

Lessons in Leadership: Paths to Leadership

[Music]

Marlene Midget: I was very fortunate to have a mentor from the time I was a teacher assistant all the way to the position that I am in today as – as the executive director. The director before me was a wonderful woman named Pat Gracie, who nurtured my ability and my passion for helping other people through this agency. Also provided me with the supervisor training and guidance that I needed.

Ruth Kie: Hey, Carmilio. You guys going to be ready for some activities today?

Pueblo of Laguna is one of 19 pueblos in New Mexico. We have about 8,000 tribal members, with about 4,500 living here on the Reservation. I was a physician's assistant for 15 years prior to – to working in early childhood. So, I always say that was my first life.

Che Che Price: Where'd he go? Is that you?

My first job here was as a Head Start center-based teacher; the first one that we had in one of our counties. And after about three years, I knew I was ready to be doing more and more of a leadership aspect. It was frightening at first because you do have to be in the leadership position. You are the one person that people look up to. And so to know that all of that is on your shoulders, it's quite – it's overwhelming at times. But the more you read, the more you learn, the more you – I'm always asking questions of other people who have supported me or who know more than me. I know that I don't know it all, so I have to get input from other people, learn from other people.

Marlene: As a leader, you will have to be able to juggle staff issues, juggle parent concerns, as well as juggle the budget, as well write grants in order to keep certain things, and juggle the community in making sure your name is out there. So there is a lot that you have to be accountable for.

Jackie Bell: Good morning. My day consists of a lot of checking in to make sure that the program is running as well as it should be. There's a lot of days that I am in and out of classrooms covering for the teachers, covering their breaks, you know, the entire day if necessary. One of our biggest challenges is that we don't have any substitutes. So we utilize my assistant, who's normally out substituting somewhere in the field, or one of our office clerks who has her infant/toddler CDA. If neither of them are available, then I come in prepared to go into the classrooms to cover the classrooms.

I always greet the staff, the parents, and the kids. I think that it's very important that they see my face for nothing else as – if I'm going in and substituting they need to be comfortable with me. Especially at the ages for Early Head Start, once they hit about the 6 month mark up to about 2, they get that "stranger danger," so it's important that they are seeing me more on a regular basis so that they don't have that fear when I do have to go into the classroom.