



I first heard about The Spartanburg County Foundation’s Grassroots Leadership Development Institute in 2015. I was honestly hesitant to apply for the 2016 class. For one, I found myself leading often but not always confident in my role. I knew this opportunity would stretch me in ways I wasn’t sure I was ready for. So, I did not apply. However, as the Executive Director of an upstate non-profit, I believe it is important to always remain teachable and to seek out opportunities of growth. Leaders should always be learning, and I knew this would be an opportunity to do just that. So when the applications opened for the 2017 class, I told the Lord, “If you want me to do it, I will get accepted.” Sure enough, I got accepted.

When the class first started, I was intimidated and had no clue what I was doing there. I can be somewhat introverted in new crowds but found myself connecting with others easily, and as it turned out, we all were feeling the same way. As the classes continued, I started realizing that not only did I have a lot to learn, but I also had a lot to offer. I learned from great leaders who spent time investing in us to grow as community leaders. We also learned more about our community, and I grew in pride over Spartanburg County. We have so much more to offer than most realize! My time in this class helped me grow in confidence of the gifts and skills I already have and gave me more tools to utilize them. I highly encourage anyone who has a desire to make a difference in your community to apply by October 13<sup>th</sup> at [www.spcf.org](http://www.spcf.org). You have a voice and a circle of influence you can lead.

Zaina Greene is a 2017 graduate of The Spartanburg County Foundation’s Grassroots Leadership Development Institute and Executive Director of Switch.