

# Energy on steroids

By: Nancy Pierce '05



**E**nergy on steroids – that’s the sense you have as Candy Zicarelli, Leadership Racine Class of 2009 sits down to work with you.

Candy is a Standards Analyst with We Energies. Her work at We Energies constantly calls upon her native skill set of detailed analyzation. Currently, she is the Project Manager for the Distribution Integrity Management Program, a federally mandated program for utilities which involves knowing everything that’s in the ground, constantly analyzing threats to the integrity of the system, and developing plans to eliminate those threats.

Candy is originally from Racine and has lived here most of her life, except for a short time in Beloit. Over the years, she has found that there is so much to be proud of about Racine, the people, the revitalization of downtown, the many things to do and the number of people volunteering their time and talent to help others. Candy sits on the United Way Caring for Kids committee, the Leadership Racine Alumni board and helps with the Big Brothers, Big Sisters Christmas party (she served on their board for several years.)

Leadership Racine was introduced to Candy by 2008 LR graduate, Bonnie Bishop. They worked together on the Board of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Racine and Kenosha Counties, Inc. She applied and was quickly accepted.

During her tenure as a LR participant, her team took on the project, Youth Empowering Strong. Their mission was to provide vocational guidance to at risk youth ages 14 -18 with specific emphasis on alternatives to a four year degree. Their one day, now annual program, in partnership with Racine Unified School District addressed a specific challenge the

Racine area faces. With a high minority student base, it is crucial that we show our students the breadth of options and opportunities that are open to them as working adults.



Candy Zicarelli  
Leadership Racine Class  
of 2009

During the 2009 class year, Speed Networking for Non Profits was introduced to the Leadership Racine program. Yes, it was speed dating to connect the LR participants to area non-profits. Each Non Profit had 5 minutes to explain their mission, their program and potentially connect with class members. That’s how Candy came to Young Aviators, Inc.

Candy has a concern and commitment for youth. Young Aviators ([www.young-aviators.com](http://www.young-aviators.com)) is a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) based program that introduces youth ages 13 to 18 to aviation. The program is unique in the United States as each student actually flies a plane daily during the program. While Candy is not a flier and had never actually been particularly interested in aviation, the commitment to youth caught her attention and she asked to visit a board meeting. As Steve Myers, Vice Chair of the program has said, “having

Candy choose Young Aviators was one of the best unexpected outcomes we’ve had!” (Steve is also the father of Dee Dee Myers, the keynote speaker for the 2010 RAMAC Business dinner) There are plenty of aviators and scientists to teach the youth, but what the program needed was a board member who understood the working structure of a Non Profit. Candy jumped in with both feet ...organizing and analyzing feet that is. She is the brawn and the brains behind every event

or program Young Aviators puts on... ketchup on your Kewpies hamburger... food for morning breaks, pizza for young stomachs; she arranges and manages it all. She headed up the committee for the first fund raising event for Young Aviators, “Our Wings will Inspire You”. She coordinated the event with Scores Sports bar for outstanding wings and an amazing outcome. Funds were raised that supported several scholarships, attendee’s had great fun not only eating, but bidding on silent auction items, seeing home built planes, plane engines of the future and for several lucky individuals, their first flights in small planes.

Candy showcases commitment to community and is a clear reflection of the servant leader model of community engagement. Her commitment to youth underscores her commitment to the economic success of not only the Racine area, but our State. She’s taken the Non Profit leadership training she received and applied it to her work with Young Aviator’s. Scott Sellers, Chair of Young

Aviators puts it this way, “Candy’s time in leadership training with Leadership Racine has raised the bar for all of our Board members. We are grateful to RAMAC for the program and especially grateful to Candy for all her



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time and efforts.”

Bottom line, Candy met a program that would not normally have been on her radar, found the youth connection and is making a difference in the lives of youth as she helps Young Aviators meet their mission of, “to light the spark of young people’s interest in aviation, science, technology, engineering and math”. Racine and Candy both benefit from this partnership. So, how can you stretch your wings and fly as Candy has done?