

Investing in Tomorrow's Leaders

LEAD: The Spirit of Lincoln Youth Academy

LEAD is a robust, one-of-a kind youth leadership program that utilizes immersive experiences to empower emerging leaders to develop leadership qualities. We specifically select students who have the potential to be leaders, but may not see it in themselves. Participants spend a full week exploring the qualities that made Abraham Lincoln such a great leader in his day. They learn why those same qualities are so important in our leaders today, and how, as individuals, they can apply those qualities as they develop their own leadership skills for the future.

During LEAD, the Emerging Leaders:

- Explore Lincoln's life and times by visiting various historic sites throughout the National Heritage Area to see how individuals were able to make a difference in their communities and affect change in their state and their nation;
- Examine how people in today's world face many of the same challenges as those faced by Lincoln and other leaders of his day – including issues such as racism through a series of group discussions and projects;
- Discuss the leadership qualities of honesty, empathy, humility and perseverance and develop a plan for incorporating those qualities into their own lives as they return home.



#LEADSnapshot

- 69 participants from 32 communities in the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area
- 8 college-age mentors
- A true public/private partnership including Union Pacific Railroad, Illinois College, Abraham Lincoln Association, 4-H University of Illinois Extension, Lincoln Home National Historic Site/ National Park Service, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, Niemann Foods (County Market), the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and of course, Looking for Lincoln
- One full week = one life-changing experience



Our Emerging Leaders Reflect on Their LEAD Experience



“I was able to express my feelings and ideas while being able to learn and grow. In this program, I was able to connect and meet with people that were able to also speak their minds. I am proud to say all that I have learned, not to mention how much I have learned about the humble and amazing man Lincoln. He is the iconic leader that I am striving to be in the near future.” – *Lieke, LEAD 2016*

“I learned to be a better leader this week because I was taught how to make my own footsteps.” – *Clinton, LEAD 2017*

“I learned to never give up, anything is possible, be brave and encourage yourself and others to do what is right.” – *Makenya, LEAD 2016*

“I loved the group debriefs, a period at the end of the day where we sat in our mentor groups and discussed what stood out to us about the places we visited or about Lincoln’s life and what lessons we could draw from that.”

– *Anna, LEAD 2017*

“In this camp, friendships prosper, minds expand, diversity is honored and you are safe. This camp is the most educational yet fun camp I have been to. I have changed from this camp.”

– *Nick, LEAD 2016*

“I can, with much enthusiasm, ensure that this group will contribute so much more to our Illinois, our USA, and our world as a whole from all that was discussed and introduced at this academy.” – *Valerie Escudero, Mentor*

For more information about LEAD: Spirit of Lincoln Youth Academy, visit our website at www.lookingforlincoln.com.

