Women Leading the Way
Real Women. Real Leadership.
“Great women leaders are everywhere amongst us and I have the capacity to be one of them.”

Iris Lama (Cohort 1)
Minerva Foundation

The Minerva Foundation for BC Women offers unique programs for women to develop their leadership capacity and reach their full potential. From leadership programs to education awards, and culturally-relevant programming developed in partnership with Aboriginal women, Minerva elevates the visibility, influence and contribution of women to change the face of leadership in BC. Since 2001, Minerva has directed more than $10,000,000 towards leadership and career exploration programming for women and girls.

Women Leading the Way™

Women Leading the Way™ (WLW) is a distinctive, interactive, part-time leadership training program for women who want to have an impact in business, government and community. The program provides women with the tools, techniques and connections necessary to expand their leadership abilities, and enables them to move into the next phase of their leadership journey.

Women Leading the Way™ is based on the Action Learning Model and focuses on values-based leadership. Designed for women, by women, WLW prepares participants for the challenges and opportunities in their futures. It provides advancing women with the training to see leadership from a variety of perspectives and learn current principles and practices of high performing leaders.

Each session for WLW brings together 26 to 28 women from all across BC who come from a variety of sectors including business, community institutions, government, Aboriginal Bands and non-profits. Participants must have at least seven to ten years of leadership experience with a desire to move forward in their careers.

The information and stories shared here reflect the journeys of many of the women who have completed Women Leading the Way™ and who are all committed to changing the face of leadership.
Speakers

More than 35 community leaders and subject matter experts are brought in to share their expertise with participants during each WLW session. These guest speakers and panelists include:

Adine Moea CEO, Minerva Foundation
Anne Stewart OC, BSc, Obitas and Greydon LLP
Annette Wall President, The Solasmost Solutions Consulting Group, Past Minerva Board Member
Barbara Ross-Desdre President & CEO, The Refinery Group, Past Minerva Board Member
Bve Briscoe Briscoe Management, Past Minerva Board Member
Beverly Pugh Beverly Pugh, Counseling
Chief Robert Joseph Hereditary Chief of the Gwich’in First Nation
Derek Gent CEO, Vancity Foundation
Dr. Bal Pawa CEO, Vancity Foundation
Dr. Ian Macnaughton UBC Neuroscience
Dr. Kathleen Burke Professor of Ethics SFU
Dr. Ken Lyloty United Way Can
Ellen Woodworth Former Vancouver City Council Member
Ferdie Shell Senior Director TELUS
Filomena Nalewajk Outgoing Principal of Children’s Hospice, Manitoba
Fiona Douglas Crampton Past CEO Minerva Foundation
Fiona Macfarlane Manager Partners Westem Canada and Chief Inclusiveness Officer Ernst & Young LLP
Gabi McBride BC Hydro, Past Minerva Board Member
Hilary Kligour Former VP Free the Children, Vancouver
Jaynie Clark Director of Advocacy, Administration and Finance BCGEU
Jeanne Douglas Past Chair Minerva Foundation, Former TELUS Technology Executive
Kevin Mahoney Corporate Director, Minerva Board Member
Kim Baird Past Chief Tsaawassen Band
Kirsten Sutton Managing Director SAP
Launi Skinner CEO Envision Financial
Laura Hansen Owner, Image Group Inc.
Lee-Anne Ragan Paper, Documents
Lis Welch VP The Welch Group, Past Chair Minerva Foundation
Liza Vogt Q2A Communications
Lora den Sturmer CEO Crowning City
Lori Ackerman Mayor Port Coquitlam
Lt. Col. Harjit Sajjan Mayor Fort St. John
Lt. Col. Maryse Carmichael Commanding Officer Snowbirds
Lynn Greene, CEO Data Luma Centre
Major Meggan McGrath Aerospace Engineer with the Air Force and world renowned adventurer
Maureen Fitzgerald Director, Community Engagement
Michelle Descreux VP Unidos International
Michelle Rupp Corporate Director, Minerva Foundation
Patricia Pratt Chair, Vancity Board of Directors
Patricia Graham VP Digital, Pacific Newspaper Group
Penney Biscuit City Manager, Vancouver
Penney Priddy Past Metro Vancouver’s Municipal Representative on the Board
Rebecca Gellert National Inclusiveness Officer
Sandra Stevenson Retired CEO Sport BC, Past Minerva Board Member
Steve Williams Past CEO Translink
Sue Hammell MLA for Surrey-Green Timbers
Tracey Hutton President and CEO of FDC Capital
Tom Brown Ethics Professor SFU
Tracey Hirsch Head of Internal Communications HSBC Bank Canada
Yuri Fulmer President and CEO of FDC Capital

Goals of the Women Leading the Way™ Program

• To increase the representation of women in leadership roles in business, government and communities to affect change that will benefit all stakeholders.
• To create a values-based leadership development model that can be adapted to other agencies, corporations and non-profits, nationally and internationally, that better utilizes and develops women in business, government and social sectors.
“I feel empowered and confident to move forward in my leadership journey. I got the clarity I was looking for — this program was a total gift and I am so grateful to have been able to attend.”

