

## How DE Changed My Life

Andy Reed, *CUDE Class of 2007*

Superficially, I knew working at a credit union was a little different than a “regular job” before I attended DE. Through the DE program, I discovered the profound mission at the heart of the credit union movement was vibrant, the rich history of the movement was empowering our future, and the real issues facing global society were being meaningfully impacted by our work.

When I attended DE I was a loan officer at a large credit union with over \$5B in assets, serving a solid upper middle class membership. I'm now the CEO of a small credit union that is 35 members short of receiving a low income designation and has \$21.8M in assets. The DE program opened my eyes to seeing the world and the role credit unions play a little differently. It gave me knowledge that equated to confidence I could make an equal or larger contribution at a small credit union versus a large one.



There is an old adage that says history is our greatest teacher. I believe the teaching of the movement's history is a critical deliverable of the DE program and I share it at every juncture with my staff, my BOD and just about anyone who will listen to me carry on about credit unions. My credit union is absolutely not for profit but for service focused. What I learned in my DE experience comes through in everything I do as a CEO and all my interactions with my staff and membership. The DE experience is so profound I don't think you could complete the program and not lead differently.



Graduation from DE in 2007 left me eager to align myself with like-minded people who were deeply committed to the social mission of credit unions. Armed with the knowledge I obtained in the program about the credit union system structure, I decided to get involved with my local Chapter. I can still hear Bill Meyer, who co-facilitated my DE experience with Lois Kitsch, saying get involved SOMEWHERE, but get involved. In the beginning, my extracurricular, “voluntold” work with the Chapter was really quite simple. I participated with our local Miracle Team to put on an annual event that raised

funds for our local Children's Miracle Network Hospital. Looking back, I realize I was being in action, albeit in a small way, impacting one of the development issues, health. And that's really how DE's make a difference – one small act at a time.

I soon became the chair of the Miracle Team, leading several fellow credit union professionals to collectively make a big impact on the developmental issue of health. Then I became an Advisory Director on the Chapter Board and was later elected to the Chapter Board of Directors, eventually becoming the Chapter President. I still serve on my Chapter Board today because I believe it is one of the ways I can fulfill on the DE mission locally.

Over time, my involvement with the Chapter opened doorways of opportunity to serve on the Texas Credit Union League Marketing and Business Development Council and the CUNA

Marketing and Business Development Council. Eventually, I would join both Council's Executive Committees and then became the Chair of CUNA's Marketing and Business Development Council. In a very short time I had moved from being involved in one event locally in a very "small" capacity to serving in leadership capacities at the local, state and national levels in the movement. But no matter where I was serving, the development issues and the mission of credit unions and the DE program showed up again and again.

At my DE graduation ceremony, Lois Kitsch gave me a prolonged and heartfelt hug and she whispered in my ear, "You're going to do great things for credit unions." I am so grateful for that moment of encouragement I received nearly ten years ago. You simply don't forget when someone so intentionally powerful and impactful speaks greatness into your future. You can only hope the work you do honors their hopes for you and the hopes of the community you serve. Thank you, Lois, for believing in me and thank you for believing in this movement. The DE experience and lessons I learned are something I intentionally live out each and every day.

