit industry is where I truly belong and the education, materials and lectures that I have received have given me a solid foundation that I can take with me to be a leader in any non-profit organization that I am a part of; now or in the future.*

**John McNabb '08 –**

*As my daughter learned before me, and pointed me in the right direction, there's only one local place to go if you want to understand the nonprofit business – that's the Center for Community-Based & Nonprofit Organizations. And if you want to understand and succeed in the business by investing a small portion of your free time, I can think of no better opportunity than their Certificate in Leadership and Nonprofit Management Program. I'm half way through and it has already paid huge dividends to our small nonprofit business. And the added benefit is the exposure to area experts and the opportunity to meet and share with so many wonderful people also serving our community.*

**Cecile Shopen '08**

*The Nonprofit Leadership and Management program arms certificate holders with knowledge and understanding of critical issues and the resources to handle them. Speakers from around the state and outside Texas share their considerable expertise and materials. As importantly, the program--hosted by the Center for Community Based and Nonprofit Organizations and launched by the Texas Association of Nonprofits--fosters new relationships through small group exercises and projects; we will leave knowing others in the nonprofit community on whom we can rely for ideas and honest opinions.*