

A Journey of a Thousand Miles Begins with a Step

Class 15 walks from night-time into day



By Amie Thomas, Dairy Farmers of America

It is said that “a journey of a thousand miles begins with a step.” After spending the past two years as a member of LEAD NY Class 15, I think our entire class can now validate that statement.

If I rewind to September 2013, Class 15 took their first collective step together as we headed to Camp Oswegatchie. Looking back on that trip to the Adirondacks, I believe it’s fair to say that none of us realized or truly appreciated the expedition that we had signed up for. At the end of the first evening, we had the option to go stumble around together in the woods for a night walk. A majority of the class chose to brave the dark and head out as a group. With no light from the moon, it turns out that walking in the woods without flashlights is not an easy task. Our class had to immediately learn to trust one another as we made our way through the woods, hurdling over tipped-over trees, and trying to avoid stubbing our toes on rocks.

As I reflect on this moment in time, it strikes me how appropriate an introduction to LEAD NY that night walk truly was. In many ways, prior to LEAD, I think

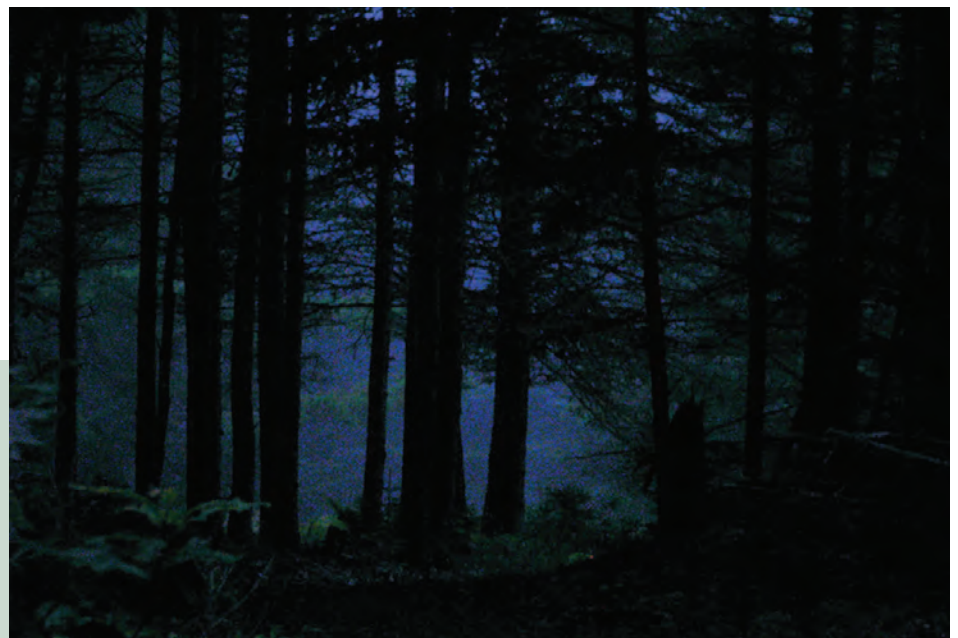
everyone in the class knew there were ways to be a leader and attributes of a leader, but had very little training from which to draw upon. Similarly, in the woods, we knew there were paths that we were walking on, but could not easily see where we were headed.

As I write this, it has been two months since LEAD NY Class 15 held their commencement ceremony in Ithaca, NY. It was a celebration of the journey of the “thousand miles” that our class took together over the past two years. In fact, apparently it was a journey of over 50,000 miles that our class traveled together during the past 2 years as calculated by class member Chelsea Smith.

From my perspective, since that first step in Oswegatchie, the experiences during our first year in Rochester, Batavia, Syracuse, Albany, NYC and Cortland provided us an excellent basis from which to become more effective leaders. It also opened our eyes to the many opportunities to collectively work together as members of the agriculture community, and the array of opportunities available in our society today to help enrich our communities.

Year two of the program brought some bigger steps with trips to Washington D.C., Ottawa Canada, and South Africa. These experiences brought understanding of both the differences and similarities faced

continued on pages 4-5



INSIDE	Perspectives	2-3
	Fundraising Donors	4-5
	Alumni Spotlight	6-7
	News You Can Use	7-8
	Donation Form	8

By Larry Van De Valk,
Executive Director, LEAD New York



Now More Than 30 Years of Leadership Development

Please help us welcome Class 16!

