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## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

### Holy Family Catholic Regional Division No. 37

#### Peace River, Alberta, Canada

Responding to the need for ongoing support to partnership coordinators who chair school Action Teams for Partnerships, the district facilitator established leadership development workshops. The district facilitator believed that strong leaders would create strong teams and, therefore, build effective programs of partnership.

Site visits, discussions, and reviews of partnership programs demonstrated to the district that the success of Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) varied from school to school and that there seemed to be a direct correlation between effective teams and strong leaders. The leadership development workshops aimed to support all school-level partnership coordinators to strengthen their leadership skills. Throughout the school year, leadership trainers from the teachers' professional association and from outside sources conducted workshops for partnership coordinators on topics such as teamwork and communication strategies.

Held in September at the school division office, the first workshop focused on running effective meetings, strategies for decision-making, brainstorming techniques, and leadership styles. Twelve ATP leaders participated in the half-day session of hands-on activities. The simulation of the brainstorming technique influenced many leaders to use this strategy with their school Action Teams as witnessed in follow-up visits by the district facilitator.

At each workshop session, participants relished the practical ideas that they could readily tailor to their Action Teams' work. A newsletter workshop session offered ideas for improving school newsletters. After this district workshop, Glenmary School made changes to its existing school newsletter by creating a booklet format, using headlines and bullets in articles, adding an "Inside This Issue" section to the front cover, and inserting a two-way communication form. The school conducted a random telephone survey of parents that indicated parents appreciated the new format. The information presented at the workshop helped enhance the school's communication strategies.

The district facilitator followed up the workshop sessions by attending schools' Action Team meetings throughout the school year, noting occasions when leaders implemented strategies and techniques from the leadership development workshops. Since the leadership development workshops' inception, the district has noticed an increase in effectiveness of school Action Teams for Partnerships.

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