

Dear LHC's Leadership U,

As a teacher in the County, I want to express my gratitude and admiration for the opportunities Leadership U has given my students. Over my 20 years with Howard County, I know of no other program that builds our student population into considerate, responsible, engaged citizens. I know of the program's success through the 60-plus college essays I've helped students revise over the years, each of which attempted to put into words what the experience at Leadership U meant to them. What you provide is often difficult for students to articulate -- that's the touchstone for an experience that delivers exceptional impact. *They can't even find the words.*

**What do students tell me they've learned from Leadership U?** They've learned to lead, to be sure, but they've learned much more than that. They've learned to follow, to judge their other leaders fairly, to be honest and authentic as they lead their peers, and to accept and use constructive criticism. They've learned how to handle defeat. They've learned not to revel too long in their successes. They've learned to calibrate their expectations. Most importantly, they've learned that sometimes their hard work's value isn't immediately visible, but that that's no reason not to see the work through. They've learned myriad ways to assess their strengths, and they've learned how to best utilize others.

**What do students tell me about how they've changed through Leadership U?** They say they wouldn't have ever guessed that they could be a part of something that had such significant impact. One student, in particular after a project directed at showing those at Howard County General how much their community appreciates their work, said he changed because his eyes were open to how often we fail to acknowledge the selfless work of so many. His perspective was forever shifted at learning what LITTLE effort it really took to be cognizant about finding ways to give back to those who give their all.

**What do students tell me about the everlasting impact Leadership U has on its participants?** Citizenship. They know full well the challenges their generation will face in bringing people together for a common cause. They know, too, that no other program gives them the opportunity to follow an initiative's process from conception of an idea to the fruition of changing a community for the better. They are different people after Leadership U. They will graduate understanding from experience that they are enough to make an impact on a community, though they may see their services as only drops in a very large bucket. They leave your experience armed with the compassion, fortitude, grace, humility, and perspective to bring other people into the fold of their community. They can create other leaders.

Thank you for all the values you instill in our youth. Thank you for everything each of you does every day.

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