

BEST PRACTICES

TACL

WHAT'S WORKING!



LEADERSHIP COLLIERVILLE TASHA HOLMES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This year was one to remember indeed. I started my role as the Executive Director of Leadership Collierville in March 2020 right before the shut down... yes, right before the shut down. For a few months, instead of planning for the upcoming year, like many leaders I was stumped with how to proceed for the coming year.

Then, the 2020 Virtual TACL Conference happened in October and I attended the sessions, collaborated with other Tennessee leaders and walked away feeling that I could totally create a virtual leadership program that my town, alumni and board members would be proud of in our community. Immediately, after leaving the conference, scripted out a skeleton year for both youth and adults, opened the applications and coined it a "Year of Impact." We made a pivot, added a book study for the class which was totally doable in a virtual space. Instead of our regular in-person retreat in August, we leaned on the Bridges Team to help us reimagine the classes launched in January. For the youth, we really landed in a comfortable space (they love virtual spaces) but the highlight for the class so far has

been the Diversity Class led by me and Leadership Collierville Alumni. In the class we created a Privilege bracelet that stemmed around our individual privileges (gender, race, faith, disability, relationship, finances) and how to be more compassionate, one person to the other, especially during the current social climate.

Other ways that we connected our class was to create a GroupMe where participants could chat and get to know each other better, talk about the book study and leadership practices. After three virtual sessions, last month, our class members met each other! They were thrilled to make connections, share what's happening in their fields and invite us to upcoming events. Above all of the chal-

lenges that I thought were ahead, TACL helped me to find opportunities and make this year the best enrollment and financial year in the last five (5) years. Thanks TACL for being there with and for Leadership programs across the state.



Leadership
 is about making others better as a result of your presence and making sure that impact lasts in your absence.
 - Sheryl Sandberg

LEADERSHIP KNOXVILLE SAMANTHA EDWARDS, DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AND INITIATIVES

For the past year, our buzzword as a staff at Leadership Knoxville has been "Pioneer". At the beginning of April 2020, I remember my boss, Tammy White, having a phone conversation with me saying that we could choose to pause our programming or... we could choose to be pioneers. Our whole staff agreed, and our board of directors supported the decision. If people in our community were going to trailblaze and innovate to navigate this new normal, we were going to be pioneers right there with them. One moment that stands out to me is deciding to move forward with our Youth Leadership Program and take what should have been their weeklong summer camp on to a virtual platform. I will be honest; we had no idea what we were doing. It was a "build the airplane while you fly it" moment. We had two weeks to come up with five full days of



virtual content. Did I mention we had really only used ZOOM to host hour long meetings? The students in our Youth Leadership program were desperate to connect with each other and we were desperate to figure out a way to help them build relationships. One thing we did to help build the "virtual" relation-

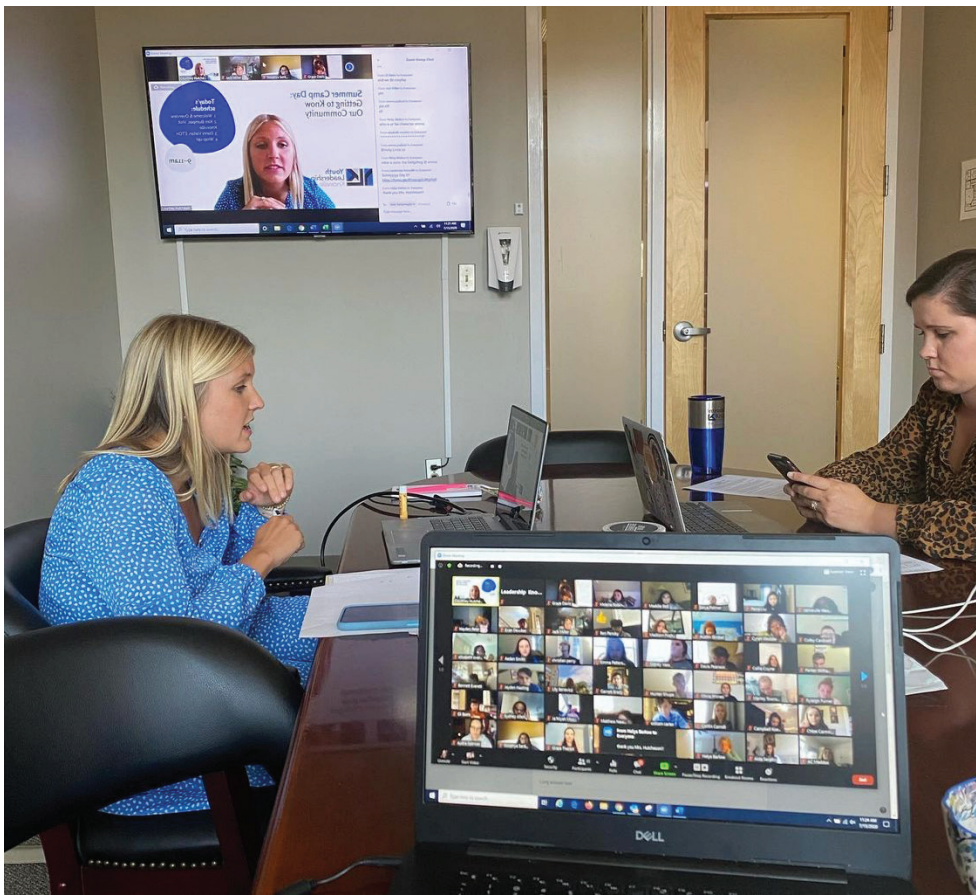
ships for our YLK program was to spend a lot of time in small groups – no more than two-three students – with a series of ice breakers. We also gave them the

opportunity to meet outside of the program time to work on their group service projects. At the end of each day, we would ask them to complete a survey

which helped us discern what worked and did not work for our virtual programming. I think we have had a lot of success in making sure this class that started virtual had a bond that translated into in-person programming.