- Lydia Petit Haslam (Cohort 3)

“I found great value in getting to know a diverse group of very interesting and motivated women. It was refreshing to hear different view points…”

Erika Reilly
Senior Vice President, Brookfield Asset Management

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
Was seeking a high quality leadership development course as well as networking opportunities in Vancouver.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
To focus my time and attention on my strengths, in my career and personal life.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
Taking on new roles and challenges to learn, grow and become a better leader.

What inspires you?
Working on interesting/challenging projects, mentoring rising stars and WLW participants, family and friendships.
“Women Leading the Way™ reinforced my belief that you don’t have to settle for less than you think you deserve or are capable of accomplishing. Know yourself and your aspirations, then take control of turning them into a reality.”

Eleena Marley (Cohort 1)

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
I was a newcomer to BC and welcomed the opportunity to network with the cohort, panels and organizers. In addition, I was keen to further develop my personal leadership skills.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
Better understanding of my values and how these align with my career and aspirations. Deep insight into other people’s career journeys and their ability to grow during the process of meeting their challenges.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
To continue to align my values with the quality and type of work I do and hold it central in my interaction with others.

What inspires you?
My main sources of inspiration are from my friends, family and people who make a difference and who have the drive to turn their ideas into reality (i.e. innovators, speakers at TED conferences, world leaders).

DID YOU KNOW?
WLW participants were interested in affecting change in all sectors: 28% social/non-profit, 59% business/corporate and 13% government.
“I love this quote: 
Walking your talk is worth a thousand words. 
Be true to who you are. Know your strengths 
and do what you love otherwise 
it’s not worth doing at all.”

- Lindsay Chan (Cohort 3)

Lindsay Chan
Director of Communications, BC Innovation Council

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
As an emerging leader in my organization, I was excited by the prospect of learning from those who have risen within their respective organizations and industries. I have a lot of respect for the Minerva Foundation and felt that WLW would not only help to equip me with useful skills, understanding and training – beneficial in my journey as a leader, but also facilitate valued connections and relationships both professionally and personally.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
Every week was exciting — it’s hard to sum it all up! It was a lot of fun to learn more about my strengths and how they contribute to my leadership style. I am more cognizant of how my actions may be perceived by those around me and more than ever consider the strengths of others in my communication towards colleagues and partners.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
I was recently promoted to Director of Communications within my organization which is very exciting! I am also expecting my first child early June 2013. So up next: To be the best mom I can. And when I return to work, continue to build from where I left off!

What inspires you?
Running, trying new things, being with friends and family, networking.
Great women leaders are everywhere amongst us and I have the capacity to be one of them.

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
I wanted to learn what it takes to advance within my workplace and be a better manager/leader for my team.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
I learned so much about myself and what I needed to be happy in my work life. I also learned to tap into my confidence and recognize my own abilities. Most importantly, I learned that I am actually pretty ambitious, and that is completely okay. I also learned that my background is not a hindrance if I don’t want it to be - all of those successful, capable women that came in to speak to us had their own stories to tell and their own vulnerability to overcome. I am applying those learnings by taking on projects and goals that would have been completely outside my horizon before.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
I am getting my Master’s degree, which will move into a doctorate at a later date. I will continue to strive towards my goals and will support others in their journey. I don’t know what exactly what my life will look like in five years, but whatever I am doing it will be bigger and better than what I am doing right now.

What inspires you?
I get my inspiration from working, being productive and being useful. There is nothing more satisfying than ticking something off my to-do list.

“Great women leaders are everywhere amongst us and I have the capacity to be one of them.”

Iris Lama
BC Regional Manager Disability Intervention Services, Great-West Life

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
To add leadership competencies to my tool kit.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
Great women leaders are everywhere amongst us and I have the capacity to be one of them.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
Walking the walk – one step at a time.

What inspires you?
Physical activity usually on my own or with my dogs.

“I learned that I am limited only by the extent of my efforts. There is nothing I can’t do, if I am willing to work at it.”

Mandy Hansen
Consultant
“When I joined Women Leading the Way™ it felt like I had a sparse wardrobe. Now that the program is over it feels like I have a complete wardrobe, one that I will make minor tweaks to as the seasons change.”

