

DDC's Starkoski Shining in the DoD New Leader Program

Stella Starkoski, a Management Analyst in the Defense Distribution Center (DDC) Business Systems Modernization (BSM) Office, was selected for the Department of Defense (DoD) New Leader Program in the 2002 Session 1. One of 113 students, there are only three DLA participants.

The New Leader Program (NLP) is a competency-based leadership development program designed to develop future public service leaders by providing assessment, experiential learning and individual development opportunities. The New Leader Program operates under the direction of the Leadership Development Academy, Graduate School, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The New Leader Program is a six-month leadership development program designed for employees who are at the GS-07, GS-09, or GS-11 grade level and demands much more than classroom participation. For starters, Starkoski had to help design her own program of study—a Personal Development Action Plan.

Starkoski's program of study to included working 30 days outside her normal work area, shadowing a GS-13 or higher for one week, completing an executive interview, reading books on management and leadership, developing a team project and presentation, and writing a Program Impact Paper, as well as, written reports for all the other assignments.

Starkoski's 30-day assignment outside her normal work area placed her in the Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pennsylvania (DDSP) Transportation Division under the guidance and direction of Ms. Jerri Taylor. "I really enjoyed working with Jerri," Starkoski said. "She prepared an extensive agenda for me, which included the opportunity to attend several meetings such as: Commander's Staff, Stand-Up, Carrier, Transportation Enhancement, and Operations Meetings. I also toured the EDC (DDSP Eastern Distribution Center) and the FedEx Ground Hub. I received on-hands training in Emergency Supply Operations, Late Lines/Cancellations, Supply Discrepancy Requests, Astray Freight, Container Bookings, FMS (Foreign Military Sales) and ALOC (Air Lines of Communication). I also worked on several special projects," Starkoski said. "Ms. Taylor's style of management is very inspiring and she's a good role model. Jerri passed along her thoughts on key elements that form the basis for good leadership.

"It was very interesting and exciting to work outside my normal frame of reference," Starkoski said. "I learned something everyday. I've worked in and around distribution for years, but I never got such a detailed presentation. I particularly enjoyed having the opportunity of working with new people and learning different functions in the Traffic



John Kurtz and Stella Starkoski during Starkoski's "shadow" phase.

Management and Shipping Planning areas of the Transportation Division."

The one-week shadowing assignment placed Starkoski with John Kurtz, DDC Financial Operations Deputy. Working with Kurtz, Starkoski attended several financial meetings and video teleconferences. Kurtz also taught Starkoski the basics of the principles of financial management. Starkoski was also able to observe Kurtz' management style. "His concern for others is endless. His style reflects fairness. John's style clearly shows that he has a great respect for exceeding the customer's needs."

Participants in the New Leader Program must be nominated. Michael Yost, Chief of the DDC BSM Office nominated Starkoski. "Developing and training our employees is one of our most important jobs," Yost said. "Stella was a natural choice and I can already see benefits in our office from her participation in the program."

"I was humbled to know Michael had so much confidence in me," Starkoski said about the nomination to the program". The program was a lot of work but knowing he was behind me really helped. I feel very fortunate to be working with some really great people. I hope after completing this training that I have grown personally and professionally. Also, that I can be an even more effective employee within my organization and reach my career goals."

From here Starkoski hopes to "to take on a more challenging workload and assist in the success of the BSM goals," Starkoski said.