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When I got my ELI application in the mail, I was skeptical about sending it in. However, the more I thought about applying, the more I realized I had nothing to lose. I am not a person who likes change and did not want to return the application. I quickly changed my mind about that as soon as I talked to one of my very good friends, who had participated in ELI the semester before. Upon entering orientation, I came in with a narrow mind. I had participated in many leadership positions in high school and thought I knew what a leader was, however, I was proven wrong the very first day. The Emerging Leader Institute was not anything I had expected as I was filling out my application, but I did discover how much it impacted my life after each session ended.

The one activity that specifically stood out while in ELI was the Program Planning session. This session was of importance because we had to choose our group project and decide how to go about planning it. The facilitator came into class that day and expected the class to already have come up with ideas for the project. However, there was a miscommunication and the session turned into a disaster. I did not realize this but we had to utilize many leadership skills we had learned in the preceding sessions. At the end of the session we decided to discuss our project further in depth. Our class came to a consensus that we wanted to make an impact on the people when we left. The fall 2001 class of ELI wanted to leave its mark. At the conclusion of our brainstorming session, we decided to volunteer at the Salvation Army. Our class wanted a hands-on activity as well as an impacting result from our experience. Once we arrived at the Salvation Army, I was very unsure as to whether our service would reach the goals we had set. After we left I

believe everyone in ELI was touched by some part of the experience and felt very satisfied with the choice in which we had made.

I have never been so grateful for experiencing the Emerging Leader Institute. I never really realized how many characteristics a leader does have. I also realized that anyone can become a leader and they do not have to be the stereotypical leader everyone may think of. I stepped into a new world after finishing ELI. I have learned more about myself during the past 12 weeks than any other class at UK and will never forget the lessons that were shared between myself as well as my classmates.

My Personal Project

As I came into ELI I knew everyone must come up with a personal project of their own. I thought about my project the whole summer and still was not sure what I was going to do. One of my major weaknesses is decisiveness. That is something I absolutely try to avoid. So to start off, I had to face one of my weaknesses. I began to think of a place in which I had never heard much of being as I am from Lexington and have volunteered at such places as: Salvation Army, God's Pantry, Hope Center, and Shriners Hospital. I wanted to experience something different. I went to my mom for help and she gave me the name of the Florence Crittenton Home. This home is a place where young single women who are pregnant are able to stay and be taken care of. I thought this was a perfect idea to help girls that were my age and help them to deal with many struggles in which they may encounter.

To see if I was able to go and volunteer at the Florence Crittenton Home, I called the coordinator of volunteers, however, to my dismay she had laryngitis and was unable

to speak to me. I was told to call back in a few days. A few days had passed and I called back. This time I was told that they had enough volunteers. I had to think fast as of what I could do. So I asked them if there was anything in which they needed and their reply was that they were always in need of supplies. I had finally come to a decision as to what my project was going to be, a supply drive for the Florence Crittenton Home.

My next act of duty was to decide whom will I contact to help with the drive. One immediate group came to my head, my sorority. I also thought of the Henry Clay High School Anchor Club, which is a community service club for girls. I had been a part of this club in high school and I figured it would be a great opportunity to publicize ELI to incoming college freshman as well. The response for my supply drive was overwhelming. Even though I did not get to mentor, I believe my donations will also make an immense impact on the girls at the Florence Crittenton Home.

Throughout this personal project I discovered my strengths and weaknesses as a leader. I am not a very aggressive person and I had to learn how to be assertive when talking to the FCH. When I would not receive phone calls, I had to keep calling back to let them know I was still interested. I also learn how to manage my time wisely. I tend to procrastinate and I did not allow myself to during this process. ELI definitely helped to sit back and look at the broad perspective of things and to use attributes that I was unaware I had.