- Alberta Evans (Cohort 2)
"My thought is to say: now go and spring forward while following your values and passion."

- Petra Remy (Covert 3)

**Petra Remy**
Investment Advisor, CIBC Wood Gundy

**Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?**
My first thought was to get a better understanding on how I can integrate a value style of leadership in my business and into my personal life. While my second thought was to hear from women who have managed to become leaders in their community. Lastly, I wanted to meet up and coming women who want to strive to be the best leader they can in their business and personal life.

**What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?**
I could write a 100 page essay of all the skills I not only learned, but also reinforced my passion and knowledge. If there is one thing I recognized, it is that the road to becoming a great leader is "full of bumps" and detours. It is a great leader which overcomes and strives to be their best, even in the face of adversity. Now my confidence and skills have been enhanced "threefold" as I use my knowledge in developing new business, networking, managing the staff and strive to be a value based leader.

**What is next for you on your leadership journey?**
I will be focusing on building my practice while staying true to my values. Working locally and globally, as my passion is to reduce poverty by increasing access to education and good health care. My thought is to locally work with women to help them attain freedom through financial planning. Globally, work with women and children as they are the ones most affected by a lack of education and access to health care. My thought is to ensure my work is done within the culture in which I affect. Building my practice will direct my journey as I hope to attain wealth which I will pay forward.

**What inspires you?**
My inspiration comes from a mirage of different avenues. My first is networking; I "luv" people. Their actions, ideas and learning are what drive me to be the best that I can. Secondly, my competitiveness and thirst for success comes from working. Thirdly, it is my "luv" for knowledge through reading and my environment which drives me to spring out of bed each and every day. Finally, a walk through nature brings me back to earth.
Three things I know for certain.

1. Leadership is a journey not a destination.
2. Change takes time.
3. It’s okay to make mistakes because that is how we grow.”

- Amanda Goodman Lee (Cohort 3)

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
Media is undergoing a major shift away from the traditional print industry toward rapidly evolving digital platforms. This new model presents a huge challenge for leadership as we try to educate and pass on new skills to our workforce, implement cultural change and help our people through this transition in the best way possible. I saw Women Leading the Way™ as an opportunity for me to develop the skills necessary to be a leader within my organization during these challenging times.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
I’m learning how to identify leadership in people. The leaders I invariably learn from the most are the ones who really understand themselves. Through WLW I have learned more about myself, what type of leader I am and how to better lead the people who work with me. I’ve also learned through WLW that 90 per cent of leadership is about leading yourself and how you react to situations and people.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
Currently I am working with a new team following the recent departmental reorganization. I have been inspired by the learnings on managing through transition. I look forward to bringing my contribution to the organization’s leadership as we move through these challenging and exciting times.

What inspires you?
I get inspiration from the people in my daily life and leaders in the world. I am also inspired by watching the miracle of honey bees; I am a master beekeeper and I have a small growing business promoting hive-related products. Bees are quintessentially founded around leadership. Here you have a matriarchal society that wholly depends upon teamwork; the queen cannot survive without her worker bees, the worker bees cannot survive without the queen, and the drones or males cannot survive without either the queen or the workers. Every bee has a role to fill and every bee matters. It is also how I feel about the people around me; every person matters.
Why did you decide to participate in Women Leading the Way™?
I had not heard about it before and my manager sent me the information. It took me about two minutes to figure out this would be a fantastic way to further develop my leadership skills, gain confidence and get some clarity on what my future career direction should be.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
There were so many things I learned to guide me in my leadership journey. I found the sessions on values, strengths and Myers Briggs have helped me to understand my own preferences and why certain events will trigger a reaction. I can apply these skills to team building and in all my interactions and supporting others. The ethics and strategic decision making sessions were relevant and useful for my current position. My communication skills have improved by asking versus telling, removing judgement and assumptions in my interactions. The excellent resources provided all form part of my leadership toolkit which I will be sure to draw upon.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
I have been in my current role for eight years and have been feeling stagnant. I have gained the confidence to apply for positions in different areas in our organization. That being said I have also learned that I am well suited to my current position as it aligns with my values and allows me to use my strengths.

What inspires you?
I get inspiration from the successful female leaders in my Credit Union and the amazing women I met in the program. I draw strength from my regular yoga practice, learning new things and connecting with family and friends. The regular trips to Vancouver to get some big city energy were such a treat for this small town dweller!

Lydia Petit Haslam
Manager, Compliance, Valley First Region of First West Credit Union

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What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
Some of my greatest learnings came from seeing old ideas in new ways, particularly around the definition of strength, the journeys that many of the speakers had taken to get to where they are, learning more about my own skill set, leadership perspectives and a key reminder not to take things at face value – a result of my WLW project.

