

Nonprofit leaders 'graduate' with certificate

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Video - Non-Profit Leadership Initiative: <https://youtu.be/emD8DXxg2GE>



GRAND CHUTE - A group of 11 current or future nonprofit leaders "graduated" at Fox Valley Technical College with a certificate in nonprofit management Friday.

The graduates' certificate of completion capped a year-long journey for the inaugural class of the Nonprofit Leadership Institute, a program under the umbrella of the [Nonprofit Leadership Initiative](#), which is supported by the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, United Way Fox Cities, Community First Credit Union and the Thrivent Financial Foundation.

The aim of the Fox Valley Technical College-hosted class, leaders say, is to teach leadership skills and support nonprofit growth in the Fox Valley.

"This is something that's been needed for a long time," said Mitch Lautenslager, chair of the Management Development department at FVTC.

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For nine Thursday and Friday mornings, the small cohort met to learn about topics like leadership, board development, marketing, human resources, fund development and finances. The students were then sent home with an assignment, before they regrouped the next morning.

"We want to give them as many tools as possible to be successful in their jobs," Lautenslager said.

The intimate class size allows the students to learn about each other and their organizations, said Nancy Heykes, a coordinator and adjunct instructor at FVTC. She said the program boasts the rigor of a graduate program, but without the exams or expenses.

"It's an intense experience," she said.

One of the graduating cohort's students, Bee Yang, called the class "very, very helpful." The executive director of [Hmong American Partnership Fox Valley](#), Yang's new to the nonprofit community. He's served in his current position for about two years.

"We've learned a lot about ourselves and our leadership styles, how we can work better with other people in our organization and our board," he said.

Other graduates include Kelly Nutty of Riverview Gardens, Maren Peterson of NAMI Fox Valley and Jarrad Bittner of the Building For Kids Children's Museum.

The second cohort of 16 students will meet for the first time next week. Lautenslager said he anticipates the program will have a "tremendous impact" in the Fox Valley.

"It's an opportunity for executive directors to come in and find out that they're not alone in the work that they do and that there's support for them," he said.

Information about the Leadership Initiative and Institute can be found at <https://www.cffoxvalley.org/grants-scholarships/grants/nonprofit-leadership-initiative/>.

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