



The Young Professionals of Knoxville (YPK) would like to congratulate the graduates of the 2016 Leadership Certificate program. These 12 young professionals completed an 8-week intensive course, learning how to set and achieve personal and professional goals, discussing leadership and the qualities of a good leader, and discovering their own strengths and how to apply them at work and in the community.

2016 YPK Leadership Certificate Graduates



Lindsey Clark is a business development regional manager at TeamHealth. She joined YPK in 2014, and is in her second year serving as a board member of the marketing committee. She is an alumna of Centre College and loves swimming, UT athletics, going to the movies, and her wonderful family and friends.

"I have a deep passion for the Knoxville community, and strive in my professional and personal endeavors to positively impact those around me. This course has helped me develop a deeper understanding of the strengths I have to offer, and has given me clear objectives on how to use them to be successful both at work and as a leader of YPK."



Deborah Huddleston is the Media Relations and Project Director at Metro Drug Coalition. She currently serves on the Young Professionals of Knoxville Board of Directors, Girls Inc. of Knoxville Advisory Board and the Knox County Prescription Drug Task Force. She is passionate about driving change in the community, her faith and children.

"I am thankful to have had this opportunity to collaborate with a group of talented individuals who have a passion for leadership. This program exceeded my expectations, especially in my personal growth. I learned that you have to lead yourself before you can lead others."



Corey Jestice is a Senior Business Development Manager for 21st Mortgage Corporation and has been with the company for 12 years. He is involved with Young Professionals of Knoxville, Jr. Achievement of East Tennessee & TnAchieves. He is on the Board of Directors for the Knoxville Track Club as well as serving as the Race Director for multiple local events. He is married to Shanna Jestice who co-owns Ironic, a home décor and gift boutique in the Bearden District. They have a 4 year old daughter, Chandler. In his spare time he loves to travel with his family, participate in a wide variety of athletic events/races, create unique woodworking pieces, and spend as much time as possible in the mountains of East Tennessee.

"The YPK Leadership Certificate was a great experience. I learned a lot about myself & others in the short time we met together. It helped bring into focus what I want to put into further action in my personal life and as I work to better serve our community."



Shana Love works at Knoxville's Community Development Corporation and serves on their Community Involvement Committee Team specializing in low-income family housing assistance. Since 2004, Shana has served strongly in the housing and general assistance field, serving with Habitat for Humanity for 11 years and Kohl's for over 7 years, where she was ranked as the top sales associate for five consecutive years. She volunteers with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Big Brother Big Sister, Tennessee Valley Fair, Alzheimer's Association, Girl Talk Inc, Goodwill Industries and many others. She serves as the chair for the Personal Professional Development Committee for the Knoxville Area Urban League Young Professionals. She is a mother of two and is active in her church.

"The leadership program has taught me if you know more you can do more. The leadership program has taught me to know your limits by learning your strength. The leadership program has taught me to dig your well before you're thirsty."



Bradley McIlwain is a 2014 MBA graduate of The University of Tennessee Haslam College of Business. He is a technology enthusiast advocating for a smarter, simpler, and more agile workplace. His work is primarily focused on nonprofits including Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church, The Evangelical Alliance Mission, a new church launching in August 2016, and a for-profit startup. Areas of particular interest include information systems, networking, business analysis, change management, project management, communications, and operations. The YPK Leadership Certificate is empowering Bradley's continued growth as a leader as he observes and learns from peers and subject matter experts. Bradley lives in West Knoxville with his wife Katie and daughters Bailey and Callie-the-golden-doodle.

"Leadership is primarily a function of EQ (Emotional Intelligence) which can be developed and improved over time not IQ."



Amanda Middleton is the External Relations Associate at the Clarence Brown Theatre. She comes to the CBT by way of George Mason University where she received her MA in Arts Management, along with a Certificate in Special Events Management in the Arts. Her background in donor relations and event planning was cultivated in the College of Visual and Performing Arts Development office working directly with George Mason's Center for the Arts. A native of West TN, Amanda also holds a BA in Art with an emphasis in ceramics from Union University. Since moving to Knoxville, she has joined Sevier Heights Baptist Church, Knoxville Area Urban League Young Professionals, Rotaract, and is currently the Membership Chair for the Young Professionals of Knoxville.

"I began the YPK Leadership Certificate program with a preconceived notion of how you define a 'leader.' I am walking away with a deeper understanding of who a leader is, who I am, and how the relationships you build with others are all working in tandem to catapult you into greatness."