What inspires you?
Inspiration comes from a number of sources: Friends, nature, music, riding the motorbike, learning, and listening to the stories and wisdom of others. I also create what is called a dream board that depicts everything that I want to become and have in my life. It is somewhere visible so I see it everyday. It is said that ‘True Power’ comes from having a future to live into.

Claire Skillen
Consultant- Business Analyst at CGI

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
I had participated in another Minerva program and thought highly of it. I endlessly pursue opportunities for personal and professional development and knew that by participating I would not only add to my understanding of self and leadership but get some great work/ life perspective as well as career direction.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
Some of my greatest learnings came from seeing old ideas in new ways, particularly around the definition of strength, the journeys that many of the speakers had taken to get to where they are, learning more about my own skill set, leadership perspectives and a key reminder not to take things at face value – a result of my WLW project.

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“Through Women Leading the Way™ I gained a new circle of intelligent and impressive female friends, as well as a whole new focus on what I want to achieve in my career and my life.”

Sarah McEachern
Partner, Borden Ladner Gervais, LLP

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
Women Leading the Way™ provided the opportunity to be mentored by female leaders in the community, as well as a forum to get to know intelligent and ambitious women outside the legal community while gaining leadership skills.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
There is a leadership style that fits my personality and I can take concrete steps to become a successful leader. We learned everything from practical steps on communicating effectively, to analyzing our own strengths and weaknesses, to dealing with difficult team dynamics. The skills we learned helped me to be more assertive and provided me with tools to ensure that I am seen and heard “at the table.”

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
I am continuing to develop my legal practice and looking for opportunities to become more involved in the community, such as through a Board of Director position.

What inspires you?
I’m inspired by socializing with friends and family, achieving new goals in cycling and running, and the intelligence and talent of my colleagues. Cooking, reading, and traveling help me unwind.

DID YOU KNOW?
40% of all WLW participants were referred, and supported, by their companies to the program.
Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
I was searching for a leadership course or a program to upgrade my skills when a friend who had taken the program (2nd cohort) introduced me to the idea, describing the course material and speakers that she experienced. It sounded very interesting and, upon further investigation, I decided to apply. Ultimately, it was the learning potential, networking opportunities, and excellent facilitators/coordinators that drew me to the program.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
The course content is very diverse and varied and, as a result, I learned a lot. I found that knowing my MBTI, strengths, weaknesses, and values to be particularly relevant. I have applied this knowledge to my workplace and home life in order to improve my communication and leadership skills. The invaluable insight from my colleagues in the program, the facilitators and guest speakers has left me pondering their thoughts and stories while taking a step back in my own life, taking the time to consider other possibilities.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
At this stage, I have just given birth to my son Nathan, so this adds a new dynamic to my life. As a result, I will be focusing on being an exceptional mom as well as continuing my work as an Industrial Relations Officer.

What inspires you?
I am often described as a person that needs to be challenged in order to maintain interest. I thrive on personal (running and weight lifting) and professional challenges (work). I like to start a project, see good progress, and follow it through to conclusion.

Lindsay Foley
Industrial Relations Officer at Canadian Federal Government

“I acknowledge the individual style and strengths I bring to my present role. I do it differently from others, and am valued.”

Mary Martin
Retired Senior Technology Architect, TELUS Communications Inc.

The program has facilitated a deeper knowledge of myself, my values, and leadership style. I have grown a lot in the past few months and have renewed confidence in leading.”

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
As a member of the WLW Steering Committee, I found the content compelling, the exposure to colleagues from other industries stimulating, and the guest speaker list a rare opportunity. As we are a class not an auditorium, interaction with our instructor, speakers, and colleagues is fruitful.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
I learned to appreciate my personal strengths as more unique and valuable than I had in the past. I relaxed with being myself, which exudes greater confidence, directing non-core activities to those who excel at them. Sticking with your values is mostly simple, steady work. The rare occasion where I have had to be outspoken on a values-based topic, I was able to defend my values, and was ready to take the next dramatic step – no courage was required, the dramatic step was mitigated. Lesson? Your deeply held personal values are often understood and respected, more than you may guess. But they WILL be tested.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
Learn and grow, and share what I know.

What inspires you?
Making something beautiful and functional—especially sewing garments. Teaching. Watching a well formed plan click into place. Being a part of a highly functioning team. All are rewarding and humbling.

Mary Martin
Retired Senior Technology Architect, TELUS Communications Inc.

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“Minerva has given me a map of the terrain, some useful tools, and an understanding of how to use them more effectively.”

Maggie Langrick
President and Publisher at LifeTree Media Ltd.

