

Celebrating 25 Years of the BASSC Executive Development Program: The Gift that Keeps on Giving

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BASSC Executive Development Program

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Introduction

TONIGHT – is one of my favorite evenings of the year –
An opportunity to:

- Celebrate your graduation from the program
- Honor and acknowledge the time and energy you've poured into the program – 3 weeks in the classroom, ½ day exchanges, 15-day internship and written case study – all while maintaining your day job and juggling home and family commitments.
- Thank our amazing university and extension partners and our County BASSC Liaisons– Stan Weiner (Program Director), Andrea DuBrow (Program Coordinator), Mike Austin (Lead faculty adviser), and Jonathan Gill – without you there is no Executive Development Program –if you're a BASSC liaison please stand up – round of applause.
- Acknowledge my fellow directors for their continuing commitment to EDP – year end and year out, you support your staff's participation, you host staff from other counties in completing their internships, and you take time out of your busy schedules to teach modules throughout the year; and
- Welcome you into the EDP Alumni Club – a club with over 750 members, no annual fees, and lots of free perks to look forward to. In a nutshell, the Executive Development Program is indeed "*the gift that keeps on giving.*"

As you know, tonight we celebrate, 25th Anniversary of the Executive Development Program.

- Pretty sure that I was asked to say a couple of words on this auspicious occasion of our 25th anniversary because as a proud graduate of the EDP Class of 1995 – Year Two, I may very well be the oldest active member of this esteemed Alumni Club.
- Set the stage– 25 years ago, I left a 10-year career in higher education to become an Analyst for the County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department.
- Truth be told, when I took the job I knew very little about what they did, who they served – it seemed like a world steeped in acronyms, unfamiliar, a bit overwhelming in fact – the only thing at the time that was crystal clear for me is that I wanted to work for this guy named Will Lightbourne – I had an informational interview with him and was inspired by him.
- So, I stepped off the cliff, took the job, and after a year working on a special IHSS assignment, Will asked me if I'd be interested in participating in this newly hatched, BASSC Executive Development Program.
- Eagerly, and without hesitation, I said yes.

MY BASSC CLASS

- In the second-year class, there were 25 folks representing 7 counties.
- From day one, I felt like a little kid in a candy store – a lottery winner – BASSC was this amazing opportunity to get a crash course in social services – connect the dots – decrease my anxiety, fuel my excitement. I did not know at the time that it would set the stage for 25 years of growth and development.

- I loved most everything single thing about BASSC: the modules, my internship in Contra Costa studying relative caregiver support; and getting to know my fellow classmates – not so much the paper.

In 1996, even if I had a Crystal Ball when I was sitting where you are – there’s probably no way I could have seen how the gifts I received from my participation in EDP would impact me personally throughout my career:

- Let me illustrate by sharing 2 examples of my personal favorite modules:
 - State and county budgeting
 - Creating a learning organization.
1. **State and county budgeting** – Sally Kippur, San Francisco Director of Administration, taught the budget module in 1996. She was very dynamic – starting from a place of values – emphasizing transparency, stewardship, the budget as the golden key that unlocks our ability to deliver on our mission – she broke it down, made it interesting, explained the power of leveraging – I marched myself back to the department and told Will Lightbourne that we needed to bring her down, we needed to change, be more transparent. At that time, there were 1 maybe 2 people in the department who understood the budget and made decisions – Even our Director, I think, felt at times that the budget was a mystery.

Ever since my BASSC class on budgeting, I’ve been on a mission to simplify, deepen knowledge within our department. I never would have predicted that the fire Sally Kipper lit under me would translate all these years later – how it would lead me to:

- Tackle 1991 and 2011 Realignment, self-study – reaching out to my BASSC classmate Elliot Robinson, trainings, and others across the region.
- Initiate cross department leveraging/financing study groups with our health and probation partners and creating Technical Assistance opportunities for our community partners.
- Navigate very difficult budget decisions during the great recession with the elimination of over 25% of our workforce – but be able to do it in such a way that no one involuntarily lost their jobs; and ultimately lead me full circle to:
 - Teach the budget module with my good friend Karen Fies. My love for trying to excite folks about finance; to simplify the complex and

ignite the same passion; all of that is a gift from BASSC – from Sally Kipper.

