

## **Develop new leaders in your community**

Written by Wauneta Breeze

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Never underestimate the need for leadership. But also never underestimate the leaders among us – the folks who step up to organize a community garden or a school bake sale. They see something that needs to be done in their town, and they do it.

Leaders provide the vision and direction for getting things done. Without them, it's difficult to accomplish things. But it's hard to picture someone as a leader if they haven't had a chance to grow into it. So how do you go about developing them?

I was recently talking with one young leader—a Latino woman who is a real force in her community. She doesn't see herself as a leader. I asked what kind of leadership development program would work best in her community. She felt strongly, and I agree, it doesn't need to be a formal process.

Teaching people leadership skills is only half the solution. Giving them an opportunity is more important. Informal mentorship can help nurture and bring new leaders along to step into community leadership roles in the future.

Give them a chance. It might be as small as preparing them for a meeting with city officials. Then have them present an idea in the meeting. Help them build confidence and skills by doing. Before you know it, you've developed a new leader.

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