



# Illuminations

A publication of the TORCH Leadership & Management Institute

## VOYAGE of SIGNIFICANCE

Recently I became a father to a beautiful boy, Henry. It is a life-changing event, and I am told, one that often leads to a shifting of priorities, points of view and impulses, and occasionally a synthesis of learning and even new understanding. In my new journey in fatherhood, and in light of this year's TLMI conference theme—*Anchor's Away: Charting a Course of Success and Significance*—I am compelled to reflect on what it means to lead a life of significance. In so doing, my thoughts go back to the many people in my life whose love, friendship and kindness have nurtured and inspired me profoundly, and whose wisdom and insights have guided me in the early moorings of my journey, both in life and in work.



In my journey, I have learned that there is a time to set anchor, a time to set sail and a time to brave the stormy winds. With healthcare growing ever more complex and the waves of change unpredictable, the need for effective leadership and meaningful collaboration has never been more important. Amidst national health reform, health IT implementation, meaningful use compliance, payment cutbacks and continual rising costs, it is easy to see how hospitals, providers and patients today find themselves deeply immersed in a perfect storm. These times of momentous changes and uncertainties call for a leadership compass, a leadership mindset and a leadership culture to guide and steady us through the great sea of change. This journey is worth making since rising tide raises all ships, and in the horizon shall be a better view.

My years in rural health have been filled with opportunities to learn, relate and succeed with committed leaders who imbued a spirit of resilience, versatility and innovation. What makes TORCH and rural health community and family so special are the truly great people and leaders and their incomparable spirit to do good for each other and for their communities. When I look around, many of these leaders are here. Regardless of the challenges ahead, we can be confident that our leadership will enable us to thrive!

This week, Henry is four months old. Time passes quickly. For me, an event like this naturally leads me to recalibrate what is truly important. As each of us embark on our own journey of significance—both individually and collectively, in life and in work—I hope each of you will find your inspiration and point your compass towards what matters most. Hoist your anchors and set sail with us on this voyage of shared learning and fellowship.

~ Quang Ngo

## Celebrating Outstanding Leaders

This year, the TORCH Leadership & Management Institute is proud to announce two inaugural leadership awards to celebrate rural hospitals and their staff.

The **Essence of Leadership Award** recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, service and contribution in healthcare, and who have made a significant impact in their organizations and communities. Nominated by their peers and, this year's award recipients are individuals who exemplify a strong dedication to the organization's goals, vision and purpose; exhibit a high level of initiative, interpersonal skills, employee engagement and technical competency; demonstrate a commitment to continual learning and growth; and embody the spirit of teamwork, service and innovation.

The **Leadership Culture Award** recognizes an accomplished team or organizational culture that has worked successfully together for the betterment of the organization, patients and the community they serve. Nominated by their peers and members of their communities, this year's award recipients are teams that model effective collaboration, communication, and

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**LEADERS**  
*among US*

**Penny Gray**  
CEO/Administrator  
Limestone Medical Center  
Groesbeck, Texas

“Teamwork is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.”

~ Andrew Carnegie

**Limestone Medical Center (LMC)** is a 20 bed Critical Access Hospital located in Groesbeck, Texas, with a staff size of approximately 180. For the past 16 years Penny Gray, a registered nurse, has served as Administrator/CEO of LMC. Throughout her tenure, Mrs. Gray has been a leader of both her team and in her community and follows the philosophy of leading by example. Naturally she encourages education and can often be quoted saying “no education is wasted.”

Without a doubt, one of the things she has enjoyed the most is bringing a hospital about to close out of the ashes to what it is now. Prior to constructing our new facility, we identified ourselves as “Limestone Medical Center The Healing Team.” We are extremely fortunate to employ a team of highly skilled, experienced individuals who make patient care a priority. We fully realize the value of educating ourselves and our patients. We take immense pride in our new facilities and in the services that we provide. Mrs. Gray will tell you she has as much fun working with the staff as they sometimes tend to get into mischief.

But at the heart of it all, we are a family dedicated to taking care of families in Limestone County. Within our family we possess a variety of personalities and knowledge that combine to provide the best possible care and support to our patients. In a small, rural community, we work together, go to church together and entertain together. We know each other and we know our patients. We want an employee to do his or her job, but we also want to know the employee. We have a company message system and a monthly newsletter to convey any personal information that an employee may wish to share and thereby draws us closer together.

Our corporate structure provides ample opportunities to share ideas from the dining room during a break to the Board Room during a business meeting. At LMC we promote the open door policy. We work in an atmosphere that promotes and encourages feedback and sharing of ideas. Additionally, we know one another well enough to offer constructive criticism and encouragement. During the annual evaluation process, all employees are requested to submit three suggestions to improve departmental operations and to describe how they, their supervisor and the other employees in the department can change them. LMC has a very low employee turn-over rate which allows the staff to stay close-knit. We know that when an issue does arise, that patient care comes first and foremost.

We know that patients have a choice in the provision of their health care. We want patients to choose us and we work together to achieve this goal. As an individual would protect a family business, we take full responsibility for our services and have a vested interest in its continued success. We are in the hospital business together and we are here to help.

