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Additional Context for Servant Leadership Roles in Civic, Professional, or Service Organizations

Long before I became a “leader” within my field, I was first a “learner.” As I’ve developed professionally, I’ve found ways to leverage my leadership abilities to contribute to organizations that consistently seek the time and energy of people whose goals are to make a positive difference. My path into civic leadership really began in college. At the University of Iowa, I embraced the opportunity to become involved in a number of both service and academic organizations. To this day, 15 years after college, I still maintain an active role within the Women in Science and Engineering and the Society of Women Engineers by mentoring, organizing plant experiences, practicing interviewing skills, and coordinating realistic job previews.

As a member of General Mills, I’ve been fortunate to find numerous ways to hold leadership responsibilities and add value to causes that inspire me. As a company that helps “Feed the World”, I have become involved in a number of volunteer purposes that aim to end hunger, provide food security, and nourish lives. In addition, my team and I support making meals for Meals from the Heartland and Feed My Starving Children.

One of the most meaningful roles that I play is a Women’s Mentoring Circle Leader with women across the United States. This role allows me to serve a talented group of women in a capacity of need for the future, working to increase female retention in the workplace and career advancement. I like to believe that I make a significant difference to the women that I mentor in my circle, by providing support in their project efforts and helping them connect to others to build collaborative networks. In truth, these young, brilliant women challenge me to be a creative problem solver, as I help them remove barriers to their path of success. I’ve been committed and involved in mentoring circles for 9 years.

My interest in becoming a key member of the Advanced Manufacturing Partnership derived from the simple reality that manufacturers across Iowa can accomplish far more together than we can as individuals. I am passionate about contributing to the goals of the partnership. Collectively, we seek innovative processes and unique ways to close the skills gap that many of us face when trying to hire, recruit, and retain a solid workforce. We try to tap into the most advanced educational methods and tools to motivate and inspire Iowans to build a skillset that leads to a fulfilling career within high-paying advanced manufacturing jobs. One of our greatest accomplishments, building a foundational manufacturing curriculum course, has come through collaboration with DMACC, Project Iowa, and employers directly.

The United Way of Central Iowa is another organization that touched a personal chord within me and has a wide-spread reputation for servicing the best needs of the local community. I have been the Campaign Manager or Co-captain for this worthy cause during the last 6 years and the results of my leadership are apparent and measurable by objective data. In 2010, I assumed the leadership role of our team and increased new contributors by over 20%, 65% of existing donors increased their giving amount by 15% or more, and our location had 62% increase in total dollars generated for the United Way. By continuing to make our United Way efforts widely publicized we now take great pride in our ability to serve Iowans in need. We’ve maintained a level of record achievement ever since.

My experience with the United Way, led me to another organization that provides a notable and essential service. The Youth Emergency Services and Shelters is a nonprofit organization serving children and their families. I’ve been able to serve the affectionately nicknamed, YESS Kids, in a variety of ways including: fundraising efforts, educational opportunities for the kids, baking contests with Betty Crocker Kitchens, clothing and food drives, building holiday baskets of food for the families, or just spending a few hours on the basketball court with a child. These moments are some of my most rewarding times with young children. I have worked diligently with YESS Leadership and volunteers to be an active supporter and advocate for their purpose.