AS ALWAYS,
WE ENCOURAGE
ALUMNI TO JOIN
THE CURRENT CLASS
FOR A MEAL,
TOUR OR WORKSHOP
AT ANY OF OUR
SEMINARS.

We are very pleased to announce class 16 of LEAD New York. We are confident that we have selected another diverse group of aspiring leaders and we look forward to working with them in the coming months.

Members come from every corner of our state, plus two other states; and we have representation from industry sectors that we have not seen in years. This is a very strong, diverse class. Should you know or run in to any of these individuals in the next few weeks, please join us in welcoming them to the program.

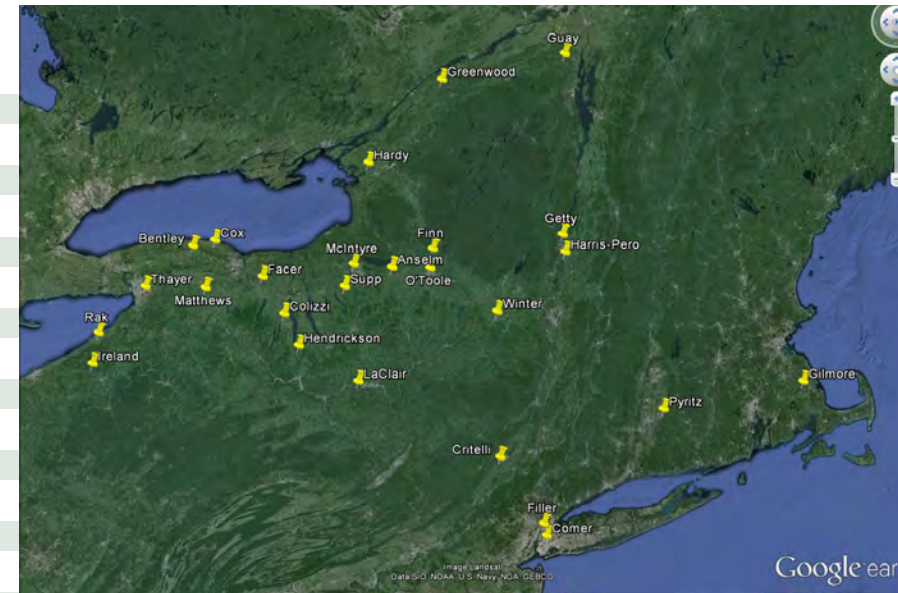
The guiding principal in the selection process is to try to assemble the right mix of participants in the final roster – including as much diversity as possible. As such, the new class has a 50/50 male/female split; is dispersed from Lake Erie in the west, to Chazy in the north, to Boston in the east, and NYC to the south, with many points in between (see map right). About 1/3 of the participants are producers, 1/3 come from the for-profit agribusiness sector, and the remainder come from the not-for profit

or educational sectors. Age range of the participants is 26 – 48, and the average age of the cohort is 35 years old. This group will bring valuable, diverse perspectives to class discussions, as they represent a wide array of specific industry sectors.

As always, we encourage alumni to join the current class for a meal, tour or workshop at any of our seminars. Class members appreciate the opportunity for interaction with alumni, and alumni benefit from the networking opportunity, too! More details on each of the seminars – including a seminar agenda – can usually be found on our website (www.leadny.org) about one week prior to the seminar. Please mark your calendars with these dates, and let us know if you would like to join us for one of these seminars. 🌱

Class 16 of LEAD New York

NAME	EMPLOYMENT
Anselm, Marie	CCE Ontario
Bentley, Laura	Bentley Bros. (equipment)
Colizzi, Mike	CCE – Finger Lakes Grape Team
Comer, Challey	NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets
Cox, William	Seneca Foods
Critelli, Jamie	Floral Beauty Greenhouses
Facer, Martha	Wegmans
Filler, Sam	Empire State Development Corporation
Finn, Debbie	Finndale Farms (dairy)
Getty, Rella Moag	Farm Credit East
Gilmore, Cass	Quatticas, LLC (cranberries)
Greenwood, Ted	Greenwood Dairy
Guay, Robert	Yankee Farm Credit
Hardy, John	Hardy Hops
Harris-Pero, Megan	Harris-Pero, PLLC
Hendrickson, Chad	Lakewood Vineyards
Ireland, J. Bryce	J. Edwards Insurance Agency
LaClair, Eric	Wagner Lumber
Matthews, Tom	Linwood Management (dairy)
McIntyre, Matt	Dairy Farmers of America
O'Toole, Jean	NY Beef Council
Pyritz, Jessica	CoBank
Rak, Adam	Double A Vineyards
Supp, Anna	Farm Credit East
Thayer, Cheryl	CCE – Harvest NY Team
Winter, Sophie	SUNY Cobleskill – Agricultural Business



Locations of Class 16 Members

Mark Your Calendars!