Another rule we've implemented is to never tackle virtual sessions alone. Number one, running a zoom session by yourself is virtually impossible, (see what I did there?) and number two, it will make you crazy. Grab a fellow staff member or volunteer to help run technology. It's the difference maker.

As an organization, I am proud of the fact that we decided to take the risk of pioneering through our program year, and I think it paid off. What worked for us was being able to remain flexible and having plans A-Z. I can honestly say that I'm not sure we used our "Plan A" once this past year... I think it was more like plans H-Q. The best advice I can give anyone in navigating a year when up is down and down is up, is to remain positive and remember that it will all be okay in the end. If it's not okay, it's not the end.



LEADERSHIP CHATTANOOGA

AUSTIN CORCORAN, TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION MANAGER



WHAT'S WORKED

Leadership Chattanooga Class of 2020-21 started as scheduled virtually and is coming upon the May, and final, session for the year still virtual. The class is pro-

vided with many breaks, breakout room discussions after hearing from speakers, and plenty of virtual social opportunities - before the day started, during the lunch break, and at the end of the day. The class members receive a box with items for the program days. Items included have been Pom Poms (used to celebrate throughout the day without having to say something on Zoom), Leadership Chattanooga tumbler and sunglasses, snacks a plenty, gift card to purchase lunch, encouraging stickers, hand sanitizer, and Peanut M&M's (a staple of the program). Being virtual has allowed the class to hear from speakers who they may not have been able to in the past due to schedule or location. Last, having the chat fea-

ture on Zoom allowed the class to talk and discuss throughout the day and ask speakers questions easily.

LESSONS LEARNED

Always provide the survey at the end of the day and, more importantly, read it. We did this every month and worked to give the best virtual experience. Throughout the year, the class always expressed the opportunity to network with its class members. Offering opportunities for breaks, breakout rooms and social opportunities was important to create a more collaborative class and engaging monthly session days. The class also expressed the desire to be in-person and experience two main events of the class year that the other classes always expe-



rienced and is part of building their network, Opening Retreat and the trip to Nashville. The class did receive a virtual Opening Retreat, but to provide more opportunity, a Closing Retreat for the class is being planned for July in hopes that the class will feel more comfortable getting together in person, while following CDC guidelines, socially distanced, wearing masks, and more precautions. With the class not having the opportunity to experience the trip to Nashville for State Government Day, the plan, as of now, is to include the class with the Class of 2021-22 trip.

LEADERSHIP GALLATIN, KIM BAKER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



One of our favorite ways to create movement within the group and to keep them connecting with each other is by matching them with different classmates each day trip. The nametags we provide for participants hang around their necks, with pockets for pins, phones, and business cards. The actual name tag slides in and out, with room behind it to stick drink tickets for the end of the day happy hour as well as materials for activities.

Prior to each trip, I lay all of the nametags out and think about each participant. Based on similarities and/or differences within the group, I match each participant with others that I think they should get to know better and/or would work well with. It's often my own little social experiment, as we all know

our leadership groups have a variety of personalities! Once I've grouped them, I develop a way for them to connect with their other "group" members for that day trip. At our Christmas mixer, I break them into groups of twos by taking two lines from a variety of popular Christmas songs. Participant A gets a slip of paper in their name tag with the first line and Participant B gets a slip with the second line. When they arrive at the mixer, I let them know they need to find the person who has a line to their song. It's fun to watch - and hear! For day trips, I try to keep them on theme to the day. For ex-

ample, on our history day trip, I print off 3 facts related to a person, place, or event in Gallatin's history that I know they'll learn about in the first half of the day. I slip the 3 related facts into 3 different nametags and by lunch, they should be able to not only identify who or what their fact relates to, but also find 2 others who are related. This group will be who they will work on a project or presentation with for the day. It keeps them engaged, learning, moving, and talking to each other and is always a hit! **Lesson Learned:** Always ask for dietary restrictions before classes start!



SAVE THE DATE - and - COME TOGETHER

TACL 2021 - OCTOBER 13-15 2021
HOSTED IN SUMNER COUNTY BY



We only covered one topic in our newsletter,
come to the TACL Conference
and learn from your peers
about many topics impacting your program.

Conference Scholarships
are available for TACL members.



Contact Us



C/O Judy Renshaw,
TACL Executive Director



Office - 731.394.2205



judyrenshaw2@gmail.com
leadershiptennessee.com

Check Us Out Online at <https://leadershiptennessee.com/tacl>