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
I’m a huge fan of the Minerva Foundation - supporting women to live fuller, happier and more rewarding lives is a cause that is very close to my heart. I’ve heard some incredibly inspiring stories from Minerva protégés and their mentors, so I know that their programs really make an impact. When I was given the opportunity to take part in Women Leading the Way™, I leapt at the chance.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
Fundamentally, I learned how to go from being a manager to being a leader. Through the interactive exercises I learned more about my own communication and leadership style and how to better understand others. The expert presenters and facilitators gave us great insights into what it takes to successfully lead a project or an organization, even under challenging conditions.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
I’m spearheading a series of new revenue-generating products for the Sun, and planning some interdepartmental projects for later in the year.

What inspires you?
Inspiration always flows best for me when I am walking, especially in nature, and especially with my dog. If I have a problem to solve or a vision to clarify, I reach for my gumboots and hit the park.
“If we can live by any universal truths...we should always be true to our values and never underestimate our strengths.”

- Christina Treleaven (Cohort 3)

Christina Treleaven
Energy Solutions Manager, Energy Efficiency and Conservation, FortisBC

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
I decided to participate in the WLW program because I felt it would give me practical tools to develop my leadership skills, and to help develop my leadership network.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
I learned a great deal about values, strengths, and the importance of clear communication. I have applied these learnings in my life, career, and workplace to great success!

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
I am looking forward to further honing my leadership skills and focusing on allowing my values and strengths to help me drive my career.

What inspires you?
I am inspired by watching others achieve and exceed their goals. In particular, I am always very inspired by my sister, who has worked tirelessly to excel in her field while consistently motivating, supporting and leading others to do the same.

Values-driven principles shape every Minerva leadership experience.
Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
I was looking for a program to help me advance my leadership skills and had heard great reviews about WLW from an earlier cohort participant. I really value the opportunity to learn from other women in their leadership journey and the WLW format seemed like the perfect opportunity to learn from amazing women.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
I’ve learned so much throughout WLW and to take the time to be reflective about my learning and how I can apply them in my everyday work experiences and the journey ahead. The workshop on strengths in particular turned my thinking upside down...viewing strengths as what makes me feel strong versus what I’m good at. I’m also now focusing more on further developing my strengths versus my weaknesses because I can see how I can add more value to myself and my team using this strategy.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
I want to continue to challenge myself but also ensure my values and strengths align with the role so I can be the most successful I can possibly be.

What inspires you?
I get my inspiration from learning new things and being around interesting people that are also excited about learning new things and challenging themselves.

Andrea Gamley
National Account Executive, Coca-Cola Refreshments Canada

“Being part of Women Leading the Way™ has helped alter and define my career path and given me tools to better understand and manage people…”

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
All of the leaders in my work group are currently men. Although they are great leaders, I wanted to be able to interact with women leaders so that I could learn from their experiences. I wanted to learn how women can become strong leaders in a work environment that is currently dominated by men.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
I’ve learned that leaders must first be advocates for themselves before they can be advocates for others. I’ve been able to stand up and ask for the appropriate support I need to learn and grow. By doing so I’ve been able to build a support group that extends across the country and throughout the firm.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
I will try to be a great leader and role model for other women within my firm, and will continue to seize new opportunities as they become available.

What inspires you?
My inspiration comes from enjoying the city. I find it very calming running along the seawall and enjoying the scenery, and then being able to sit by the beach and enjoy a coffee with my friends.

Carla Tanaka
International Tax Manager, Ernst & Young LLP

“Great leaders must be able to surround themselves with a diverse group of people who complement each other, and be able to find unique ways to motivate and teach each individual on the team.”
Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
My colleague participated in a previous cohort and encouraged me to apply. I was making a transition to a different sector. It could not have come at a better time.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
Most important learning was reflecting upon what makes me feel strong. I thought that a strength was something you are good at, not about how you feel doing something. This changed a lot for me, including the direction I see my career going in the future. Women shared experiences about surviving colossal mistakes and how failure led to positive change. This was invaluable.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
1. Dive deeper into strengths-based leadership and how to apply it to my work and leadership style.
2. Stay connected to Minerva and the WLW participants. The WLW program leaders emphasized and nurtured connections amongst participants — this makes Minerva a program that keeps giving over time. I intend to continue learning from the amazing women I met during WLW.
3. Reading! Numerous leadership resources were discussed. Creating space to reflect on all that I’ve learned and challenging myself to continue.

What inspires you?
I get my inspiration and energy from family and friends — after a week with family I might not be ‘well-rested’ per se but I’m always joy-filled with energy. I need to balance this with time alone to read and learn — new information and unique ways of thinking keep me engaged and excited about work and life. (Flipboard is an important app for my inspiration!)

