



OLDS AND DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE RECEIVES \$50,000. GRANT FROM WILD ROSE FOUNDATION

LEADERSHIP TRAINING CONTINUATION FOR OLDS AND AREA

Several years ago, the Olds and District Chamber of Commerce identified the need to foster social, cultural and economic development in our community. In 2000/2001 a Leadership Training Program aimed at developing and promoting personal and community leadership was offered by the Olds Chamber with the assistance of a grant from Wild Rose Foundation. The two year program focused on Personal and Team Leadership and Performance Leadership for adults and youth.

Approximately 30 adults and youth attended the program. The participants gained increased self knowledge, awareness of themselves in a group, better communication and networking skills not only within groups but within other communities. The outcome of this leadership training resulted in significant personal change and growth for participants. Most participants have had the opportunity to pass on leadership training information to other people and groups. The Chamber considered the program very successful and worthwhile.

The Olds Chamber has recently formed a partnership with a number of organizations in the community in the pursuit of once again offering Leadership Training to adults and youth in Olds and surrounding communities. The partners include the Olds Chamber, Olds Jr/Sr High School, The Blooming Lodge, Olds Neighbourhood Place, CAREERS ... The Next Generation and Olds College. The Rotary Club of Olds has expressed interest in working with us on this project. The Olds and District Chamber of Commerce received a grant of \$50,000.00 for this second two year program from Wild Rose Foundation and this grant will partially fund facilitation and administration costs of the program.

At a recent workshop, representatives from the partners had a brainstorming session to determine the course content, timelines, etc. for the second two year program. Senior high school students were invited and asked for their input for the youth program and to provide information on Youth Conferences held throughout Canada. The Olds Chamber will be offering support to the Provincial Youth Conference which Olds will be hosting in 2005. 600 - 800 student delegates will be in Olds to attend this conference in May 2005. Ife Abiola (co-president of the OHS Student Council) says ***"I strongly believe the world is in desperate need of leaders right now. Involvement in student council and other leadership activities doesn't just help you in school, but in other aspects of everyday life. That's one thing I greatly respect about the program.*** Jordi Roelfsema, OHS Student, says ***"I am very excited about helping to organize the provincial student leadership conference here in Olds. It's going to be an awesome experience!"*** Sandra Dorowicz, Educator for OHS, believes that ***"We must always keep in mind that today's youth are tomorrow's leaders, the power at all levels of society. The more opportunities we can provide for young people to develop their personal styles of leadership and to demonstrate their energy, creativity, enthusiasm and willingness to get involved and make a difference, the more we all benefit!"***

The Olds Chamber is very excited about working with the partners as we determine what the program will look like for adults and youth of Olds and Community. We have some very good people sitting around the table working on the course content and scheduling for the two year program. Not only adults and youth taking this program, but employers and communities as a whole will benefit a great deal from this endeavour. ***Andrew McManus, President of the Olds and District Chamber of Commerce indicates "Everything about business comes down to the employees that work for it.....A well trained leader can provide the skills and training to ensure that these employees are working effectively."***

Adult leadership training for Olds and surrounding communities will result in skills being passed back into the community - longevity - a return investment to the community, the empowering of individuals while youth leadership training would mean skills learned resulting in a contribution to society as a whole (globally) - youth taking their learned skills with them as they move on. ***"Giving youth an early start on developing their leadership skills through applied learning is one of the best learning model's I know of."*** states Mel Giles, CAREERS ... The Next Generation Foundation. A WIN - WIN situation for everyone!