

Youth Leadership Development Series
A Partnership between Leadership Greater Hartford and
The American Place, Hartford Public Library

Goal: *For immigrant and refugee teens to become leaders in their schools and communities through interactive workshops and service learning activities that foster personal responsibility, social connection and civic engagement.*

Session I: Teambuilding (2 hours)

Most members of high-performing teams report that it is fun and satisfying to work on collaborative teams because they are asked to contribute at their highest potential and learn along the way. Session 1 will include icebreakers, games and activities for participants to step outside of their comfort zone and to build relationships with each other and with staff. Also discussed within the session will be the characteristics of high-performing teams and the concept of creating collaborative and participatory environments. Brainstorming of potential service projects will also occur so that staff can plan the upcoming service day.

Session II: Leadership 101 (2 hours)

This workshop lays the groundwork for participants to accurately measure their leadership skills and take action to improve their effectiveness as leaders. Various interactive exercises help participants apply these concepts and identify ways to grow beyond their current skill set and explore those practices they less frequently use. This model approaches leadership as a measurable, learnable, and teachable set of behaviors, because everyone can be a leader—whether in a designated leadership role or not. The session will also discuss the importance of understanding one’s own set of values and how to care for one another through leadership.

Session III: Decision Making & Problem Solving (2 hours)

Why is decision making important to leaders? What are some difficult decisions teens face every day? How best can young leaders solve the difficult issues they might face? What tools and models are out there to enhance the decision-making and problem solving process? Decisions made during the formative years of high school and college can have long-lasting benefits and consequences. Understanding “how” to make positive decisions is extremely important.

Session IV: Community Building (2 hours)

Understanding the history and make-up of the capital city is the first step to leading and loving the community. This series will utilize the resources of HPL and connect with the Hartford History Center for this session. In addition to understanding the history of a community, it is the civic responsibility for leaders to give back so it is important to identify personal power towards influencing positive change. What barriers are in place and how can we break them down?

Session V: Service Learning Project (3 hours)

Service learning is different from community service because it includes student leadership, reflective and academic components, and chances for celebration once the service activity has been successfully completed. Students will have reflected on the needs of the community, discussed ways to help, partnered with a nonprofit organization to implement, and once their service has been completed, they can internalize how their efforts have contributed to the specific area of need.

Session VI: Mindfulness (2 hours)

One in eight children in the U.S suffer from an anxiety disorder (National Institute of Health). Therefore, personal care, stress reduction, emotional regulation, compassion, and calming practices are essential. Cognitive outcomes of mindfulness can include attention focusing, self-control and overall wellbeing. Building a safe space and listening to what the gut, heart and mind feel and want is of the utmost importance. In addition, conversations around mental health awareness and eliminating stigma will occur.

Session VII: Communication Skills & Public Speaking (2 hours)

Learn the fine art of public speaking and leadership presence. This workshop will provide many useful tips on how to speak effectively in larger groups of people. Students will get the chance to practice these skills in fun, small group exercises as well as learn of other effective communication skills.

Session VIII: Diversity and Social Justice (2 hours)

What impact do race, gender, religion, appearance, and class have on others and us? Students will begin to use diversity as a tool to get things done. How do we find our “Common Ground”? How to discuss the issues on “isms” in a productive and healthy conversation? What part do we play? Can we start to change our thinking? Cross-cultural understanding and appreciation will be at the forefront of the conversation.

Session IX: Riverfront Adventure Program (3 hours)

In addition to celebrating the completion of the leadership series, students will have the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned by participating in a high challenge low ropes course. As stated by Riverfront Recapture, “The vertical realm of our low ropes course challenges preconceived notions of limitations, builds trust, and inspires commitment to completion.”

Please note: *This leadership series was specifically developed by Leadership Greater Hartford, Inc. for participants in the After School English Program at Hartford Public Library.*