



Statewide convening to recast RI

Alumni, others invited to free daylong event on Oct. 24 at Rhodes

By Jane Nugent '95

ReCasting Rhode Island is this year's program theme, and Leadership Rhode Island alumni are invited to join the cast as principal actors in staging a Rhode Island resurgence.

You have already auditioned by going through the Core Program; your roles have been cast; and the scripts are ready.

Leadership in Action teams from the current class, the Lambda IIs, have begun the process of recruiting you to act on Rhode Island's behalf. They have sought you out, where you live in Rhode Island. They have asked you to join them in identifying what's good, what's awesome, what can be celebrated in every city and town in the state.

Many of you have joined the Lambda IIs in these local discussion groups, have pledged additional support, and will be asked to stay with this effort as it builds toward a concluding Community Convening to be followed by celebration of LRI's 35th anniversary – The Greatest Lil State on Earth – on Oct. 24 at an iconic Rhode Island landmark, Rhodes on the Pawtuxet.

The "road to Rhodes" has been paved with 33 community discus-



Lambda II's Lucy Rose, Vice President of Human Resources for East Bay Community Action Program, and Ting Barnard, Chief Relationship Officer for Jai Communications Group, participate in a listening session in Providence.

sions, in which alumni and other residents have offered their insights on what to celebrate about where they live.

From these local meetings, the Lambda IIs will create a facilitated, daylong, free of charge, Community Convening to celebrate the best practices from around the state; offer ways to share findings across communities; help create connections; learn what works and identify projects for future action.

From her book "Turning to One Another," **Margaret Wheatley** of-

fers several principles central to this project:

- There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about.
- Ask "What's possible?" not "What's wrong?"
- Notice what you care about. Assume that many others share your dreams.

LRI's StrengthsFinder initiative, another key element of the three-year Make Rhode Island Stronger campaign, will play a role in the Commu-

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LRI's Top Five Strengths

I have been a participant in plenty of strategic planning sessions over the years, but the one the LRI Board of Governors held last month was remarkably different. Rather than perform the usual Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat (S.W.O.T.) analysis, we decided to take a page from LRI's Strengths initiatives and focus solely on our strengths.

The thinking was this: If we want to make LRI stronger, we need to develop our top five strengths. First, we needed to identify them. Armed with post-it notes, board members jotted down words and phrases to represent what they consider LRI's five strengths. Then, we each stuck our ideas on the wall, grouping similar notions together. About 20 different strengths emerged. I was impressed.

The categories with the most post-its were declared our Top Five Strengths. They were the Core Program, the organization's Statewide Impact, its Leadership in Action Projects, its Neutrality/Objectivity, and its Alumni.

It was a beautiful Friday afternoon in May. We were done by 3 p.m. Not bad. But wait. The real work was yet to come.

Knowing that we could not create tactics to make LRI stronger on-the-spot, we instead used the rest of the retreat to develop open-ended questions around each strength. It's difficult to look in the mirror and ask the really hard question. Maybe it's something you do not know the answer to, or a question you need help from others to answer. Maybe it's a question for which you don't want the answer.

We did it. We came up with a pool of 27 provocative questions. A sampling: How can we increase visibility of our statewide impact? How do we capitalize on our credibility without compromising our credibility? What does it mean to be an engaged alum and how do we inspire that engagement?

Executive Director **Mike Ritz** will dip into the pool and pick a relevant question for the board to weigh at the start of each monthly meeting. We will be challenged to keep strong.

— **Steve Duvel '12**



Two new members joined LRI's Board of Governors for the annual retreat at Amica. Angella Franklin is Strategic Account Director with CVS/Caremark. Angela Ankoma is Chief of Minority Health at the Department of Health. After the retreat, board members paused for a photo. Front row, from left: Scott DiChristofero '00, immediate past chair; Ted Shallcross '11, treasurer; Mike Ritz '07, executive director; Pam Alarie '05, chair; Paul Oliveira '07, vice chair. Back row, from left: Christopher Feisthamel '01; Mitchell Edwards '11; Angella Franklin '13; Angela Ankoma '14; Mario Hilario '05; Steve Duvel '12; Baldev Seekri; Sulina Mohanty CLRI '05; Bob Ferreira '11; Alec Beckett '11; and Nicole Benjamin '13.