2. **Building a robust learning organization /workforce development.**
 - BASSC module taught I believe by Mike Austin – the take home point– constantly get better at what you do; be curious; question – why do we do things the way we do? Invest in your staff – they’re the single greatest asset you possess in fulfilling our mission.
 - When I went to BASSC in 1996 – I would couch our investments as minimal, inconsistent and decentralized. Like many social services agencies, we were in the infancy stage of implementing concepts like workforce development, performance outcomes and learning organizations. Staffing wise – our only two dedicated resources were: 1 personnel officer and 2 staff development trainers
 - Fast Forward to today, and I’m very proud to say that **we have over 40 staff working in our Organizational and Community Development arena:** each and every one of them dedicated to developing our workforce and providing them with the tools they need to do their job, be engaged and informed with opportunities to grow, learn, advance, decide, change, and challenge the way things have always be done
 - *Organizational Development Manager* – who by the way, I met through BASSC and snatched up from Sonoma
 - **Robust Staff Development unit**
 - *Planning and Evaluation Division* – Centralized Business Analytics and Reporting Team, Contracts Unit, Quality Improvement Unit
 - *Community Relations and Outreach Team*
- In this arena, the gift that BASSC gave me was the VALUE of investing in the workforce and creating a culture where we strive to improve, learn and support. I’ve been blessed to be in a position over the last 20 years to be able to advocate for, implement, oversee and support, and hire incredibly talented folks who’ve turned this value into a reality—one that’s making a real difference in our outcomes and in the workforce culture.
- In 1996, If I had a second crystal ball – a regional crystal ball, I also couldn’t have imagined how these Executive Development program gifts would

ripple out to our respective county departments, our region, our field, and ultimately to those folks in our community who need and rely on our services.

GRADUATES

- I don't think any of us imagined that our graduates would multiply from 25 to over 750

CASE STUDIES

- Or that as many internships and case studies on topics from A-Z would be conducted, published and on many occasions recommendations from graduates implemented.
- I did some quick math, and just in case studies alone, that represents over 11,250 hours of intentional growth, development, best practice exchange – double that to 22,000 hours when you factor in the time invested by host counties.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- One of the goals of this program is to help develop our next generation of leaders – Over the last 25 years, I have no doubt that on this front we have succeeded. You see this in many forms:
 - BASSC alumni promoting within their departments, moving to other counties in the Bay area, (we've stolen some folks), making lateral moves to other program areas or perhaps staying in their current roles and using the skills of BASSC to make positive impacts within their current role.
 - In Santa Cruz County alone, in last 10 years in Santa Cruz alone, approximately 70% of our Senior Managers/Directors have graduated from the EDP program. Those 750 folks would be movers and shakers within their department and across the region.

INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION – FORMAL AND INFORMAL

- 750 folks would disperse and come back together again through:

- Phone calls, trouble-shooting . . . product sharing, participation in hiring/interview panels;
- *BASSC committees work* – Children's, Welfare-to-Work, Adult and Aging, Admin and Finance amazing examples of innovation, product and practice development;
- *BASSC research projects* conducted by our talented BASSC team and university partners;
- *Regional Responses to Crises and Opportunities* – coming together to respond to the unexpected – most recently, you see this in our response to the Fire disasters of late – Mutual Aid MOU's, or in our upcoming transformation into Region 1 for our march towards CalSAWs implementation.

So tonight, I wish I could give each one of you a Crystal Ball so you could see how your graduation from the Executive Development Program will be the “Gift that Keeps on Giving” – What I can give you is my own experience and the reassurance of so many other graduates, that you are leaving with a set of skills, perspectives, values and relationships that will carry you to new places – *“Oh the places you will go” if you stay open and cultivate the opportunities*

As you move forward in your career, my best advice to you is to be intentional with these gifts:

- pick the ones that excite you the most and run with them
- give back what you've learned to others
- stay connected to your BASSC classmates
- grab opportunities – take risks.

On behalf of the Directors, congratulations to all our 2018/19 graduates and happy 25th anniversary to the Executive Development Program.

