

Leah Huth
ELI Final Summary Paper

Being accepted into the Emerging Leader Institute is a definite accomplishment. All that are accepted have proven the importance of leadership in their lives, and have also proven their own leadership skills in the past. When we all first met, I had mixed feelings about how beneficial to my leadership skills this class would be. Through the great speakers and group talks with my fellow ELI members I learned a lot about the various characteristics needed as a leader. To me, personally, the Emerging Leader Institute has not only helped me to become a better leader, but it has also helped me to try new things, meet new people, and face new tasks. Overall, ELI has been an extremely beneficial class for me now, and also in the future.

The many group activities in ELI brought our class together, helping us to work better as a team, while teaching us how to become better individual leaders. This is the one class that I can truly say that I know everyone and enjoy working with each and every one of them. Despite the fact that I loved working with the class as a whole, the one group activity that stood out the most to me was the weekly mentor group meetings. Even though in the class discussions we had a chance to build our group as a whole, the mentoring groups truly helped me the most with my individual service project among many other things.

Each week we discussed something different in the “red” group, and each time all five of us became closer. As time went on, we were more open with each other and more willing to help out with each other’s tasks involved in the individual projects. Also, from our mentor group I learned that it is okay to ask for help. Personally, going into my individual project I was hesitant to ask for help. However, as time went on, I realized that we were all there to help each other. We would give each other ideas or contacts and even volunteer to help out with each other’s service project, which proved to help enormously in the end.

The one assignment that we were given in our mentor group was to write a journal each week. At first I did not see the point in keeping a journal, but after a few weeks, I started to realize that it really helps you to know yourself better. We could write about whatever we wanted; what was going on in our life, the war, the economy, anything. This was really one of the best things that we did in our mentor groups. Looking back on past journal entries, I realize the difficulties that I was faced with such as schoolwork, money shortages, work, stress, and family problems. Reading those journal entries helped me to realize that I can get through it, even when the times get tough.

During the process of my individual service project, the times definitely got tough. My plan was to organize an informative speech for students regarding the effects of smoking. However, one of my biggest fears is public speaking, so I was planning on having a healthcare specialist come in and speak on the topic. One quote that I try to live by is, “the biggest risk in life is not taking one at all” (unknown). Keeping that in mind, I decided to face my fear of public speaking and give the speech myself.

Being in ELI has helped me to gain confidence in myself. My mentor group is extremely supportive, and everyone in the class as a whole has been very encouraging. Normally I get extremely nervous at the thought of giving a presentation, especially by myself, in front of an audience. However, looking out at everyone in my ELI class I could see interested, smiling faces that helped me to go on and finish successfully. I think that for the first time in my life I can say that I gave a good presentation and was not nervous about doing so at all.

Public speaking is a huge part in all of our lives, and at one point or another, we will all have to do it. As emerging leaders, I believe that good speaking skills are an important aspect in the leadership of others. I can proudly say that I took the risk and based my individual service

project on my biggest fear; public speaking. Without the Emerging Leader Institute, I would not have been as successful in completing this task. As a business major, I know that I will be faced with the opportunity to give more speeches, and having conquered this fear of mine, I can now say that I am ready for the working world, and eager to take on more challenging tasks throughout my life.