Q&A with 'Vanishing Neighbor' author

Marc Dunkelman, author of *"The Vanishing Neighbor"* and research fellow at Brown University, spoke during the first Lambda II program day. His book expands on Robert Putnam's position that Americans are losing their sense of "township," where people of different interests, values and perspectives once worked together for the greater good.

Why did you write "The Vanishing Neighbor"?

While living and working in Washington, D.C., it dawned on me that the litany of explanations for why Washington is broken – gerrymandering, filibustering, lobbying, etc. – didn't really hold water for one simple reason: They all existed before D.C. became so dysfunctional. Something else had to have changed, and I

wanted to figure out what. A trip to Cincinnati, my father's hometown, reminded me that he'd grown up amid a much more vibrant social fabric. He knew his neighbors. His parents were involved more deeply in civic institutions. I began to wonder whether there was a connection. What I found after years of research is that the routines of our everyday lives – how we invest our time and attention – is the most important factor affecting political dysfunction. We're having fewer interactions with people outside the sphere of our own experience. I've subsequently come to understand it's having an effect on a whole variety of other issues, like the decline of American entrepreneurialism.

Did the book have anything to do with your moving to Rhode Island?

My wife and I moved our family here because we wanted a place where the sorts of connections that have been lost more broadly remained in fuller effect. We've found that to be true. We know our neighbors. We've been welcomed into a whole variety of local institutions. We're meeting types of people who we likely never would have stumbled upon elsewhere. We think that's a real asset, not only for our children, who will be exposed to much more diversity, but also because good ideas aren't bolts of light-



Author Mark Dunkelman addresses the Lambda II class.

ning. They emerge because people with different points of view are put in close proximity. Innovation emerges when concepts from one field are applied to another. I think that's more likely to happen in a place like Rhode Island than one where individuals are cloistered among like-minded friends, peers and colleagues.

Why did you get involved with Leadership Rhode Island?

The folks at LRI stumbled upon my book and realized that I was speaking to a subject that's at the core of the program's curriculum. The hope at LRI is that Rhode Islanders from entirely different pockets of the community will really get to know each other while exploring a variety of important issues. The Core Program is designed so that participants share their experiences and lend their expertise to people they might not otherwise know. The central insight of my book is that American exceptionalism is born from those sorts of interactions. And to the degree they happen less organically today because we're wrapped up in other sorts of relationships, LRI is doing God's work by bringing people together.

Given your research for the book and your experience with the Clinton Foundation, what are LRI's areas of opportunity?

Innovation, mutual understanding, and problem solving aren't formulaic. They all emerge from a Petri dish of community where people are having substantive interactions that allow ideas to seep into places we can't predict. The real value of LRI is that it's a forum for people to break out of their own bubbles.

So, how might the LRI of the future encourage more idea-provoking interactions?

The hope needs to be that the sort of familiarity that exists between members of a given class extends to other alumni and then to people who aren't LRI graduates.

What else do you think LRI's alumni should know?

What's remarkable to me is that the folks who live here don't give the place the credit it deserves. Kathryn and I chose to live here simply because we thought it was a terrific place to call home. Are there drawbacks? Sure. But compared to what? We've got world-class institutions, beautiful homes, affordable prices, access to the ocean, terrific proximity to New York and Boston, great restaurants. The list goes on and on. There's no denying that the economy has been more dynamic in other places for a whole variety of reasons, but the foundation for growth here is strong. Maybe in a few years I'll understand what everyone's complaining about. But after 18 months, I'm just grateful we were able to make the jump.