Katie Moore serves as the Community Liaison for the Tennessee Housing Development Agency. She is in touch with partners, elected officials, media and other housing entities to further develop THDA's effectiveness in East Tennessee. Prior to THDA she had roles in multi-family tax credit development, homeownership and minor home repair groups. She serves on several boards including Mortgage Bankers and served previously as the East TN chair of the Affordable Housing Coalition. She also has an extensive background in disaster relief.

"As young professionals we should seek any opportunity to develop- this is one such opportunity to learn about strengths, areas of growth and what we should be working toward. Tiffany McGee is a very talented facilitator and the program could not run without the dedication of Elle Benson."



Sara Prinzi is a God-fearing woman, mother, daughter, wife, small business owner, animal lover, and dreamer that currently serves the YMCA of East Tennessee and their mission. Sara has always been a leader; academically, athletically, and professionally. Her greatest accomplishments in life are her two beautiful girls; "Being the best role model and showing them what a strong woman looks like is my top priority." She has high career aspirations and life goals. Sara serves on the board of the East Tennessee Wellness Roundtable and is a co-chair on the steering committee for Young Leaders Society of United Way. She is a member of AYP, YPK, YLS, and AFP.

"This class has given me the opportunity to look deeper into myself and my strengths. What we do in life echoes in eternity. So do something great!"



Erin Rosolina serves as the Public Relations and Marketing Coordinator for Goodwill Industries-Knoxville, Inc. She graduated from Berea College, which fueled her desire to work in the non-profit industry, using her talents to affect change and build stronger, more sustainable communities. She received the Compton Mentor Fellowship and the 2011 Crawford Prize in Conservation and currently serves on the board for the Young Professionals of Knoxville. She strives to bring out the best in those around her, both in their personal and professional lives.

"The YPK Leadership Certificate program has given me valuable tools and vocabulary for empowering others and developing myself. I highly recommend this class for anyone who finds themselves in a leadership role."



Nita Sexton, Business Process Analyst for the Girl Scout Council of the Southern Appalachians, currently works to provide data quality assurance, reporting, and technical support for the Girl Scouts in our region. She works with Girl Scout councils across the country and other nonprofits to provide the application of practical project management and business process solutions, including strategic planning, process improvement, data quality assurance and reporting, and software system implementation. She is a proud alumnae of the University of Miami and is an even prouder wife and mother of two future Girl Scouts.

"My favorite thing about the YPK Leadership Certificate course is that it has connected me with likeminded individuals in a deeper way around topics that will help all of us have a greater impact on our community. This was done not only through the content presented by inspirational thought leaders in our community but also by allowing me to take the time to slow down and reflect on the impact and legacy I want to make as a young professional in Knoxville."



Brian Speight was born January 6, 1979. Growing up, the company his dad worked for transferred him frequently and this forced him to learn to adapt to new settings. It seemed from a young child Brian was destined to blaze his own path. He was always self-motivated and willing to try anything, pushing himself through the Boy Scouts and eventually becoming an Eagle Scout. At the age of 17 he joined the United States Army where he quickly advanced to a Sergeant. He served 4 years active and two years inactive with the military. Brian was able to learn many life experiences from those years that he couldn't have learned from anywhere else. All the while he was in college in Virginia and later transferred to the University of Tennessee. He had several jobs but it wasn't until he took a job working for a cellular company that he found his niche. Brian quickly found he not only loved selling but that he loved being a team leader and coaching others to meet their monthly goals. Through this job Brian met his wife and they worked alongside each other for six years. The cellular industry gave him the experience and training he needed to enter the world of insurance and, ultimately, to open his own office. Selling insurance has become not only a career, but a way for Brian to help others. Nothing gives him more satisfaction than sitting with a client and helping them protect themselves and their families.



John Young is the Assistant Director of Alumni Chapters for the Office of Alumni Affairs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Originally from Richmond, Virginia, John came to Knoxville to attend the University of Tennessee; he graduated from the College of Arts and Sciences in 2009 with an English degree. He currently serves on the Young Professionals of Knoxville board and holds volunteer positions with the United Way Young Leaders Society and Dogwood Arts. In his free time, John enjoys live music, playing tennis, and exploring Knoxville.

"The YPK Leadership Certificate program provided our class an excellent opportunity to delve deeper into the meaning of leadership as a group. Discovering my personal strengths through this program has better prepared me to connect with and lead others on teams at work and in the community."