

If you would like to become a mentor or a protégé, contact DDC's Equal Employment Opportunity Office (EEO) at 717-770-4128 (DSN 771-4128) or visit the EEO page on the DDC intranet for more information.

Although becoming a protégé does not guarantee promotion, it does provide many opportunities for professional growth. As DeVito puts it, "The sky's the limit."



*Shearer and DeVito discuss strategies for achieving goals.*



*Heiner (left) suggested books for her protégé to read in order to better understand how people communicate.*

## DDC Seeking Aspiring Leaders

*By Polly Charbonneau, DDC Command Affairs*

Are you a motivated self-starter? Would like to improve your managerial skills? Be better at working in a team? If you answered yes, then the Aspiring Leader Program may be for you.

Part of the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Graduate School, the Aspiring Leader Program prepares federal employees at the GS 5-7 levels for positions as team leaders, supervisors, and managers. The program strengthens basic competencies in managerial skills such as oral and written communication, problem solving, leadership skills, self-direction, customer service, and decisiveness.

The Defense Distribution Center (DDC) has been participating in the program since 2000 and has several graduates around the headquarters and the distribution centers.

"The course really inspires one to strive for goals," said Dennis Amrhein, Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa. (DDSP) Supply Technician, "both at work and personally. The program overall provided me many opportunities and allowed me not only a better picture of DDSP and DDC, but gave me an opportunity to better development my skills and learn more about myself."

Developmental assignments include some opportunities to consider your career in the long-term. Participants must interview a minimum of three federal managers at the GS 11-13 levels. These interviews

Good leaders set the pace of work and communicate verbal and written instructions received from their supervisor to the employees. They also train the employees in areas that require additional technical information or guidance. Good leaders recognize exceptional performance from their employees and reward them with monetary and non-monetary rewards.

*Vincent Grace, DDDC*

By telling them they are doing a good job, every now and then give them time off awards. Give them a monetary award. Have a picnic for them. Give them a letter of appreciation.

*Patricia Freeman, DDJF*

I think without a doubt a good leader acknowledges valued employees through recognition. **The recognition doesn't have to be elaborate but should always be timely.** It's important that the employee feels they are "Part of the equation" and that they are not being lost in the shuffle.

*Rory Pitts, DDPW*

Sometimes good employees have not been given the opportunity to work on high profile projects and due to that, have not stood out when awards are given. If a leader appreciates an employee for their steady devotion to their work, the good leader gives **words of encouragement** occasionally to let them know that their work is appreciated. Sometimes it is easier for a leader to only talk to an employee about their work when they have made a mistake instead of letting them know that they have been doing a good job.



*Tracey Miles, DDCT*

### DLA Goal #2

Structure internal processes to deliver customer outcomes effectively and efficiently.



One of the most important qualities of any good Manager, Supervisor or Lead Person is to **be a good listener**. Listen to your personnel. **Treat each person as an individual** and not just another person that belongs to a Department or Division within the organization. Consistently **communicate with mutual respect** and demonstrate democratic values. Adapt to your audience, **keep in mind that we all come from different backgrounds, cultures, religions and ethnic groups**. Follow-up on items brought to your attention and **always give feed back**.  
*Walter Maldonado, DDJF*

A good leader trusts their workers do their job without micromanaging. A good leader gives positive feedback even when giving instructions on how not to make that mistake again. A good leader leads by example.

*Ginny Goldberg, DDPW*



*Janie Reyes, DDCT*

Good Leaders demonstrate that employees are valued by showing them respect and **knowing when you need to stop and listen**.

By **being visible, available and providing feedback, both positive and negative**. If you're not "present" in the workplace then employees may think they're not worthy of your attention. Employees want to know how well they're doing. Feedback should be provided on a regular basis.

*Melanie Sorgenfrei, DDPW*



*Nisha Herrera, DDCT*

By communication skills, knowing the value of that employee and letting them know they are doing a good job once in a while.

provide an additional opportunity to have visibility at the management level and gain critical information for long-term career planning and development. "The challenging part of the program," said Ruby Pazos, DDSP Lead Supply Technician, "is deciding what career path to take. Once you decide what career path you want everything else about the program falls into place."

In addition to the three one-week sessions, the program includes a one-week "shadowing" assignment of a federal manager at the GS 11-13 levels. Participants observe a manager in action, focusing on their management style and how they interact with their employees.

"The part I enjoyed the most," said Amrhein, "was the opportunity to perform work details in other areas. I performed a one-week detail at the DDSP Inventory area, where I was able to learn many aspects of the Inventory area. This allowed me the opportunity not only to learn what they do, but also provided them the opportunity to learn what type of worker I am.

"I also performed a 30-day detail in the DDC Supply Management Division under the direction of Tony DeVito (DDC Supply Management Division Chief)" Amrhein said. "This allowed me an outsider's view of the activities at DDC, and also allowed me the opportunity to learn many new skills."

The program also allows participants to see themselves in new ways. "A really challenging aspect about the program is that I never thought of myself as a mentor," said Pazos. "I always looked at myself as a protégé. The program forced me to look at myself as a mentor and the responsibilities of a mentor."

The program challenges participants on many levels. "The most challenging part of the program was meeting the deadlines," said Ralph Cross, Defense Distribution Depot Norfolk, VA (DDNV) Supply Technician. "We had many assignments to keep up with plus we had to do our regular job as well."

The first step in any training is getting the approval of your supervisor. Several supervisors said they supported their staff member's application because of their work ethic and work quality and a demonstrated desire to learn. Many supervisors reported seeing increased self confidence in graduates

and would recommend the program to others.

One supervisor said an aspiring leader from his team had a real fear of public speaking before the training. "The program worked," he said. "She speaks more about issues and has really opened up."

Many Aspiring Leader participants agreed that public speaking is a challenge. "The most exciting, fun and at times nerve-wracking part of the program was the presentation skills," Pazos said. "Since the program I have joined a speech club called Toast Masters. In the Leadership program I have learned the importance of effectively expressing and presenting oneself. I have also been reading more books about management and leadership."

"The hour long presentation that is assigned to your team was the most challenging part of the program," Amrhein said. "The topic my team chose was "Continual Learning." Standing in front of the entire class was extremely difficult for me since I had never done anything like that before. I did realize that after it was over, that I did okay and that I would be able to do this again when required."

Participants are already recommending the program to others. "Anyone who attends the program should take full advantage of what is offered," Amrhein said. "They should take this chance to broaden their horizons and take chances to do something that they may have thought they could not do. Since ending the program, I hope to be able to one day join the DLA Intern program and not only learn more about DLA and DDC, but expand my knowledge and abilities."

"I definitely recommend the program to other employees," Pazos said. "This is a career program that will integrate well into your personal and professional life. Different aspects of the program will introduce and put you in contact with many people in the government and you will share personal and professional growth."

"I would recommend the program because it helps you to get use to working under pressure and be able to reach deadlines that may be a stretch," Cross said. "You also learn presentation skills and interviewing techniques which are very useful."