On a creative and teambuilding note, we love to decorate for every occasion possible. We enthusiastically prepare a float and get into the theme of the annual Fourth of July parade as well as the annual Homecoming parade. At Halloween you will find us in our costumes. Every Christmas Limestone Medical Center hosts the annual Christmas lighting ceremony. It is an opportunity for us to invite the community to come and share an evening together. It helps all of us to see beyond just doing the job and to celebrate with the community.

Needless to say, we are incredibly proud of our facility and team, and feel that Limestone Medical Center is not just a place to work...it is a place to be creative.

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consensus-building; demonstrate the ideal of a service-oriented culture that is focused on measurable results and outcomes; achieve new standards of quality of care, customer service, patient satisfaction, and organizational performance; and embody the spirit of successful teamwork, mutual respect, support and innovation.

Award recipients will be formally recognized during the Awards Luncheon at the 2012 TLMI Conference & Retreat at the Lakeway Resort & Spa in Austin, TX, on September 6, 2012.

**Four-Letter Word That Equals Success**

Four letter words have gotten a bad reputation. I’m sure you can think of a handful of them. There’s one four-letter word, however, that equals communication, camaraderie and results. It has the capability to be extremely powerful, yet it often struggles to reach its full potential. It often causes friction, friendship and frustration, all at the same time. What is this powerful four letter word? TEAM. You’ve probably seen or heard the acronym for T.E.A.M. (Together Everyone Achieves More). Why then is it so hard to create effective, high performance teams? Because teams are made up of individuals, and individuals are imperfect. I’m often asked how to improve teamwork, resolve conflicts and improve communication among team members. There is a fairly straightforward formula that is simple in theory, yet extremely difficult in practice:

$$\text{ACCOUNTABILITY + COMMUNICATION + PERSONAL LEADERSHIP = SUCCESS}$$

The moment we start owning our actions and behavior, communicate effectively and demonstrate personal leadership, we can accomplish anything, individually or as a team. The equation:

**Accountability:** While this has become a business buzz word, it simply means taking ownership, knowing that you can’t control anyone else’s behavior but your own. Playing the victim does nothing but frustrate yourself and others. If you focus on what you can control, **YOU**, it is much more productive.

**Communication:** We all communicate in our own unique style. Most people don’t try to intentionally miscommunicate, yet poor communication is the number one culprit of dysfunctional teams. Listen to understand, ask questions, adapt to others’ communication style, and most importantly, assume people have the best intentions.

**Personal Leadership:** Act with character and integrity, regardless of what other people do, and you’ll be a lot happier and more productive. Most of us know when we’re doing or saying something that is less than praise worthy. Would your mother be proud of your behavior? If not, it’s time to re-evaluate.

Teamwork is not just a skill. It’s making conscious choices about our behavior and attitude. It requires patient, persistence and practice. Not all four letter words are bad. Some can equal phenomenal success!

~ **Geoffrey Tumlin, Ph.D.**  
President & Founder of OnDemand Leadership

## Learning Leadership by Doing: TLMI Healthcare Fellows Selected

TORCH maintains a fundamental commitment to rural healthcare and recognizes the need for strong leaders who can articulate and execute a clear and compelling vision for rural hospitals. To this end, we have developed a special healthcare fellowship opportunity through the TLMI program for working Texas rural healthcare professionals.

TORCH is pleased to announce the inaugural class of 2012-2013 TLMI Healthcare Fellows. Congratulations go to:

- **Paul Aslin**, Chief Operating Officer, Clinical Care Associates, Wise Regional Health System
- **William Kiefer**, Chief Nursing Officer, Red River Regional Hospital
- **Tonya Price**, Chief Nursing Officer North Texas Medical Center

### PEARLS of WISDOM

“Interdependent people combine their own efforts of others to achieve their greatest success.”

~ Stephen Covey

“Build for your team a feeling of oneness, of dependence on one another and of strength to be derived by unity.”

~ Vince Lombardi

“Goals provide the energy source that powers our lives. One of the best ways we can get the most from the energy we have is to focus it. That is what goals can do for us; concentrate our energy.”

~ Denis Waitley

This opportunity is a year-long commitment that enhances skillsets and assists participants with their journey towards professional achievement. Fellows will participate in four experiential learning and special networking events that provide personal access to experienced leaders in rural healthcare, both at the state and national level. This is an exceptional chance to learn leadership by doing. Fellows will work with TORCH staff and the TLMI Leadership Council to complete a capstone project that will be presented at the TLMI Conference in the Fall of 2013.

Each Fellow is awarded a \$1000 TLMI Healthcare Fellowship Stipend through the TORCH Foundation Scholarship Fund. Again, congratulation to our Fellows!