Kerry Byrne
Consultant

“Women Leading the Way™ is a lens through which to view your future – come prepared to reflect and be honest with yourself!” — Kerry Byrne (Cohort 3)
“Being a leader is like running 10k. I might be able to finish the run, but there are many ways to do it better. I can focus on breathing, technique… Similarly, I can lead a team but I can always find ways to do it better.”

- Reggie Mueller (Cohort 3)
The woman is the foundation on which Nations are built. She is the heart of her Nation. If that heart is weak, the people are weak. If her heart is strong and her mind is clear, then the Nation is strong and knows its purpose. The woman is the centre of everything.”

- Art Solomon

Barbara Williams
Business Owner, 4Feathers Innovating Passion

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
My passion and love for learning has led me to this program when it first was announced as a pilot program. I love to learn something new each day that can be added to my skills and abilities.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
Putting my preference to work and seizing leadership opportunities.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
Continue to build my education skills and take on more work for my company to help where my skills are valuable and useful.

What inspires you?
Knowing what my Great Ancestors went through and the pure leadership our women held back in those days inspires me so that we can thrive in this day and the future ahead of us. Not to mention the words of wisdom and legacy of my late grandmother, Mary P. Williams, who inspires us by living and leading by example of her own life during her time with us.
Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?

WLW was a great opportunity to help develop and define my leadership skills. I appreciated that we were in a close knit group that met twice a month for six months so we were able to develop strong connections with one another on an individual basis.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?

It is hard to narrow down what I learned over six months into one paragraph. Each session covered a lot of information and I always left with a takeaway. I really enjoyed finding the results of my Myers Briggs and then comparing the results amongst our group. It made me learn how to approach things differently for different people. Applying this has made me more successful in my personal and professional relationships.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?

Not sure, what other programs can I register for? I say this because I’ve been fortunate to attend three Minerva leadership programs and each has helped define my leadership style. For now, it’s taking what I’ve learned from all three sessions and applying them. It is reminding me to lead from my values and take risks in order to create the life I want to lead.

What inspires you?

I get my inspiration from being around others. Whenever I am having a horrible day, going for a coffee or a walk with a colleague or friend helps lift my spirits incredibly. I also really enjoy reading a book, going for a dog walk on the seawall, or taking a hike with my camera to recharge my batteries.

Kristy Todd Millar
Account Manager - Commercial Real Estate, HSBC Bank Canada

“Women Leading the Way™ has reminded me to take the time to reflect on my life and what I want it to be. It’s hard to make time to reflect with no distractions but it’s one of the best things I can do for myself and those around me.”

DID YOU KNOW?

Funding from the Status of Women Canada allowed us to provide $27,500 in program bursaries throughout the first three cohorts.
“Aspire to inspire before you expire.”

Roberta Fidalgo
AVP, Human Resources at Valley First Credit Union

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
To gain a greater sense of self awareness, become a more effective and inspirational leader, team member and better business partner.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
With support, encouragement and advocacy, I can be anything I want to be. I learned about my values and how they influence my leadership style, how to achieve high performance, best practices to engage teams and how to be a better problem solver and decision maker. I strive to apply these learnings daily and believe that I have developed a team culture and improved relationships that reflect my journey.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
I believe in lifelong learning. I will continue to strengthen my skills and experience by requesting and being open to ongoing feedback and making the choice to accept every new opportunity with the potential that it has to help me grow and be great.

What inspires you?
I get my inspiration and energy from people. Making a difference in someone’s life, watching an individual develop into someone they never thought was possible and taking a moment out for myself to reflect on how precious our lives are and how lucky I am to have a wonderful family. Yoga helps.

“I have learned to build confidence and follow my dreams with courage.”

Miranda Lam
Branch Manager, HSBC Bank Canada, Kerrisdale Branch

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
I would like to enhance my leadership skills and enrich my personal development experience.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
I learned the various qualities and skills required as a courageous leader, and applied them to lead my new team to deliver high performance.

What inspires you?
I am inspired by my mentor who is also my first direct manager. He has showed me how to be a successful coach to lead high performing teams. He also inspired me to be active with community involvement and external networking.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
Assume leadership role for larger teams (e.g. larger branches or district manager) or different line of business.
Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
To broaden my understanding of leadership and build skills to work as a values-based leader.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
It was valuable to discover my strengths and how I could apply them in my leadership journey. Whether it has been building a team, engaging my board, organization or community; I am confident in my work, come from a place of integrity and am able to recognize my own gaps. The values-based leadership skills that the program taught has benefitted my own organization and the many boards I have the pleasure of sitting at the table on. Importantly, the program gave me the confidence to pursue graduate work in community development.

