Stewardship

Stewardship involves the use of one's own time, energy, and resources. A person's stewardship goes beyond physical and into cognitive, aesthetic, and personal matters. Resources vary in type and quantity, but each individual is ultimately responsible to make profitable use of what he or she has been given. Stewardship directly affects people. Thomas Sergiovanni said that stewardship taps into people's emotions, appeals to their values, and responds to their connections with others.

STEWARDSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

Stewardship responsibilities are at the heart of the administrator's role. Stewardship represents an act of trust. People and institutions entrust a leader with specific obligations and duties with the expectation that the leader will fulfill and perform the obligations and duties on their behalf. Stewardship also involves the leader's personal responsibility to manage his or her life and affairs with consideration for the rights of other people and for the common welfare.

Stewardship also involves placing oneself in service to the organization's ideas and ideals and to others who are committed to their fulfillment. Stewardship acknowledges and accepts all members of the school as community and all those who are served by the community. Parents, teachers, and administrators share stewardship responsibility for students. Students also are involved in stewardship responsibility for the school as a learning community.

STEWARDSHIP AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Robert Greenleaf, recognized for developing the concept of "servant-leadership," contends that true leadership evolved from those whose main motivation was to help others. Stewardship and servant leadership assume a commitment to serving the needs of others. Other common characteristics include (a) use of openness and persuasion rather than control, (b) commitment to the growth of people, (c) appreciation for the fact that people have an intrinsic value beyond their visible contributions, (d) a commitment to listening to others in order to identify the will of the group, (e) an understanding and empathy of others, (f) commitment to "healing" relationships—recognizing and helping others maintain a positive spirit, (g) establishing group and self-awareness, (h) reliance on persuasion rather than a position of authority, (i) ability to maintain dayto-day tasks while nurturing the larger view of possibilities, and (j) ability to foresee the likely outcome of a situation. Stewardship and servant leadership are based on the responsibility of nurturing the personal, professional, and spiritual growth of others.

There are a number of areas where the principles of servant leadership are being applied: (a) servantleadership as an institutional philosophy and model with the focus on the group-oriented approach to analysis and decision making as a way to improve the institutions and society, (b) servant-leadership as a pivotal role in the theoretical and ethical framework of boards of directors and trustees as a way to reanalyze their approach to their roles focusing more on asking "Whom do we serve?" and "For what purpose?" (c) servantleadership and its role with community leadership organizations as a way to build a true sense of community, (d) servant-leadership and experiential education as a way to strengthen service learning, (e) servant-leadership and its use in formal and informal training programs as part of a conceptual framework for leadership and management

models, and (f) servantleadership and its use in programs that address personal growth and transformation as a way to encourage individuals to take advantage of opportunities to serve and lead others.

—Jean Haar

Further Readings and References

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