

Innovation has never gone out of style



By Nancy Pierce LR '05

Racine is a place of Innovation – one need only look to our history and some of the companies that started right here: Case, Twin Disc, InSinkErator, Modine, Hamilton Beach, Oster, SCJ ...the list goes on and on. Racine in many ways has been a quiet Innovator. It's a testament to the work concept of the people who choose to live here.

Our founders and all who have followed take a look at what needs to be done, consider ways to make it happen, develop the tools and knowledge needed for success and implement the work. We are the same culture today.

In a recent consultant review of RAMAC, one of the comments made was that RAMAC is not like any other Chamber in the US. RAMAC does more, in more varied and innovative ways. No surprise there, look at who we are!

Leadership Racine is a benefit of that innovative thinking. More than 12 years ago RAMAC President Roger Caron and community leaders focused on the value and benefit a leadership development program would bring to Racine. Consider the timing – Racine was dealing with the loss of much of its manufacturing base and looking for ways to broaden the work base. Roger's vision of what a community trustee program would bring to the table has become an outstanding recognized program. Roger and the RAMAC Board "knew" that in developing community commitment, sustainable actions would occur as well as a cultural change and commitment to Racine. Our entire quality of life in Racine has been affected by the decision to create Leadership Racine.

If we consider that over 330

graduates contribute a minimum of 40 hours a year, at a value of \$20 an hour, in the last year, the Racine community has received \$264,000 of benefit. If we look at just three members of our founding class; David Mack, Judy Gavigan and Art Howell- an estimate of 200 hours each year, translates into \$144,000 in benefit for Racine. Look at what these three have worked on:

- City Council
- Boy Scouts
- Junior Achievement
- Women's Resource Center
- Racine Community Foundation
- HALO
- Safe Start
- Racine Zoo
- Animal Crackers
- Indian Summer
- RAMAC
- Cops N' Kids

That's just three out of over 330 people!

Why did people want to participate in Leadership Racine? Did they know of RAMAC's work to develop the program? Has Leadership Racine been a benefit for them as well for the community?

Judy Gavigan wanted to participate as she says, "I needed to have a more rounded understanding of what Racine was about and a means to become more familiar with programs, resources, what should be done and what should stop being done to better our community".

Art Howell did not know that RAMAC was behind Leadership Racine. The Racine Police Department was recognized nationally at the time and committed to a community

policing model. His participation was "a direct extension of the concept of being connected to others, whether at the corporate level or within local neighborhoods".

David Mack read articles and noted that it "looked like an exciting opportunity to get more involved in the community and to enhance my own skills".

Innovation – every day a graduate of Leadership Racine uses it to continue to grow and support this great community. Innovator – the word for the work of Roger Caron and the RAMAC team that 12 years ago began the journey we continue today.

Leadership Racine Founding Board Members

Charles Bray
 Gabriella Klein
 Richard Hansen
 Jerry Franke
 Mark Marlaire
 Roger Caron
 Robert Taylor
 Carol Barkow
 Greg Andereggs
 Janet Brown Exner
 Dave Maurer
 Marge Kozina
 Blake Smith
 Celeste Henken
 Julie McKenna