CLASS 16 YEAR 1, 2015-2016

ORIENTATION (1 DAY)

- ➔ July 21, WNY (East Aurora)
- ➔ July 22, CNY (Syracuse)
- ➔ July 23, ENY (Albany)

Procedures, expectations, assignments, facilitation, etc.

OSWEGATCHIE ➔ October 1-3

Retreat, introductions, teambuilding, MBTI #1, leadership theory intro, Listening

ROCHESTER ➔ November 5-7

Consumers, marketing, food away from home, business etiquette, fundraising basics, speech training, 360 feedback

BATAVIA ➔ December 3-5

Production ag. issues, technology, persuasive speeches, debate training

SYRACUSE ➔ January 7-9

Ag. Society – Climate Change, practice debates, cooperatives, media training, equine industry

ALBANY ➔ February 1-3

State government, shadowing activity, lobbying, writing skills, conflict management

NYC/LI ➔ March 6-10

Food distribution, finance, urban consumers, LI agriculture, farmland preservation

OWEGO ➔ April 6-9

Local government, Libertyville, meeting management and board service, graduation

Booming beverage industry is well represented in LEADNY

The distilling, brewing and winemaking industries are well represented in LEADNY, on both sides of the graduation podium, if you will. Our newest class includes three representatives from the wine industry (Mike Colizzi – Finger Lakes Grape Team, Chad Hendrickson - Lakewood Vineyards, and Adam Rak – Double A Vineyards), a hop grower (John Hardy) and Empire State Development Corporation's Director of Industry Development for farm-based beverages (Sam Filler). Of course, these folks have their LEADNY experience in front of them. When I want to know what similar alumni are up to, I always enjoy reading *The Wine Press* from the NYWGF and scanning for the names of some of our alumni. It is unusual for me to see an issue that doesn't mention at least one of our alumni doing something noteworthy or providing some leadership for their peers. For example, I recently learned that Linda Purdy (class 13) was elected as Chair of the Winegrape Growers of America. Congratulations, Linda!

Class 15 Fundraising Summary: Thank you for helping us exceed our fundraising goal!

The roster below represents all donations received for Class 15, with the exception of endowment contributions. The donation period represented is July 1, 2013 through June 8, 2015. If you have made a donation since this issue went to press, or we have inadvertently omitted your name, please accept our apologies. *Donors in italics are LEAD alumni.*

Keep in mind that as of July 1, 2015, we will begin a new class fundraising cycle, and as a result will wipe this donor roster clean. So, if you want to be recognized as a donor to Class 16, please remember to make a contribution! You should see new solicitation materials arrive later this summer, or use the donation card in this newsletter and send in your contribution today.

We sincerely appreciate your continued investment in our program. Without your support, we would not be able to continue to offer this high-quality leadership development experience to our future industry and community leaders. Thank you!

Over \$50,000:

Northeast Agricultural Education Foundation, Inc.

Over \$25,000:

American Agriculturist Foundation Endowment Fund

Over \$10,000:

Farm Credit Endowment Fund
Cargill, Inc.
BASF Corporation – *Kate Wheeler*
CHS Foundation
Eastern Produce Council

\$5,000 - \$9,999:

Friends of Pro-Fac Fund
Diane and George Conneman Endowment Fund
Laurie and Steve Griffen
Jim Vincent

\$2,500 - \$4,999:

Lowell Smith Circle of Courage Fund
Northeast Ag Education Endowment Fund

Monsanto Endowment Fund
National Grape Cooperative Endowment Fund

Seneca Foods Endowment Fund

Erie and Niagara Insurance
NY Wine & Grape Foundation
Walnut Ridge Dairy (*Hardie, Palladino, Fleming*)
Dairy Farmers of America
NY Farm Bureau
NYS Agricultural Society

\$1,000 - \$2,499:

New York Corn & Soybean Growers Association
Upstate Niagara Cooperative, Inc.
Corwin Holtz
Keith Pierce
Saputo Dairy Foods
Roger Lamont
Jonathan Burns
Kreher Farm Fresh Eggs
Joe Falcone
Kast Farms – John Kast
Bentley Bros. Inc.
Long Island Farm Bureau

McCormick Farms, Inc.
Midstate Mutual Insurance
NBT Bancorp
Northeast Ag. and Feed Alliance
Mark Bitz
Peter Call
Ken Mattingly
Dave Rockwell
Commodity Resource Corp.
Bill Drake
Sunoco, Inc.
Greg Wickham
Craig Yunker
Bob Smith
Robert Call
John Mueller

\$500 - \$999:

Edwin Fessenden
Northeast Dairy Producers Association, Inc.
United Apple Sales
Darleen Krisher-Meehan
Karen Cartier
Andrew Rice
James McKee
Mark Modzeleski
Jim Walker
Larry Van De Valk

Roberta Severson
Thomas Felton
Lawrence Eckhardt
Chip Hyde
Julie Suarez
Malachy Coyne
Leonard DeBuck
Eric Dziedzic
Brian Monckton
Timothy Rose
Thomas Facer
Kris Kane
Garden Trends
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Southworth-Milton, Inc.
Western NY Energy
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William Young
Richard Call
C. R. Pete Nesbitt
John Ruskiewicz

\$250 - \$499:

David Pugh
Triple Crown Nutrition, Inc.
Lucinda Noble
Harold Smith
Wm. Paul McDowell
Scott Keyes
Donald Bay
George Casler
Russell Kelly
Michael Oleksak
Mark Russell
Judith Smith
Lakewood Vineyards
Theodore Wells
Kate Wheeler
Ryan Hrobuchak
Steven Ammerman
Kristine Rogers-Ganz
Gramco, Inc.
New York Apple Sales
Willet Dairy, Inc.
Yankee Farm Credit, ACA
Henry Adams
Gregory Albrecht
Tricia Bauer
Briana Beebe
Berry Bros. Lumber
Robert Bitz
Justin Brown
Richard Butler
John Caltabiano
Thomas Cosgrove
Carolina Eastern Crocker
Bruce Dehm
James Edelstein
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Timothy Marshall
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Ronald Robbins
Seth Sheehan
Jason Swede
Donald Tracy
Karen Wadsworth
Paul Webster
Willet Dairy LLC
James Zimmerman

Up to \$249:

Richard Church
Russell Marquart
Ellen Abend
John Fessenden
Paula Burke
Craig Wilcox
John Noble
Laura Pedersen
Pirrung Auctioneers
Bruce Croucher
Susan Rosenthal

Kelly Young
Paul Molesky
Barbara Hanselman
Deb & Stew Ritchie
Karen Barie
Amie Thomas
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Tom Della Rocco
Scott Kramer
Stacey Deebes
Brenda Avedisian
F. Brandon Mallory
Karin Bump
Diane Whitten
Peter Jentsch
Calvin Wood
Jennifer Crist
Dianne Domoy
Robert Deemer
Susan Isham
Stuart Young
Timothy Harkenrider
Cynthia Stiglitz
Jeremy Forett
Marc Larabee
Ryan Akin
Andrew Dugan
Ann Noble-Shephard
Ken Van Fleet
Nathaniel Hartway
Roxaina Hurlburt
Monroe Tractor
Jessica Ziehm
Thomas Klapper
Bethany Wallis
John Paul Ruskiewicz

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Jeremiah Cosgrove
Theron Kibbe
Aaron TeCrony
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Daniel Welch
Todd Lighthall
Mike Maffei
Mark Masler
Suzy Hayes
Brett Kreher
Jenny Lundberg
Ron Bunce
Jenny Montalbano
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Reed's Seeds
Melissa Osgood
Wade Heineman
Douglas Brodie
Gary Snider
James Preston
Jeff Williams
Evan Schiedel
Beth McKellips

PLEASE NOTE: All donors marked in *italics* are LEAD alumni or current class members. Donors in **BOLD** have established endowment accounts for the benefit of LEADNY. The names listed represent donations received from July 1, 2013 through June 8, 2015. If you have made a donation since then or we have inadvertently omitted your name, please accept our apologies.