CLRI Fellows program aims to keep young leaders in RI

By Matt Coupe CLRI '12

As a participant in College Leadership Rhode Island's new Fellows program, **Heather Hermanowski** got a chance to shadow **Rose Amoros '09**, Chief Public Affairs Officer at the state Department of Transportation.

The experience opened Heather's eyes to the possibility of working in the public or nonprofit sectors, the new graduate of the University of Rhode Island says. Until the shadowing experience, Heather, who majored in public relations, only envisioned herself in the corporate world.

For **Kelsey Arpin**, who is studying Healthcare Administration at Rhode Island College, shadowing **Sandra Coletta '93**, Chief Operating Officer at Care New England, had a surprising outcome. She was offered an internship.

Heather, Kelsey and seven other CLRI '14 students took part in the new Fellows program during the spring semester. The brainchild of **Jillian Stone**, CLRI '10 and former LRI staff member, the Fellows program is an enhancement to the fall semester's CLRI program. Of the 33 in CLRI '14, more than a dozen applied and nine were selected.

The other Fellows were **Gladys Alvarez Mendez** and **Toby Riseborough**, Rhode Island College; **Courtney Butler** and **Elena Melekos**, Johnson & Wales University; **Lauran Fiske** and **Emily Pietrzak**, University of Rhode Island, and **Rachel Wilkinson**, Community College of Rhode Island.

Other executives who were shadowed included **Karen Bordeleau**, Executive Editor of The Providence Journal; **David Casey**, Vice President of Workforce Strategies and Chief Diversity Officer at CVS Health; **Robert DiMucio '01**, CEO of Amica Mutual Insurance; **Connie Howes**, Executive Vice President of Women's Health at Care New England; and **Cheryl Merchant**, CEO of Hope Global.

The Fellows gained insight into nonprofit management by serving as non-voting members on agency governing boards and working with executive directors. Participants were the Center for Dynamic Learning, the Central Falls Housing Authority, Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island, Girls on the Run and the Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

It was "an opportunity to encourage their involvement in the community as they embark on their careers, and the nonprofit sector could benefit tremendously from engaged young professionals," says **Deborah DeBare '95**, executive director of the domestic violence agency.

Emily Pietrzak, a URI engineering graduate, says The



Through the CLRI Fellows program, recent URI graduate Emily Pietrzak had the chance to shadow Providence Journal Executive Editor Karen Bordeleau.

Center for Dynamic Learning was "a perfect match" because it's a STEAMM (science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics, manufacturing) organization.

"I've chosen to stay involved . . . and will even be joining a committee," she says.

For government, the third prong of the Fellows program, the Fellows got an up-close look at the General Assembly, observing a legislative session in both the House and Senate. The experience was led by **John Marion '11**, Executive Director at Common Cause Rhode Island, who contextualized the role of the legislative branch and provided the history and background of Rhode Island's state government.

Fellows were greeted on the House floor by Rep. **Stephen Ucci**, member of the Lambda II class, and formally recognized on the Senate floor by Minority Leader Sen. **Dennis Algiere '97**, who said, "Keeping young leaders engaged and interested in the important issues being debated here is essential to keeping them in Rhode Island."

The goal of the Fellows program is not only to encourage talented students to remain in Rhode Island, but to help them begin to form the relationships and networks that are oftentimes the launching pad to new opportunities.

The pilot year was made possible with the generous support of the Rhode Island Commodores. If you or your organization would like to support the 2016 Fellows, please contact Leadership Rhode Island at 401-273-1574 or online at office@leadershipri.org.

Lambda IIs on the move



Clockwise, from bottom picture:
 1. Steven Kitchin, Vice President for Corporate Education and Training at New England Institute of Technology, addresses the class on Economic Development Day.
 2. Led by the Lambda IIs, Cranston residents identify their city's best practices during a ReCasting Rhode Island Community Forum at Brutopia.
 3. Classmates gather for a group shot on Government Day.
 4. Lt. Gov. Dan McKee, Ken Block '12, Shawn Selleck, Nicole Pollock and Mayor Allan Fung '01 offered their thoughts on Innovation and Efficiencies at the municipal level during Government Day.

