



SFTL: Seminar For Tomorrow's Leaders

A **RYLA** Initiative to Develop Teen Leaders

By Rotary District 7680 and the Center for Creative Leadership



Rotarians are committed to cultivating the understanding and application of excellent leadership skills in students when they need it most. Since 2009, Rotarians from District 7680 in west-central North Carolina, in partnership with the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®), have impacted hundreds of students' lives by delivering a research-based intensive, transformative, and empowering leadership development program for teens.

The same leadership development framework used for global executives, policy makers, and military officers is successfully applied to students participating in this four day experiential program. Selected student leadership delegates stay overnight in dorms on a college campus. During the programming, all involved in the leadership experience including students, volunteers, and trainers, learn together and grow as leaders, creating a rich and rewarding inter-generational, diverse and inclusive leadership-enhancing experience.

"Many people my age think it's impossible to relate to the younger generation, but if you sit down and talk with them, you realize that we share many of the same problems. The leadership skills taught by CCL are applicable to anyone. Being able to interact with a group of young people and discover that we face similar issues, such as conflict resolution and committing to goals, showed them that being a leader is a continuous process that doesn't end once you become a successful adult."

– Calvin Gaddy, District 7680 Rotarian and Mayor of New London, NC

the Experience

Within a nurturing and challenging environment, students blossom as they are guided through a carefully and intentionally crafted experience that empowers them to increase their self-awareness and develop life-changing skills: giving and receiving feedback; effective group communication; applied leadership and applied ethics; vision and goal-setting; non-verbal communication; self-assessment; increasing emotional intelligence; and reflection.

the Program

Leadership Theory and Development

Learning to effectively give and receive feedback using CCL's Situation, Behavior, and Impact (SBI) model; applying these skills during the trust walk; and honing communication skills through CCL's Direction, Alignment, Commitment (DAC) framework lays the foundation for working and living with others now and in the future.

Real-World Application

Small groups explore how to utilize DAC in everyday life, and students experience the dynamic nature of leadership development. Strategic planning tools such as the "Pipeline" create an opportunity to apply DAC to many scenarios and build a strong foundation for effective communication.

Increasing Emotional Intelligence, Public Speaking, Nonverbal Communication and Skit Performances

Students now turn inward and get to know themselves, a critical component of good leadership. Breaking mental models to encourage empathy, sharing strengths and weaknesses and deepening understanding lead to increased emotional intelligence. Exploring the impact of the six channels of nonverbal communication, followed by skits, solidifies leadership concepts in real-life scenarios.

Planning, Communication, Patience, and Focus

After reviewing all the tools and skills learned in preceding days, including planning, effective communication, patience, focus and collaboration, students apply these skills to the intentionally complex "colourblind" exercise. After successfully solving this difficult problem using colorful shapes and blindfolds, young leaders share a sigh of relief as they realize they have integrated many critical lessons.

Four Way Test, Ethics, Small Group Discussion, Goal Setting, and Increased Self-Awareness

Throughout the seminar small clusters of 8-10 students led by a mentor, gather in groups where they debrief, recap and clarify the lessons. These intimate groups foster discussions about goals, ambitions, careers, college plans and relationships.

Using CCL's self-assessment tool, the Values Explorer, students identify and reflect on their defining values. The resulting growth in self-awareness is just one example of how the small groups encourage group member trust and increase emotional intelligence.



"At the end of one exercise, I learned that, more often than not, the strengths of my own personality complement those of my peers while the strengths of their personalities complement my own weaknesses. The exercise made me more aware of my own strengths and weaknesses in the realm of leadership, but also taught me never to discount the ideas of others."

-Youth Participant

As a college student and former participant, I was in a unique position. The students could really relate to us since we were just a couple years older than them. We talked about college life and leadership. Because of SFTL and then my mentor experience, I went back to my college and started a Rotaract Club.

