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Leadership Skills Still Needed Despite Good Education

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A new organization has been formed to increase the leadership ability of active citizens in Conejo and Ventura. It is called 101 (One-O-One) Leaders, like the highway it follows.

"101 Leaders Alliance" is a collaboration between Cathcart Institute, Inc. and Infinite Strategies both based in Ventura County. Professional speaker and author Jim Cathcart created the 101 Leaders Institute in response to the continuing need for skilled leaders at all levels of our society. Professional fund raiser and business coach Jeff Tanenbaum has joined him to create an alliance geared to increasing leadership skills throughout the region.

The targeted market for 101 Leaders is what they call the "101 Corridor" from Calabasas through Ventura along the highway itself. In these twelve communities there are more than 500,000 people, multiple universities, colleges and other schools, as well as scores of organizations designed to help the community sustain an already high standard and quality of living.

In casual surveys throughout this region, Cathcart and Tanenbaum have found almost unanimous agreement that in many cases: meetings are poorly led, projects disorganized, public presentations unclear or boring, volunteers though willing are not directed well, people skills are inconsistent, and more. There is an abundance of intelligence, education and talent for virtually every need, yet leadership skills still appear to be lacking. This is not merely true for the 101 Corridor, it is prevalent throughout the business and civic community nationwide.

"The problem," suggests Cathcart, "is that existing approaches to leadership development don't require people to learn to: lead meetings, deliver compelling presentations, motivate others, organize projects and follow through on agreements. People learn to be excellent at analysis, strategy, science, technology, systems, philosophy, and marketing but not at 'getting the job done'." For example, Cathcart asks his audiences, "think of the last time you attended a meeting that was led by a well educated person, yet the meeting ran over time, was confusing and boring or worse." He always gets acknowledgement that the need exists.

Tanenbaum adds, "the ability to get things done through others is still the most highly valued skill in our society." Leaders are valued and sorely needed. Consider the plethora of books on "leadership" over the past five years alone. Resources and information abound yet the skill levels haven't noticeably advanced. This is because application is needed, says Cathcart. We need "action learning" as our primary mode for developing leadership skills.

In the 1970's Cathcart was the National Program Manager for Leadership Training at the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce. His role there was to develop training programs and teach others to use them in the tens of thousands of "Jaycees" chapters nationwide. They had 356,000 members and Cathcart was kept busy flying from state to state to train and motivate other trainers. Today he works as a professional speaker and business advisor, serving currently on advisory boards for the Schools of Business at both Pepperdine University and California Lutheran University. Of the thirteen books he has written and published, all are focused on developing the individual's skills for leadership and sales success.