Job-seekers to participate in StrengthsFinder pilot

Leadership Rhode Island, which has spent the last year introducing strengths-based management techniques to leaders in local businesses and nonprofit organizations, is reaching out to a new type of clientele, the state's unemployed.

The basic premise is that unemployed individuals who know their strengths will approach a job search with more confidence and are more likely to seek employment that lines up with their strengths.

A small pilot program with the state Department of Labor and Training begins this month. LRI, working through NetworkRI, the department's one-stop career centers, will administer the StrengthsFinder test, developed by Gallup, to 50 unemployed individuals.

After discovering their top five strengths – Gallup calls them naturally recurring talents – the job-seekers will learn how to leverage these talents in a job search and how to make use of them when considering a new field of work.

"There's early proof in Texas that strengths training helps the unemployed. They're using it for prisoner re-entry into the workforce, but it's really still a new idea and we're pleased to lead this pilot in Rhode Island," says **Mike Ritz** '07, Executive Director of LRI.

The first ten individuals to choose the LRI strengths class include people who have worked as an executive assistant, a program organizer, a human resources reports coordinator, a jewelry designer, teacher, salesperson, project manager and operations manager.

"StrengthsFinder is such a refreshing change in focus for how people are viewed and evaluated generally in the corporate world," remarks **Phil Albert**, an LRI coach who will lead the workshops for the unemployed.

The most common evaluation approach is to recommend that people spend their time working on improving things that are not their natural talents, says Albert. "StrengthsFinder has the opposite focus. It identifies what people are good at and suggests working on those things to get even better . . ."



Brigadier General Marcus Jannitto '97 brings StrengthsFinder to the 158th Fighter Wing in Vermont. One of LRI's Strengths coaches, he believes emphasizing strengths is effective in many areas.

Albert, who has more than 40 years of human resources experience and is the current volunteer Vice Chairman in Rhode Island with the Employer Support of the Guard & Reserve, says he is enthusiastic about working with the state's jobless. The workshop, he says, "will begin the process of understanding how uniquely talented they are."

He is one of the eight men and women LRI has trained to fulfill the role of strengths coach for LRI's multi-faceted Make Rhode Island Stronger campaign. Launched in March 2014, the multi-year initiative will help thousands of Rhode Islanders discover their innate talents and show them how to develop and use these strengths in the workplace and in their lives.

The strengths initiative was developed in

response to a Gallup survey in 2013 which found that Rhode Island has the most actively disengaged workforce in the country and also to combat the negative attitudes so pervasive in Rhode Island.

One of LRI's first clients, Gilbane Building Co., experienced a 7-point increase in workforce engagement after six months of StrengthsFinder training, according to the annual Best Places to Work survey by Forbes.

"Through the coaching of LRI and StrengthsFinder, I learned that I (and others around me) should focus on natural leadership talents. My own talents, complemented with the strengths of my team members, enables success and overall well-being," observes **Steve Duvel**, '12, Vice President, RI District Operations Manager, at Gilbane.

Karen King '13, who has held various management positions at DiPrete Engineering, says she jumped at the chance to get strengths coach training.

"From an HR perspective I can see where Strengths can create a more engaged workforce and improve well-being," King says.

Emphasizing strengths is effective in many areas, says Brigadier General **Marcus Jannitto** '97, who coaches high school volleyball.

In practice, some coaches work on their team's weaknesses and mistakes in prior games, he says. "The better coaches out there work hard to develop their players' strengths."

