

## **Dana Mann**

When I first heard about the Emerging Leader Institute, I was interested but I felt that this opportunity was not for me. After all, I wasn't involved with any group or organizations here at UK, I basically attended class and that was it. When a second opportunity came about for me to apply again for this class, I decided to give it a try. Little did I know that decision I made would have such a huge impact on my life. Trying to pick one specific activity that I experienced with the ELI that stood out the most to me is pretty hard. Everything that we did forced me to rethink my ideas and outlook on life. I know that seems pretty cheesy but it really did. If I had to pick my favorite activity that we did it would have to be our group service project. All the anticipation leading up to the project, all the fun while doing the project and all the memories I have walked away with after the project made it my favorite experience. Spending hours with my fellow peers helping other people was such a great bonding experience. We shared laughs and stories that will remain with me forever.

I would also have to say that my individual project was another one of my experiences with ELI that stands out to me the most. Maybe I didn't change the world but I put stepped out of my box and helped to put a smile on a child's face. Volunteering at the Family Care Center and doing craft projects with some of the children there made a world of difference in my life. Helping kids wasn't my passion, nor was it my mission in life but it was something that I had no experience with and that I felt would further help form me into a leader by stepping beyond my comfort level and reaching out to someone that, without this class, I never would have. Since volunteering and doing craft projects

with the children, I have made several little friends that I enjoy visiting with and that I look forward to staying in touch with in the future.

My favorite facilitator that we had during my entire Emerging Leader Institute experience without a doubt, would be Mr. Raymond F. Betts. He is the most intelligent interesting man I have ever met. Everything he said made me think and laugh. His excitement about leadership potential along with his vast assortment of facts made my experience with him very enjoyable. He planted the ideas and thoughts into my head that will stick with me and help me to further grow into a better person and a great leader.

*"Great leaders excite great controversies. They acquire strong friends and bitter enemies. It should be no surprise that different people see the same leader in different ways, or that judgments conflict, or that judgments change."*

This excerpt is from an excerpt from a book called In the Arena. Mr. Betts' highlighted many other excerpts from this book but this one stuck out the most to me. I cannot begin to express the impact that this one person has had on my life but he definitely managed to leave a lasting impression that will stay with me throughout my entire life and hopefully show through in my leadership now and in the future. We had many great facilitators with many great stories, information and facts. Each and every one of them left at least one thing that I will always remember and for that alone makes me thankful that I had the opportunity to participate in ELI.

My experience with the Emerging Leader Institute has given me the tools and ideas I needed to help enhance the leader in me. My experience with the Emerging Leader Institute has helped to mold my college (and life) experience into something more positive and meaningful.

I plan to use the skills I gained in ELI throughout the rest of my life. My experience with ELI has enhanced my present leadership skills as well as brought about new leadership skills that will ensure that I will be a great leader now and in the future. The various relationships that I have found because of my participation in ELI hopefully will stay with me forever. Getting to know my classmates on an individual level, we learned how to have trust and support each other. This trust and support has now grown into some solid relationships with people that never would have happened if I had not participated in ELI. The thing I wanted to learn most from this class is how to bring out the leader that I feel has been inside me all along and now after a semester of growing, I have succeeded in doing so.

Now that this class is coming to a close, I feel a totally different feeling emerging from me, I feel empowered to change the things around me that I don't like, no matter the size, and really make a difference. This class has helped me to recognize my potential as a leader and I know it will do the same for anyone who becomes involved in this class.