

Member Profile: Leadership in Action

Soon after **Brian Williams** (SKL XXX) read an article about a rape that occurred at John Marshall Middle School on Indianapolis' eastside in 2007, he decided to take action. He motivated his friend and colleague, **Todd Ryden** (SKL XXXIV), to join him in a meeting with the school's principal, Jeff White.

When Williams and Ryden met with White, the conversation quickly went far beyond the academic and disciplinary challenges facing the school. It was the start of a powerful movement to bring necessary resources and opportunities to disadvantaged kids and to positively impact the community.

John Marshall was a struggling school that lacked community involvement including a Parent Teacher Organization, student involvement exhibited by no student council or honor program, and poor academic achievement. But, Williams and Ryden were encouraged by White's contagious passion, dedication and enthusiasm for the students and his efforts to implement progressive ideas to turn the school around.

After several conversations with a group of committed parents and teachers Ryden, White and Williams created a Community Strategic Action Plan, which focused on tackling current challenges and developing crucial programs important for the school's future success. Ryden and Williams may have been the architects and the business minds behind the Action Plan, but White's ability to motivate and inspire teachers, parents and grandparents was the driving force behind the school's success.

Once the Action Plan was implemented, the accomplishments were many. Through the power of Ryden and Williams' connections in Indianapolis, they raised nearly \$1,000,000 to support new programs and purchase essential equipment for the sports teams and performing arts. A PTO group, a new honor society program and a student council were formed, along with other educational and mentoring programs. Internships were developed and provided students a means to pursue their interests in a structured way.

Success soon became evident. Parents and teachers began to take ownership of the school's programs and remain accountable for their tasks and targeted deadlines. Consequently, all involved were able to celebrate a historic moment as the school's highest ISTEP scores were achieved in the 2007/2008 school year.

The team assembled by Ryden, Williams and White almost makes success look easily attainable. But it was the conviction of our LLA colleagues, Ryden and Williams, that started a dialogue which resulted in a tangible effort to improve a neighborhood and its school. Each of us, whether graduates of the Stanley K. Lacy program, LEAD or Opportunity Indianapolis, share the common desire to become better leaders and contributors to society. Opportunity knocks every day, and you have the power to make a difference through your network and personal goals. Are you ready to commit yourself and create an invaluable impact on our community? LLA encourages you to start today.

Lacy Leadership Association will be, indisputably, the premier leadership network driving high-level engagement that makes Indianapolis the best city in the nation. Lacy Leadership Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

LINK and Stay Connected

The LINK is our answer to you and your member survey results. The monthly LINK email is your one chance each month to read Lacy Leadership Association news, register for upcoming programs and respond to the initiatives that inspire you. Stay in the know through the LINK email, find out what you've missed and get a sneak peak at the valuable programming and events that will keep you connected for months to come. We hope by reading the LINK, you'll be invigorated by the latest way LLA has been engaged in the community and the various leadership opportunities in which to get involved. Take advantage of the ease of this resource and learn ways to maximize your member network.

LLA is excited that the monthly LINK is our latest transition to streamlining member communications. That means good news for our members — You will no longer get multiple invitations, announcements and email notices from LLA because the LINK is now your news vehicle of the future. Don't miss out on this monthly resource designed just for you which will arrive in your inbox the fourth week of every month. Make sure you read the LINK email so you can stay connected!

