



BRUSHY FORK

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

A STRATEGIC INITIATIVE OF BEREA COLLEGE

2021 Impact Report

As 2021 draws to a close, Brushy Fork Leadership Institute is grateful for another year of service to leaders, organizations, and networks that are striving to build a resilient region. Zoom meetings continue to be a normal part of life, though we have begun to gather in some communities. Meanwhile, Brushy Fork's work and partnerships throughout the region have continued, and we would like to update our friends on this past year!



Mural images based on stories of strength and hope, produced by leaders at the Clay County Detention Center (top) and Manchester Freedom House (bottom) as part of Getting There Together in Manchester, Kentucky.

Getting There Together: Clay County, Kentucky

Getting There Together means finding ways to engage an entire community in leadership efforts, including people who face challenges and who may not be recognized for their leadership potential. Residents of Manchester, Kentucky adopted the name “Getting There Together” for a leadership program that served around one dozen male inmates at the Clay County Detention Center and ten parenting and pregnant women in recovery at Volunteers of America’s Freedom House. Brushy Fork co-designed the program with Stay in Clay/Project Hope, Volunteers of America, the Clay County Detention Center, and Story Bridge. Participants shared stories, explored personal leadership moments and ways they had been positively impacted by other leaders, reflected on their leadership styles—and the implications of working well with others—and shared their vision for serving as a leader for self, family, and community. Participants created two murals expressing themes from their stories. Freedom House participants said their mural represents that: “We are fighters and survivors, and we can do anything together.” The mural from the Clay County Detention Center represented inmates’ hope for their futures. Both murals are displayed in Rawlings/Stinson Park in Manchester, having debuted at a community event, *The Good Continues*. Brushy Fork continues to provide leadership development to women at Freedom House on a monthly basis, serving an average of six women per session.

2021 Brushy Fork Leadership Summit: Adaptive Leadership in Uncertain Times

Brushy Fork hosted 80 leaders representing 68 organizations for the 2021 Leadership Summit, which was held online from September 13 through 24, 2021. Participants joined the Leadership Summit from their homes and offices with representation from Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and even Connecticut and Washington. With a focus on adaptive leadership, the Summit connected leaders to focus on solutions for organization and community issues. Workshop tracks provided learning and resources for managing significant challenges of communities and organizations, strengthening adaptive leadership and technical leadership skills. The Summit also explored social inequities revealed by impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Community and organizational leaders explored the following topics:

- approaches for collaborative impact on systemic issues

Place Matters: Kentucky Promise Zone

The Brushy Fork Leadership Institute serves as a core partner in Place Matters—an effort to support children and youth from cradle to career in the eight counties of the Kentucky Promise Zone. Brushy Fork’s work engages organizations that are working at the local level to build communities in which children and youth are safe, healthy, and supported. Neighborhood partners in this work are Red Bird Mission, the Letcher County Culture Hub, Pine Mountain Settlement School, and the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky and its Affiliate Community Foundations. Through this program, Pine Mountain Settlement School has held its first iteration of Opportunity: Pine Mountain, a workforce development and career mentorship program for youth ages 18 to 24 who participated in paid internships. Red Bird Mission is creating *Full STEAM Ahead*, a STEAM site at the local school that will eventually expand to include workforce development and certification opportunities for youth and community members. The Letcher County Culture Hub has coordinated youth programming across various satellite locations in Letcher County and will continue to explore how this network of organizations can unite around youth-centered work. Finally, Brushy Fork has provided leadership and board development to Affiliates of the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky through monthly webinars that are responsive to board needs. In addition, Brushy Fork has facilitated strategic planning processes for six of the Affiliates, resulting in plans for investment of time, talent, and treasure to enhance the quality of life in communities.

Berea Community Leadership Table Coordination

Supporting families and children is a theme for some of Brushy Fork’s work within the city of Berea, Kentucky. During 2021, Brushy Fork has hosted a Community Results Coordinator to organize a leadership table in Berea that includes the local government, schools, health care organizations, and higher education. The coordinator is facilitating the leadership work of these agencies toward a long-term result that all children will enter Kindergarten ready to learn.

What’s Next East Kentucky?!

In 2021, Brushy Fork has continued to coordinate the volunteer network, What’s Next EKY?! (WNEKY?!). Volunteers have hosted monthly Community Connections via Zoom to facilitate the connection between fellow change makers in Eastern Kentucky, as well as resources, and inspiring ideas. These monthly meetings have reached over 140 people.

This Fall, the network began developing a Community Accelerator program and toolkit which will be tested and refined by two pilot communities—Grayson, Kentucky and Pikeville, Kentucky—with the goal of helping local people act on economic development projects in their community. Additionally, the WNEKY?! Small Business & Tourism work group has been collaborating to map out small businesses and unique destinations in

eastern Kentucky that will be highlighted on a mobile app geared toward motorsports tourists. This app is being developed with a funding opportunity from a USDA-grant by Backroads of Appalachia. Members of the Small Business & Tourism work group will be the first communities to use and give feedback on the app!

Community Leadership Program: Reimagining for the Future



Communities are stronger when an increased number and diversity of people assume leadership roles and work toward a shared vision. The Brushy Fork team is hard at work reimagining and renewing an intensive community leadership development program that builds on more than three decades of experience serving established and emerging leaders. The Brushy Fork Community Leadership Program will unite leaders to define the results they want to achieve; broaden their perspectives on historical, socio-economic, racial, and gender equity issues; articulate values to guide their work; build an understanding of leadership and communication; and develop technical and adaptive leadership skills. We are excited to launch this program in 2022! Watch our web site and social media for updates! You may also see the program overview [here](#).

Have you experienced an impact from Brushy Fork?

We welcome your thoughts and stories about any impacts you have experienced with Brushy Fork this year. Send us an email at brushyfork@berea.edu or share to our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/BrushyForkInstitute>.