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Class XXXII

1. Why is it exciting for you to be part of the ALF network? What sticks out in your memory about your class?

It is exciting to have the ability to collaborate on different projects and to interact with people who have different perspectives. I also appreciate the camaraderie that I see among Senior Fellows because of our shared experience.

2. What has been ALF's impact on you? On the community? On organizations and people that you work with?

My wife can best describe the impact ALF has had on me. She says, "Jerome is not a joiner. However, the ALF experience has opened Jerome up to the possibility and power of interacting with other people." ALF has proclaimed loudly that there is so much more you can accomplish *with* others.

ALF has also strengthened my commitment to the community, my resolve to work where I can, and to make this a better place for us all. My ALF classmates have encouraged me to look at the world, see what's great about it and what can be improved. For me, it's meant, "let's all work together to improve what we have and what we are leaving behind for our children".

At work, ALF has inspired me to take more of our staff meetings out of our conference room and into our blue lounge. It seems to help us focus in on creative ideas and encourage people to speak up.

3. Why were you interested in serving on the ALF board?

When I was asked to serve on the board, I thought that it would be a great opportunity to help this organization move forward. I'm honored to provide my perspective that may benefit this organization. I am a strong believer in the power of diversity of voice on the board and I believe that this diversity can truly elevate the organization.

4. What committee(s) do you serve on and what are you most excited to work on?

I'm currently serving on the Marketing Committee. I believe that one of the best marketing tools ALF has is galvanizing Senior Fellows to spread the ALF story whenever they can, wherever they are. There are so many people who don't know about ALF. More people need to know about ALF to participate in future classes and what better way is there than to have our Senior Fellows serve as recruiters!

The other marketing tools that I love for ALF are the simple branding ideas. Simple small ideas can really help this organization, in very low cost and sometimes no cost ways. For example, the Bite Size Branding tips that suggest putting ALF in your e-mail signature line are great. I also really like the cover

image on ALF's latest annual report. The Wordle says a whole lot about ALF. Having images that say and speak to what we are all about can make a huge difference.

5 Which was the most memorable day of your ALF class experience back in Houston?

Without question, it has to be all of the discussion leading up to our class dialogue. There were so many great ideas about what we should do. The dynamics of getting strong leaders to come together and decide on one class dialogue is challenging. That experience-- the frustration, the collaboration, and ultimately the agreement is top of mind for me. It was all about the journey, not the end product. I appreciate all that we went through as a class to get there, all that challenged and strengthened us—as we focused our dialogue on young adults aging out of Houston's foster care system."

5. Are there any ALF lessons/techniques that you apply in your daily life/professional/community life?

Now that I am a Senior Fellow, I am personally less hesitant to reach out to other Senior Fellows for help. For example, after our class dialogue about aged out foster youth, I had no hesitation calling Vanessa Gilmore (Class XI), United States District Judge, U.S. District Court -Southern District of Texas, to invite her to learn about our dialogue and invite her join us in our next steps. It was really cool to be able to do that. ALF provided the entrée for that conversation. Our ALF connection made me confident in reaching out to her--Senior Fellow to Senior Fellow. There is great power in the ALF network!

6. Can you share an example of one of your proudest leadership moments?

I am very proud of a series of art projects that I conducted to raise funds for little known charities that help children. Few people know that I'm a painter of abstract art. I decided to sell my art and donate the bulk of the proceeds to charities doing great work for kids. Those non-profits include the Stop ALD Foundation which fights Adrenoleukodystrophy, or ALD, a deadly genetic disease which often appears in childhood, and the ALDINE Y.O.U.T.H. Center.

7. Is there anything else that you would like to share with Senior Fellows?

I encourage anyone associated with ALF to look around and ask, "What I can do to help out? How can we convene people to make this community a better place?" I know this is a challenge for me and all of us to utilize what little time we have to help and to make the biggest impact on our community.