-Alumni Mentor

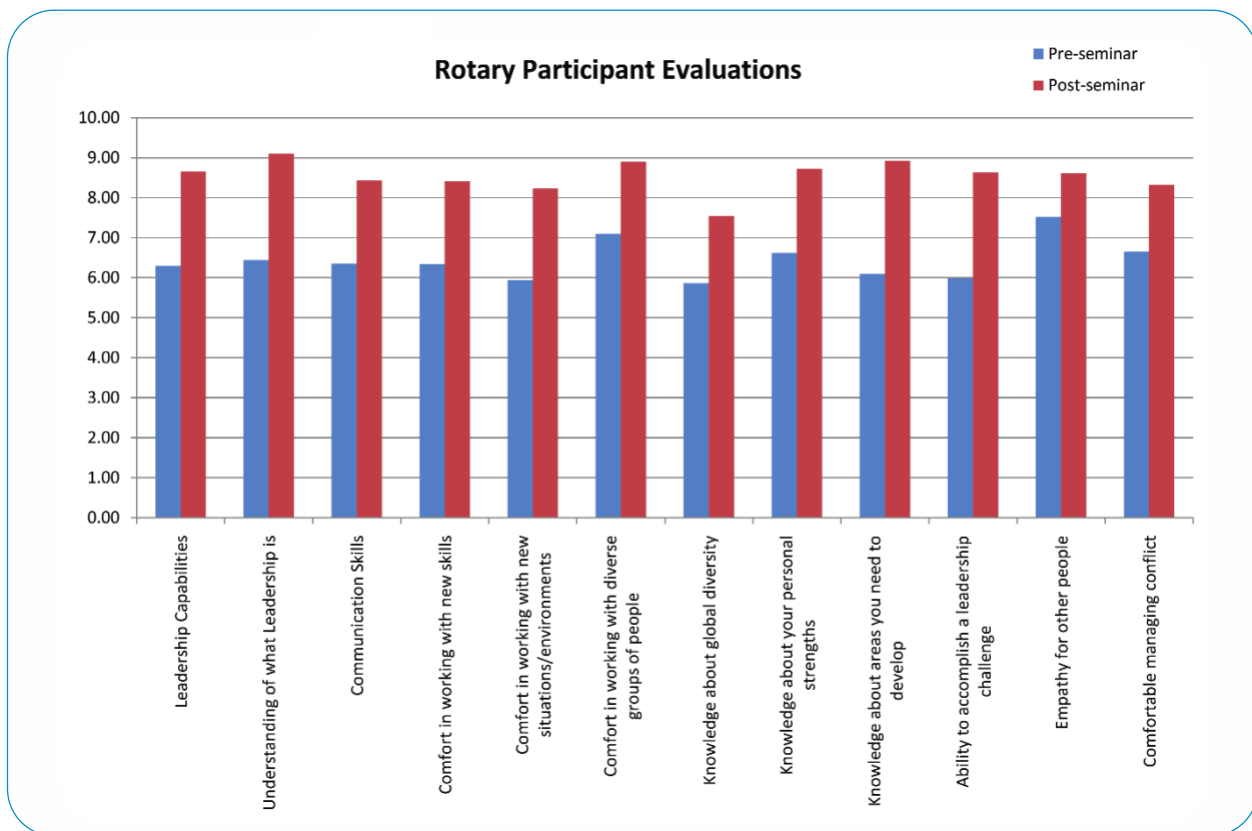
I think I grew even more as a leader when I returned as an alumni mentor. Participating in the activities allows you to get in touch with yourself and your values as well as your own strengths and weaknesses. Leadership came alive for me.

-Alumni Mentor

the Impact

Sweeping Improvement in Leadership Skills

After the seminar, participants reported significant improvement in 12 key areas of leadership capabilities, including understanding leadership, communication skills, comfort working with new skills and new situations, knowledge of personal strengths and areas in need of further development, ability to accomplish a leadership challenge, empathy for others, comfort managing conflict and working with diverse groups of people and knowledge about global diversity.



“Leadership is like a muscle, the earlier you start flexing it, the stronger it grows.”

– John Ryan, CCL Chief Executive

“Students and volunteers resoundingly report SFTL as a blessing and life-changing experience. The learning never stops as we not only count our blessings but share them with the world. SFTL’s impact has rebuilt and started new Interact Clubs, started Rotaract Clubs, increased Rotary membership, and most importantly, been the pivotal experience that changed individual lives for the better.”

-Debra Corbett, RYLA Chair and Lead Facilitator



“We had to adapt on the fly to make it work. When our first or second plan failed, we used what we observed to learn from our mistakes and formulated a new strategy.”

-Student Participant

“The DAC model for leadership can be compared to a three-legged stool; if one leg is missing, the function of the stool, or group, is impaired.”

-Vincent Ford, CCL Facilitator and Youth Mentor



“Positive feedback can be very empowering- it is more genuine when it’s specific because the person giving it is clearly focused and paying attention to your actions”

-Student Participant



For more information about
Seminar For Tomorrow’s Leaders (SFTL)
visit
www.Rotary7680.org/sftl.php