## Leadership “Illustrated” – Go Team USA!



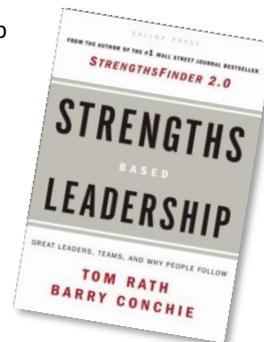
**Amazing Achievement Through Personal Excellence and Remarkable Teamwork**

### TORCH Leadership Assessment Program Announcement

TORCH is pleased to announce a new initiative for hospitals, the TORCH Leadership Assessment Program, provided in partnership with On-Demand Leadership, a comprehensive leadership development company based in Austin, Texas.

The TORCH Leadership Assessment Program helps individuals to discover their own innate talents and leadership strengths, and hospitals to uncover institutional strengths, in a parallel program of instruction and assessment. All participants complete a short online assessment to prepare for the group training session (from the book *Strengths-Based Leadership*). Hospitals receive an assessment of institutional leadership in areas such as: organizational resiliency, organizational congruence, and organizational performance that are compiled from employee and stakeholder perceptions.

The TORCH Leadership Assessment Program consists of four components: a group training session, two individual leadership coaching sessions per participant, written feedback for each participant based on the one-on-one coaching sessions, and written feedback for the institution based on the hospital’s assessment results.



These four components can be modified to best fit your hospital’s needs.

All TORCH staff has participated in this workshop. We highly recommend it! Contact Dawn Haberkorn at [dawn@torchnet.org](mailto:dawn@torchnet.org) to learn more. This is a fantastic opportunity for your employees and your team!

### COFFEE BREAK SNIPPETS

For decades, Gallup scientists have researched the topic of leadership. They’ve surveyed a million work teams, conducted more than 50,000 in-depth interviews with leaders, and even interviewed 20,000 followers to ask what they admired in the most important leader in their life. The results of that research are unveiled in *Strengths-Based Leadership*. Using Gallup’s discoveries, authors Tom Rath and Barry Conchie identify three keys to being an effective leader and use firsthand accounts from highly successful leaders — including the founder of Teach for America and the president of The Ritz-Carlton — to show how each person’s unique talents can drive their success. Loaded with novel research, inspiring stories, and actionable ideas, *Strengths-Based Leadership* offers a new roadmap for leading people toward a better future. A must read for all interested in discovering their special gifts and strengths!

### UPCOMING EVENT:

**2012 Rural Hospital Technology Conference (HITCON/12) & Exhibition**

**October 17-18, 2012**

*Omni San Antonio Hotel at the Colonnade, San Antonio, TX*

*Illuminations* is a publication of the TORCH Leadership & Management Institute, a program of the Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals (TORCH). To learn more about TLMI, contact Dawn Haberkorn, Director of Education & Member Services, at (512) 873-0045 or at [Dawn@torchnet.org](mailto:Dawn@torchnet.org).

Visit our online Leadership Center at: [www.torchnet.org/leadership\\_center.php](http://www.torchnet.org/leadership_center.php)

## FOR FUN: *Team Games & Exercises*

### **Building Trust: Willow in the Wind** (Time Required: 20 minutes)

This particular trust building exercise goes by different names, but usually illustrates the same idea. This exercise is best suited for coworkers who already know each other fairly well. One participant must volunteer or be chosen to be the "willow." The willow must stand in the middle of a group with their eyes closed, their feet together, and body upright. They will perform a series of "trust leans" against the other participants, whose job is to hold up the willow and pass them around without allowing them to fall or feel frightened as if they're going to fall. Before beginning, the instructor should discuss "spotting" techniques to all participants. Those who are not the willow must have one foot in front of the other, have their arms outstretched, elbows locked, and fingers loose, as well as be ready and alert. This will ensure that they will successfully pass the willow around without any troubles. Various co-workers can take turns being the willow. This technique helps coworkers establish and build trust with each other in an open, fun environment.

### **Communication Building: Coin Logo** (Time Required: 5-10 minutes)

Begin by asking all participants to empty their pockets, purses, and wallets of any coins they may have and place them on the table in front of them. If someone doesn't have any coins or only has very few, others in the room can share their coins with them. Instruct each person to create their own personal logo using the coins in front of them in just one minute. Other materials they may have on them, such as pens, notebooks, wallets, etc. can also be used in creation of the logo. If there is a particularly large group, people can be broken up into teams of 3-6 people and instructed to create a logo that represents them as a team or the whole room can gather to use the coins to create a logo for the organization/group/department/etc. Each solitary participant can explain their logo to the group or if the room was split into groups, the leader can have each group discuss what led to the team logo and what it says about them. Not only does this exercise promote self and mutual awareness, but it also enables participants to get to know each other on a more personal level.

### **Problem-Solving: Create your Own Team Building Activity** (Time Required: 1 hour)

The group leader should present participants with this fake problem: The hour was going to be spent doing a problem solving exercise, but as the group leader- you don't know any and you don't want to do one that the participants have already heard or tried previously. The goal- or problem- then, is to have each group of participants come up with a new problem solving exercise that they've invented themselves. Groups should be no larger than four or five people, and at the end of the hour, each group must come up and present their new problem solving exercise. Aside from being a problem solving exercise in and of itself, this exercise also promotes creativity, communication, trust, and time management, among other things.

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