



Every year, PEV sponsors LEAP, a LEAdership Program designed to help teenage girls blossom into the next generation of motivated leaders. This year, the girls "took the LEAP" in a rural setting north of Toronto. The program involved several different activities that led to a deeper self-awareness and understanding of others. "Growing in their self-awareness, the girls were able to reach out to others," said Program Coordinator Miriam .

The girls worked hard to discover their strengths and weaknesses. Jane, the Program Director, encouraged them to see that nothing is set in stone when it comes to personality. "Just because our personality is a certain way, it doesn't mean we have to act in a certain way," Jane told the girls during a personality test. "Each person has the freedom to make their own choices." By understanding each other's strengths and weaknesses, the girls were able to work together to overcome some of the teamwork challenges set for them. A "blanket challenge," for example, taught the girls how to implement especially creative solutions. Here's how it went: While standing on a blanket that barely had room for them all, the girls needed to find a way to turn the blanket over without stepping off it. After many amusing attempts, they finally succeeded--thanks to their collective effort to listen to each other and take turns giving and receiving advice. Fun activities like this one were complemented by practical workshops on topics such as effective communication and First Aid. One of the girls emphasized the practical aspect of the program, saying, "I learned some very valuable leadership skills and tips ... that are able to be applied to my everyday life."

On both the theoretical and practical levels, LEAP introduced the girls to an inspiring ideal of leadership. In one workshop, the girls were asked to list specific qualities of a leader, and they discovered that good leadership necessarily involves *service*. They learned that the truly effective way to lead in today's world is to serve others, responding to the needs of those around them to the best of their ability.