A Journey of a Thousand Miles... *continued from page 1*

within our own country, our neighboring countries, and a country half-way around the world. In addition, our local leadership projects provided an opportunity to put some of the theory we had learned in year one into practice this year. Lessons on the value of optimism, forward thinking, and having the attitude to drive to the desired outcomes, even in the face of adversity and seemingly overwhelming obstacles, were abundant.

Finally, in our last session before commencement, we had time to decompress. It was a session which allowed the class to

take in all of the things that we learned over the past two years, reflect, and truly put the final puzzle pieces provided by LEAD NY together. I could think of no better way to end the formal education provided, than once again wandering around the woods, this time by the light of day.

Through our entire LEAD NY journey, we were encouraged to learn about ourselves, think about our communities, and to understand how we fit into the bigger leadership picture. While the formal training as provided by LEAD NY has ended for Class 15, our leadership journey has really just



begun as we now engage in our workplaces and our communities with the knowledge and understanding earned over these past two years. I personally am very excited to see where my own personal journey will unfold from here.

Now that Class 15 has concluded our formal education, the program is ready to welcome Class 16 to start their journey. I wanted to take a moment to provide a few words for Class 16:

You're all about to start a journey that can only be appreciated after walking through all the steps that lay before you. I

want to encourage Class 16 to embrace the knowledge that LEAD NY will provide to you with an open mind and open arms. You will meet some amazing people. You will also meet some people that will challenge you. Learn from everyone, no matter how different your viewpoint may be. Choose to go into the dark woods for a walk – you never know what light you might find. 🌿

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT ON...

Tom Facer (Class 1), President, Farm Fresh First, LLC

By Larry Van De Valk, Executive Director, LEAD New York



Mike Gardinier (class 4), VP Operations, and Tom Facer (class 1), President, Farm Fresh First, LLC

LEADNY: Tom, please tell us a little bit more about Farm Fresh First. What do you do, and can you describe your position there?

Facer: Farm Fresh First, LLC is an agricultural raw products supply company specializing in the supply of fruits, vegetables and popcorn for the processing industry. Farm Fresh First, LLC is owned by 17 fruit and vegetable growers and managers. We specialize in arranging production under contract with growers for specific customer needs. We work with growers in several states and supply processors in several states, however our New York volume is the highest. We have a small staff of experienced agricultural managers and they work very closely with our customers to match their needs on a daily basis with the acreage that is produced specifically for the customer.

LEADNY: So FFF is relatively new – established in 2007 – we understand that several other LEADNY alumni were instrumental in getting this business started, and that a

few other LEAD alumni work with you. Can you say a bit about the importance of relationships you formed during your LEAD experience that have contributed to the success of FFF?

Facer: It is certainly not coincidental that several of the owners and employees of Farm Fresh First are LEADNY alumni. Four of the five founders of Farm Fresh First are LEADNY alumni, three of us were from Class I. LEADNY provided an opportunity for individuals of similar but different backgrounds to gain an understanding of the Agricultural and Food system as a group. Since everyone had a slightly different view of the food system, the group discussions (mostly after formal class hours) brought the group closer together. The success of the early LEADNY classes certainly encouraged others to apply and enroll in LEADNY. Agriculture is a large industry and an industry built on relationships. LEADNY has aided in building lasting relationships, and Farm Fresh First, LLC is just one example.

LEADNY: Recently, you were involved in the creation of the “Agricultural Research Fund”, specifically to benefit the processing vegetable industry in NYS. Were other LEADNY alumni involved in the creation of that endowment fund as well?

Facer: Actually the Agricultural Research Fund was not created by Farm Fresh First. The fund was created by a small group of western NY vegetable producers, all of which are LEADNY alumni. The Farm Fresh First Board of Directors strongly supported these individual’s efforts and to add increased exposure and initiative estab-

lished a program internally to contribute on an annual basis. We want the Fund to grow and encourage additional growers or industry personnel to contribute.

LEADNY: What do you see as some of the major future trends – positive, like consumer demand for local product, or negative, like new pest problems – that will be impacting the vegetable industry in NYS?

