



**Betsy Frantz, president and chief executive officer, Leadership Arlington**

Programs: Signature Program, Young Professionals Program, Executive Forums, Youth Program, Leadership Institute of Northern Virginia

[www.leadershiparlington.org](http://www.leadershiparlington.org)

### **About Betsy Frantz**

Betsy Franz knew she had found her dream job in 1998 when asked to be the founding director of Leadership Arlington (Virginia). “I’ve felt that way every day since,” Betsy said recently in an interview for this newsletter. Her sincerity shines through in both her life and work, and she is a leader who has made her mark by following her passion.

Her career began as a buyer for Bloomingdales after graduating from The College of William and Mary. While taking a break from the working world to be home with her three young children, she remained active by holding leadership positions on civic and education-related boards.

Prior to joining Leadership Arlington, Betsy served as director of development for The Northern Virginia Community Foundation and as president of the Junior League of Northern Virginia.

### **About Leadership Arlington’s programs**

Like many leadership organizations, Leadership Arlington has programs tailored to both young professionals and experienced community leaders. In addition, they offer a Youth Program for talented high school juniors and seniors that provides a first step toward leadership development.

One program that is uniquely Leadership Arlington is called Executive Forums. Groups of up to a dozen executives meet for eight, three-hour sessions and enjoy a “confidential learning environment for executives to grow as leaders, seek counsel from their peers on organizational challenges, and receive support in achieving their goals.” Betsy refers to the forums as, “The Arlington community’s brain trust.”

### **Great ideas for advancing your mission and generating revenue**

In 2010, Betsy took a bold step in asking community stakeholders what additional role Leadership Arlington could play in bettering the community. Based on those conversations, Leadership Arlington developed The Leadership Institute of Northern Virginia - a capacity-building initiative for nonprofit organizations. The Institute trains nonprofit executive staff and board members, creating more efficient, skilled nonprofit leaders. To date, more than 35

organizations have benefitted and the Institute has become a major source of revenue for Leadership Arlington.

### **Secrets to success**

How does Leadership Arlington manage programs, forums, a speaker series, a leadership institute and a multitude of events with a staff of five? Betsy is happy to tell anyone that volunteers are Leadership Arlington's "greatest treasure." At least one-third of their members volunteer on committees for events and programs. Betsy makes sure volunteers know they're appreciated, thanking them "times three." As Betsy puts it, thank them "anyway you can, as often as you can."

Betsy also believes the organization's culture of a "personal touch" is a key to their success. As an example of that personal touch, board members call every program participant sometime between their orientation and opening session to welcome them to the program.

The result of these efforts to engage participants and graduates? A 95% membership retention rate - phenomenal results for any member organization.

### **Where do you look for best practices?**

"We get input from participants and funders - we want the combined viewpoints of the broader community," Betsy told us. She researches current topics and incorporates the statewide perspectives of Leadership Virginia.

### **On Betsy's bookshelf right now**

"I'm a groupie of David Allen's books," Betsy told us. "I'm currently reading 'Making it All Work: Winning at the Game of Work and the Business of Life.' Allen is also the author of 'Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity.'" The core premise of the books is managing your work life and your personal life as one cohesive endeavor. According to Betsy, "it's the only way to go."