Other LRI alums who are now coaches include **Michael Coelho**, '13, Director of Teen Programs for the Boys & Girls Club of Pawtucket; **Susan Daly** '13, who led the first year of the strengths initiative for LRI, and **Claudia Cardozo**, '11, who has spent years helping small business owners start and grow their business ventures.

In addition to Albert, two other non-alums, **Emily Flower**, Program Manager for Generation Citizen Rhode Island and **Robert Vincent** of the Center for Student Leadership Development at URI, stepped up for training as strengths coaches.

"Helping others realize their strengths and putting them into action has the potential to enhance the well-being of the whole State of Rhode Island," says Vincent.

Responsible for the LRI coaches and LRI's strengths initiative is **Kevin Cooper**, who worked on the effort as an intern last summer and is returning to the LRI staff as Strengths Expeditor.

Kevin came to the United States from Ireland to attend Brown University as an undergraduate and Providence College for an MBA. His ability to run a sub 4-minute mile earned him substantial financial support from both institutions.

"Kevin has a proven track record of success rooted in focus, discipline, integrity, and nearly flawless execution. He's going to do very well here," Ritz says.

Meet the Strengths coaches



Phil Albert



Claudia Cardozo '11



Michael Coelho '13



Susan Daly '13



Emily Flower



Marcus Jannitto '97



Karen King '13



Robert Vincent

Interested in knowing your top five strengths or in becoming a strengths-based organization?
Email office@leadershipri.org or call 401-273-1574.

Discover your strengths, RI's assets

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nity Convening. Participants will be offered the opportunity to discover their top five strengths. By identifying the inherent talents of the individuals attending the event, coupled with showcasing their productive efforts, LRI will create an asset map of Rhode Island like no other.

Alumni are the key to this entire effort. Mobilizing our alumni at the “hyper-local” level has given the Lambda IIs the necessary boost to move their project into high gear. Many of you have told us how much you have enjoyed the process, especially how much you’ve enjoyed meeting other alumni from your region.

Last year, when asked what LRI could do for alumni and what alums could do for one another, close to 200 graduates, representing every class, responded. As a group, alumni said they want more programming, they want to help Rhode Island, and they are willing to help one another.

This is LRI’s alumni engagement effort for 2015; this is our response to your urging LRI to call you to action.

For the Lambda IIs to be successful, they need you to remain involved. You represent a talent base like no other in Rhode Island, have networks, contacts, experience and skills that they need to bring ReCasting Rhode Island to fruition.



Alumni and local residents of Providence’s North End and East Side participate in a community listening session at the offices of Jai Communications.

We believe that Rhode Island is a great state and LRI’s alumni make it even greater. We believe that mining locales for what’s working well, who are its champions, how do they do it, why do they do it, what has it produced, how has it made a community better – all of this is worth celebrating.

Working together, LRI’s human

capital is formidable. Stay with us, join with us, as this year’s class works to make Rhode Island better. Help the Lambda IIs, help LRI, help the state, help your city or town to be recognized.

Take on a role in ReCasting Rhode Island. Get on the “road to Rhodes” with us and the Lambda IIs. The curtain goes up Oct. 24.

Guiding principles from Wheatley’s ‘Turning to One Another’

Margaret Wheatley, author, teacher and organizational consultant, believes that all change, even big and powerful change, begins when a few people start talking to one another about something they care about.

- Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters.
- Talk to people you know.
- Talk to people you don’t know.
- Talk to people you never talk to.
- Be intrigued by the differences you hear.

- Value curiosity more than certainty.
- Invite in everyone who cares to work on what’s possible.
- Everyone is an expert on something.
- Trust that meaningful conversations can change your world.
- Know that creative solutions come from new connections.
- Real listening always brings people closer together.
- Expect to be surprised.
- Stay together.

Lambda II teams combing the state for best local practices, unsung heroes

What do a youth sports organization in Cranston, a beautification project in Barrington and an oyster farm in Matunuck have in common?

They are among the dozens of local initiatives Lambda II teams have discovered as they combed the state in search of awesome activities and projects, large and small, that may be worth replicating elsewhere.