Michelle Favero
Executive Director, Abbotsford Division of Family Practice

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
To broaden my understanding of leadership and build skills to work as a values-based leader.

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It was valuable to discover my strengths and how I could apply them in my leadership journey. Whether it has been building a team, engaging my board, organization or community; I am confident in my work, come from a place of integrity and am able to recognize my own gaps. The values-based leadership skills that the program taught has benefitted my own organization and the many boards I have the pleasure of sitting at the table on. Importantly, the program gave me the confidence to pursue graduate work in community development.

Michelle Favero
Executive Director, Abbotsford Division of Family Practice

“Women Leading the Way™ uncovered the confident community leader I aspired to be and set me on a leadership path of integrity, growth and ability. Thank you for planting the seed that has helped me bloom.”

Michelle Favero (Cohort 1)
“Play to your strengths, embrace change, and be at ease with the fact there is no single best or right solution to leading. You are capable of far more than you think.”

Lisa Blackham
Manager, Corporate Human Resources, New Gold

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
To demystify leadership and gain a stronger understanding of what the personal qualities and experiences are that contribute to the development of a leader. In addition to gaining insight to my own abilities as a Leader and how this translates to my chosen industry.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
What I have learned is that there is no one route to leadership. There are common traits and general experiences recognized leaders possess, however how these are applied and how you approach leadership really comes back to being true to who you are and being clear on your values.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
Who knows – but I’m lucky enough to have options so I’ll make the most of each learning opportunity to develop myself and others and be impactful in a positive way as my professional and personal path evolves.

What inspires you?
I get my inspiration from looking into the past, reading about what the well known and more often the less well known leaders have achieved, the latter interesting me more. I look to the present to see what my family, friends and colleagues are doing on an everyday basis, both personally and professionally to impact the world in which they live, and how their actions challenge my thinking and behaviours. I look to the future for trends, that is ideas and concepts that are just starting to shape how an individual or a sector of society conducts themselves in challenging environments.
DID YOU KNOW?
By the fourth cohort, close to 40% of WLW participants accepted into the program were referred by someone who had been through the first three cohorts of WLW.

“I am more confident in my profession and in my abilities to be a leading lawyer within my area of practice.”

Stephanie Daniels
Associate Lawyer, Farris, Vaughan, Wills & Murphy LLP

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
To improve my leadership skills; to identify my current leadership skills and the areas in which I need to grow; to find out more about myself and assess whether I should be taking a different career path; and to develop a network within Minerva.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
I learned about my strengths – as in, the things that make me feel strong. This has been hugely rewarding, as it lead me to determine that my job is a good fit for me. I have felt encouraged and motivated to think strategically about how to excel within my organization, within my community, and as a lawyer in general.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
I intend to work on my project, which is the development of a life and business plan, with the hope that I will be able to manage life as a mother of two children and a lawyer in private practice at a large law firm. I intend to develop a self-sufficient law practice, as I enjoy being independent within a community of other lawyers.

What inspires you?
I get inspiration from being with my friends who are other female professionals, particularly those who are also mothers. I also get much inspiration from hearing established leaders talk about their journeys, particularly their set-backs and the challenges they faced, as they almost always found a way to overcome them.
These values are the foundation for how I show up in the world: as a leader and as a human being.

Roselynn Verwoord (Cohort 3)

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
I decided to apply to participate in WLW because it had been several years since I had taken a formal leadership program. As a 2008 graduate of Leadership Victoria, a ten-month leadership learning program, I had been exposed to opportunities to explore my understanding of service-based leadership. I am now in a different place in my professional career and I wanted to explore my current understanding of leadership and to engage in conversations with other women leaders who face common challenges of work-life balance and self-advocacy. Having participated as an Emerging Leader in Minerva’s Learning to Lead Program™, and having had such a positive experience, I was confident that WLW would provide me with just what I needed.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
Through WLW, I learned and had the opportunity to explore many things including: self-awareness, self-advocacy, and networking. I really appreciated the opportunity to explore how I show up in the world, my values and to identify my strengths (what energizes me). I have a much clearer understanding of who I am and I feel more confident about my role as a leader with this new understanding.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
My next steps in my leadership journey involve continuously challenging myself to always live by my values, even when my values are tested. I am also committed to being a healthy leader – someone who models a healthy work-life balance without sacrifice. I truly believe that as women leaders, we can have it all!

What inspires you?
I am continuously inspired by people who are willing to take risks and to explore alternative possibilities. I am also inspired by people who are making a difference in the world – by living their values, by helping others to identify their values and strengths, and by working for change both locally and globally.
“Women Leading the Way™ helped me realize that the key to living a more meaningful life is to be myself. Who I am is not just enough – it is everything I need to be happy, and make a difference in the world.”

