

2020 Leadership Academy Finishes Year as the Elite COVID Cohort

On December 16, 2020 by Barbara Landeen

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other,” said the late President John F. Kennedy. We are proud to announce the 2020 Leadership Academy cohort has completed their program year in the most remarkable of circumstances. In a year like none other, this year’s class of 26 fellows gathered entirely in the virtual world for personal and professional leadership development, concluding with last week’s session on Transformational Leadership.

The 2020 class began in May with our first Zoom session studying Authentic Leadership, learning about our personal leadership style, our strengths and natural talents. We welcomed guest leader Gayle Kvenvold, LeadingAge Minnesota President & CEO, and believed we would almost certainly gather in person for the August session. These aspirations quickly faded, and the cohort pressed on, determined to learn and engage fully despite never meeting in person.

As the year progressed, the leaders learned about emotional intelligence, rethinking the ways in which we approach our work, inspiring and motivating others, and applying key leadership concepts to an individual Action Learning Project. Studying Sir Ernest Shackleton’s epic Antarctic adventure, we were inspired by his bold vision, compassionate leadership and unyielding courage in the face of tremendous challenges and setbacks. “Another Shackleton moment” became a familiar mantra as we shared our experiences as the COVID pandemic continued on. Leadership Academy became a welcome respite for many – a space and time to pivot from the intense pressure of our regular work to pause, reflect and focus on our professional development.

“The past year of Leadership Academy has meant so much to me, mostly because I simply cannot imagine having gone through the past year without it,” commented one graduating fellow. “With our entire year of Leadership Academy being during a global pandemic, this has been a lifeline that I’m not sure I could have survived the year without. I feel like I have a new family and we can say that we were the COVID class and that WE DID IT TOGETHER.”

Heartfelt Congratulations to the Leadership Academy Class of 2020. [Click here](#) for the list of graduates, who will be formally recognized at the 2021 Institute & Expo, May 19-21. Many thanks to our Coaching Team for guiding our leaders through their journey. We gratefully acknowledge and thank 2020 program sponsors [Healthcare Services Group](#) and [Ziegler](#). Plans are underway for the 2021 Leadership Academy. Watch this space for announcements of dates and application process.