The 11 teams are not only finding impressive local programs, they are looking for the local residents who inspired them, grew them and now keep them going.

Taking a page from Sherlock Holmes, the Lambda IIs are digging deep to find the “secret sauce” that makes these programs tick.

At a meeting in mid-May, representatives of each team took a few minutes to share some of the innovative practices identified during local discussion sessions with LRI alumni and others.

Flower Power is “one of the things that connects a lot of people in Barrington,” said **Leo Phenix**, Senior Director/ CVS Health, who is on the Lambda II team assigned to Barrington and Warren. Flower Power brightens the day for shoppers and business owners with gorgeous, hanging plants in the town’s shopping district.

Laymen in North Kingstown Schools (LINKS) is also an organization that involves the community, noted **Brendan Ennis**, a project engineer at Gilbane, who is a member of the team covering 6 towns in the state’s mid-section. LINKS organizes volunteers for differ-



Lambda II Leeds Mitchell IV discusses the strengths and assets of Warren and Barrington, such as Flower Power, which hangs plants in Barrington’s shopping districts and was cited for connecting people in the town.

ent activities, such as themed career nights for high school students.

Miki Lombardi, retired probation and parole supervisor and member of the team assigned to the northwest corner of the state, described one intriguing aspect of the popular Scituate Art Festival: it is a fundraising bonanza for many of the town’s nonprofit organizations. Festival planners ban outside vendors, saving the operation of refreshment stands for local groups.

The list of ideas and successful activities will be narrowed down to the top five-to-ten initiatives in each of the 11 regions. To assist in prioritizing, the teams are unveiling their findings at public forums throughout the state at which they are seeking guidance from residents.

“I was extremely impressed and gratified by the enthusiasm and excitement of the young (to me) members of

the team and their thoughtful analysis of the socio-economic factors that make a good neighborhood,” **Kerry Kohring**, a resident of Providence’s East Side, noted after attending a forum last month at Temple Beth-El.

Over the summer the 50 to 100 successes identified by the team will be reduced to about a dozen of the most compelling projects, programs or activities in the state.

The best local practices and the unsung heroes behind them will be showcased at “The Greatest Lil’ State on Earth,” a Community Convening and statewide celebration expected to attract up to 1,000 Rhode

Islanders to Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet on Oct. 24.

“I’m definitely looking forward to the October 24 convening!” **Christina Vivona**, resident of Providence’s West Side, said after attending the public forum in May at which the assets of her West Side neighborhood – innovative social enterprises, community arts, cultural diversity and economic diversity – were weighed.

The upbeat summit will focus on what’s right, not what’s wrong, on what succeeds, not what fails, on strengths, not weaknesses, in cities and towns throughout the state.

“Don’t assume you know what may help others,” Mike Ritz, executive director of LRI, told representatives of the 11 Lambda II teams. People will be looking for the “secret sauce” that turns ideas into successful projects. “They’ll know it when they see it.”

Class Notes

Here's what some of our members have been up to

Leadership Rhode Island alumni are popping up all over as Gov. **Gina Raimondo** fills key positions. Her appointments include **Barbara Cottam** '00, chair of state Board of Education, and Rev. **Jeffery Williams** '02 to the board's Council on Postsecondary Education; **Melissa Husband** '12, I-195 Redevelopment Commission; **Heather Tow-Yick** '11, Rhode Island Airport Corp.; **Carmen Diaz-Jusino** '10, RI Arts Council; **Suzanna "Suzy" Alba** CLRI '04, **Nina Pande** '12 and **Susan Rittscher** '96, Governor's Workforce Board; and **Charles Fogarty** '88, Director of Elderly Affairs.