Sheila Gayatri Evani
Founder and Owner, Medha Legal Services

Why did you participate in Women Leading the Way™?
I was looking for inspiration and direction. That was when I found out about WLW. By then, I had a vague notion I wanted to work with charities, and I hoped the program would give me some of the skills and contacts to move into a management role in a non-profit.

What did you learn and how did you apply these learnings?
Although I knew there would be an emphasis in the program on building self-awareness and reflecting on my personal values, I wasn’t prepared for what that would actually mean in my life. Truthfully, I thought I already knew what my values were, but this program helped me understand how my value-priorities in life and work had to do with my own sense of personal satisfaction and authenticity. I realized, what had turned me off of legal practice was the politics of firm management and culture, but that I actually I loved the work itself, and took a great deal of personal pride in being an advisor to clients I admired and respected. Starting my firm after that just naturally followed. Now I also get to experience the thrill of building a values-based business of my own.

What is next for you on your leadership journey?
I am growing my own firm, but also starting to take a more active role in mentoring community-minded start-up businesses and non-profits in setting up their ventures. There are so many great innovators in Vancouver doing work that serves a commercial purpose, but also focuses on social good. I find it very inspiring and am excited to be involved in the movement.

What inspires you?
It mostly comes from paying attention to what is happening in the moment, staying curious, and being present in my everyday experiences. It can happen when I’m hearing a great speaker telling amazing stories about their personal journeys, a random thought that occurs to me during a yoga class, a beautiful song on the radio as I’m driving to work, or even an unexpected conversation with a friend.
Women Leading the Way™ Participants 2010-2014

Cohort 1
Alexa Fankboner
Barbara Williams
Catherine Foster
Duba Ahmed Chisaka
Eleanor Milner
Kerry Kitigour
Iris Lema
Janine Chow
Joanne Sims Gould
Jodie Wong
Kasia Szul
Lara Stone
Lynn Paus
Mandy Hansen
Mary Martin
Michelle Favaro
Michelle Stewart
Rebecca Kerbel
Renée Lomon
Robertta Poatsy
Robert Walker
Srejana Asha Krya
Tracy Howard
Valerie Casselton

Cohort 2
Alberta Evans
Andrea Semeny
Angela Brown
Anisha Umeki
Chris Little
Christine Fernandez
Erika Raffi
Erlin Hodgins
Grace McCollum
Jeanie Pan
Jill Tidman
Jiliane Schulte-Kohler
Karen Joseph
Kelly O’Don
Lindsey Harding
Lori Lynn Ackerman
Michelle Grant
Natalie Gaspard
Paula Treme-Baldwin
Petra Kalsoun
Paehow Brower
Paula Reams
Sarah Meecham
Sharon Lau
Shelby Gaydets Evan
Suzanne Jean

Cohort 3
Amanda Goodman Lee
Andrew Semeny
Carla Tanaka
Carol Chu
Christina Treloar
Claire Skillet
Kathy Muir
Jasmine Scott
Katie McInnis
Kelly Khaish
Kerry Byrne
Kristin Demaert
Krisst Toddl Millar
Lara Lowe
Lindsay Chan
Lindsay Folloy
Lana Kim
Jaslyn Drew
Grace Beattie
Juliana Buitenhuis
Karen Joseph
Jennifer Chen
Lindsey Herring
Lori Lynn Ackerman
Michelle Grant
Natalie Gaspard
Paula Treme-Baldwin
Petra Kalsoun
Paehow Brower
Paula Reams
Sarah Meecham
Sharon Lau
Shelby Gaydets Evan
Suzanne Jean

Cohort 4
Ali Rinar
Alicia Williams
Camilla Tibbs
Charlene Sanlaf
Cindy Frost
Gillian Burnett
Grace Kuk
Helen Goodwin
Hannah Fetter
Iris Lo
Jaslyn Nguyen
Jordan MacLellan
Kelly Ridley
Kim Kang
Leslie Campbell
Lisa Leblanc
Lucie Balin-Ad
Melissa Estable
Nicole Kiber
Nina Legac
Rena Messerschmidt
Roxana Million
Ruben Ochou
Sharon Lee
Shelley Millman
Sherron Tongue
Sofia Forin
Sunny Mistry
Vera Zviny
Zana Dojmov

Women Leading the Way™ Program Overview
For the first six months of the program, WLW participants come to Vancouver once a month for two days to engage in intensive in-class leadership training. During the second phase of the program the participants are asked to put their leadership skills into action by engaging in a leadership project that benefits their communities or their organizations. They are then asked to present their projects to a team of panellists, demonstrating leadership techniques used and leadership lessons developed throughout the program and subsequent project.