Facer: New York agriculture’s greatest asset is our close proximity to a large portion of the US population. The ‘local’ movement has been a positive and appears to be more than just a fad. All of us in local agriculture are guilty of not keeping our ‘local’ populations aware of where their food came from. Shame on us for allowing our ‘local’ populations to not be aware of what local agriculture has provided for generations. New insect and disease pests have and always will create challenges for the fruit and vegetable production system. Our New York climates require we learn how to combat these challenges under our conditions and not depend on distant researchers to solve our problems. This is why we strongly support the “Agricultural Research Fund”.

LEADNY: On a more personal note, you are one of a growing number of alumni that have a child that has or will be participating in the LEADNY program. (*Editor’s note: Martha Facer, a category merchant at Wegmans Food Markets, was recently selected for class 16.*) You were in class 1, almost 30 years ago. Surely, a lot has changed in the program since then, but the experience remains a significant one for all those involved. Any advice for your daughter

(and her classmates) on how to get the most out of this program?

Facer: I had the fantastic opportunity to be in LEADNY Class I. There were no prior class expectations or challenges when we started. Our first meeting was at a camp on Owasco Lake. The first evening we had a formalized mixer to introduce ourselves, we had never been together prior to that evening. During the ‘formal’ exercise of telling about ourselves and learning something about the person that was sitting next to us, there was an ‘unofficial’ conversation between a few of us that we would meet in the parking lot after the session and go to the local bar. Class I did very well at ‘unofficial’ conversations, well over half of the class was in the parking lot that first evening! We did not have a hospitality room until the January session of our first year, but trust me, there was never a seminar after that without a hospitality room! In all seriousness, the most important aspect of the LEADNY experience is for class members to share each other’s learnings and understanding of the food system and how their personal interests and experiences relate. These discussions do not only happen in a class room setting, take full advantage of the entire time you are together!

LEADNY: Anything else you want to add?

Facer: The leadership of the NYS Agriculture Society and CALS at Cornell that formulated the foundation of LEADNY over 30 years ago must be complimented!! 🍀

Kast Farms donates utility vehicle to Albion ag. program (reported in OrleansHub.com)

Kast Farms (David, Brett and John Kast, class 15) recently bought a new Kubota RTV-X900 from Bentley Brothers (Laura Bentley, class 16) in Albion, and donated the unit to the Albion FFA program. John was a student in the program 25 years ago, when there was talk of eliminating the program. Now, the program has 65 students, and more in a junior high FFA. Nice job by John and the rest of his family at Kast Farms in supporting their local community!

Register now for ILAC in Colorado

The Colorado Ag Leadership Program (CALP) will host the 2015 International Leadership Alumni Conference (ILAC) **August 5-8, 2015** in Denver. The agenda and registration materials are now available. It looks like they have an interesting conference agenda put together, including tours, great speakers (e.g. Dr. Temple Grandin) and interesting topics for discussion (Marijuana and Hemp production, Intergenerational issues). If you are interested in a little break in early August, I would encourage you to consider the trip to Denver. For additional information about ILAC or to register, please visit www.ilac-conference.com or www.coloradoagleaders.org.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

ALUMNI NEWS, OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS

JOB OPPORTUNITY: Director of Agricultural Sales & Marketing, Jordan Energy & Food Enterprises

The Director of Agricultural Sales and Marketing is responsible for planning and implementing sales and marketing strategies in selling solar and LED lighting products developed by the company for both short and long range sales targets in existing and new agricultural & food markets. The position manages the development of marketing plans, sales materials, client financing plans, sales travel schedules, annual sales targets and budgets, as well as any and all other activities related to the marketing and selling of solar and LED products. Interested and qualified applicants can speak with the company founder, Bill Jordan, at 646-648-3772, or direct inquiries/send resumes to bill@jordanenergy.org.

Mourning John McAleavy

John McAleavy, long-time Executive Director of the Eastern Produce Council, passed away at his home on June 5th surrounded by friends and family. Through John’s tireless work ethic and professionalism, he helped build the EPC into one of the most highly regarded Produce Food Councils in the country, and he was instrumental in securing EPC support for the LEADNY Program for many years.

Several LEADNY alumni and their spouses were fortunate to be with John at the Eastern Produce Council dinner dance in West Patterson, NJ this past April. There, the EPC presented us with a \$5,000 check in support of program. Thanks to John, the EPC board of directors and their membership for their continued investment in our leadership development efforts!



Class 15 Fellows on safari in South Africa, February 2015.
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on your graduation!



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Cultivating LEADership

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 Agriculture and Life Sciences

Cornell University

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