LRI alumni are also serving in a variety of positions in the administration of Providence Mayor **Jorge Elorza**. They include **Alexis Gorriaran** '04, Providence Tourism Council; Sen. **Juan Pichardo** '00, vice chair, Providence Board of Licenses; **Stephen Del Sesto**, Lambda II class, Providence Economic Development Partnership; and **Kas DeCarvalho** '04 and **Zack Mezera** CLRI '11, Providence Ethics Commission.

Also, **Victor Capellan** '98, member of the 2015 LRI Program Committee, has been named to the Zoning Board of Review and is the new chairman of the Providence Democratic City Committee.

Newly promoted Captains in the Providence Police Department are **Dean Isabella** '14 and **Oscar Perez**, member of the Lambda II class.

Phil West '91, former executive director of Common Cause RI, has been inducted into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame.

The new Executive Director of Rhode Island Housing is **Barbara Fields** '93.

Retired healthcare CEO **Diane Desmarais Souza** '88 received an honorary degree and gave the keynote address at the May commencement of Charlton College of Business.

Ed Mastriano '07, Cox Media marketing manager, is a Cox Charities Community Hero for his volunteer work with the Rhode Island Mentoring Partnership.



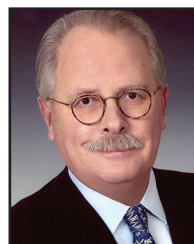
Cottam



Nelson



Ranglin



Sutton



Williams

No longer Mayor of Providence, **Angel Taveras** '99 has returned to law as a shareholder at Greenberg Traurig, LLP, in Boston.

Annette Bourne '07 is the new Training Manager at GrowSmartRI.

Howard Sutton '95, former publisher of the Providence Journal, has been named to the Board of Directors of the Rhode Island Foundation.

Amanda McMullen '12 has been promoted to chief operating officer of Meeting Street.

Patrick Crowley '07 has left the Rhode Island affiliate of the National Education Association to be an Organizational Specialist for the national organization. He is leading the NEA's "Degrees not Debt" campaign team.

Lisa Ranglin '13 is a new member of the Board of Directors of Roger Williams Medical Center.

Ross Nelson '06 was elected Chair of Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce. Other alumni elected to the Executive Committee are **Ernie Almonte** '88, Secretary, and **Susan Fabrizio** '90, Treasurer. **Kevin Tracy** '04 and **John Gregory** '94 have At-Large seats.

Diana Franchitto '08 and **Lisa Holley** '12 were selected as two of this year's "Three Wise Women" by the National Organization of Italian American Women.

Nicole Benjamin '13, **Kyle Zambarano** '14 and **John Russell**, member of the Lambda II class, are now Shareholders of Adler Pollock & Sheehan.

Bob Smith '14 retired from the state Department of Transportation and is now Senior Project Manager at McMahon Associates.

Sheila Cardente-Capece '10 has accepted the position of Behavioral Health Manager at Wood River Health Services.

Kim Arcand '14 has been elected to the RI Museum of Science and Art's Board of Directors.

Jeff Wilhelm '13 has been named 2015 vExperts by VMware.

Jody Sullivan '11 has retired from the Newport County Chamber of Commerce.

For Barrington Printing's father-son duo, LRI reinforced community commitment

By Richard Staples '90

Barry Couto and **Keith Couto** are living proof that fathers and sons can still appreciate each other, even after running a business together for years. If they disagree about anything, it's probably over which LRI class – Rho or Epsilon II – is "the best class ever."

Barry was a school guidance counselor back in 1981 when he founded Barrington Printing. After retiring from his school job 10 years later, he and Keith joined together, along with other family members, to grow the business into the large, successful family-owned company it is today.

Barry and Keith found their path to Leadership Rhode Island in different ways.

In Barry's case, LRI came to him in the form of **Ellie O'Neill** '96, a printing customer who was on the LRI staff at the time. "Ellie kept telling me about this wonderful program, Leadership Rhode Island, and that I should go through the program to broaden my interests, meet new people, and find new opportunities," Barry recalls. "She was right on all counts, and more."

Barry has fond recollections of his Rho class experience in 1997 and still keeps in touch with friends he made during his program year. LRI also opened his eyes and heart to the many areas of need across the state identified by classmates and at session days, resulting in several board membership experiences for him and an ongoing commitment by Barrington Printing to help support the work of nonprofit organizations by offering its services at lower cost.

For Keith, life at Barrington Printing's presses began in his teenage years. He's been "in the shop" ever since and is now a co-owner with his father. Keith says he could see the many positive impacts LRI had on his father's life, especially his commitment to give time and resources to help others, and decided he wanted to experience Leadership Rhode Island for himself.

By 2009, Barrington Printing had expanded by acquisition and moved its plant and offices to Cranston. The time was finally right for Keith to enjoy his own LRI experience so he applied and was admitted to the Epsilon II class in 2009. He describes it as his time "out from under the roof" and recalls being energized by the exposure LRI gave him to other points of view offered by classmates whose life experiences had been much different from his own. Six years later, the business consumes much of Keith's time but he still stays in touch with the "Gang of Ten" from his class through social media, enjoys an occasional meet-up, and has offered his time to support several charities.

Keith describes his father and business partner as a "visionary" whose life view and LRI experience helped him discover his own passions for giving back and learning more about the communities that surround him. They enjoy this philosophy on many levels citing, as just one example, their commitment to support Mathewson Street United Methodist Church's Community Meal by buying and delivering 30 pounds of oranges each week.

Barrington Printing now has seven Couto family members working alongside 23 other employees as the company continues to grow and expand to meet new opportunities. Both Barry and Keith speak fondly and with pride about working with each other and everyone at the company, often completing each other's thoughts and speaking confidently about the future. It has worked even better than imagined, they say, shows no sign of slowing down any time soon, and is poised to welcome a third generation of the family into the business and, eventually, to Leadership Rhode Island.



Barrington Printing's father-son duo Keith Couto '09 and Barry Couto '97 each say their LRI experience led them to become involved with local nonprofits, and both stay in touch with classmates.

*Want to share some good news from the Best Class Ever?
Email us at office@leadershipri.org.*



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It's a block party – and the whole state's invited!

"Won't you please? Please won't you be my neighbor?"

The Hi Neighbor! Statewide Block Party, hosted by Leadership Rhode Island, promises to be the largest event in LRI's history. With more than 1,500 guests already registered, this is one free, family-friendly event you don't want to miss!

The block party will take place on Wednesday, June 17, from 5 to 8 p.m., at The Steel Yard, 27 Sims Ave., Providence. LRI alumni will enjoy a fast-pass entrance.

"The Lambda II class will have conducted 33 community meetings across the state by the time of this party," says **Mike Ritz** '07, Executive Director. "Everyone who attended from Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns will come together to embrace the summer after a long, cold winter. The whole state is invited!"

Arrive on time for a chance to participate in the creation of the special 2015 ReCasting Rhode Island Metal Pour by The Steel Yard. Bring your classmates to form competitive teams in LRI's custom-made, human-sized Foosball Court, sponsored by Turino Group.

Grab a 'Gansett, sangria or a Yacht Club soda to quench your thirst, as you listen and dance to the lively musical performances of Tigerman WOAHH. The stage is sponsored by National Grid RI. Enjoy food on-site by one of Julians' three kitchens or bring your own picnic basket, lawn chairs or blankets to spread out on the green grassy lawn. While admission and participation in all the festivities are free, guests will be charged for food and beverages. There is plenty of on-street parking.

The Steel Yard is a nonprofit operation that builds community by fostering the industrial arts, encouraging experimentation and serving as a small business incubator. It's sure to be plenty warm, so please dress comfortably. Fun for the whole family!

Further details on the Hi Neighbor! Statewide Block Party are online at <https://hineighborstatewideblockparty.eventbrite.com>. No RSVP is necessary to attend.

