

**WOMEN  
EMPOWERED**



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# THE CHRONICLE

Volume 45, Number 26

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.

THURSDAY, March 7, 2019

## LEAD Girls NC host third annual soiree

BY TEVIN STINSON  
THE CHRONICLE

March 1 is the official start of Women's History Month in the United States. While we celebrate the women who have made history with their contributions to society, we must also ensure that young girls and preteen girls have the necessary tools and resources to become leaders and history-makers in their communities as well. And last week more than 200 people came together to celebrate a local organization that has been doing just that for the past three years, LEAD Girls NC.

Founded by Joy Nelson in 2016, the mission of LEAD (Learning Everyday Achieving Dreams) Girls NC is to encourage and mentor girls to aspire and achieve greatness academically, emotionally and creatively. From humble beginnings as an after-school program with only six girls, today LEAD serves more than 150 girls in middle schools in Forsyth and Guilford Counties.

During the LEAD Girls Soiree on Sunday, March 3, an annual gathering that serves as a fundraiser for the program, Nelson, who is a graduate of Salem College and a certified life coach, said when girls have a strong foundation and someone who believes in them, they can do anything. She said after col-



Joy Nelson founder of LEAD Girls NC congratulates Brittany Shuff during the 3rd Annual LEAD Girls soiree on Sunday, March 3. Shuff is the first participant in the LEAD Girls program to graduate from high school.

lege and seeing how many girls in the community needed a positive role model, she decided to follow her heart.

"... I knew I was ready to get into action and those girls needed me. We have girls in our program who have experienced things no child should have to experience. We have girls who don't have parents to care for them and girls who want a future but have no

idea what that could be or how to get there," said Nelson. "In LEAD our girls discover a safe environment. They learn to problem solve, support their peers and communicate effectively. They set high expectations for themselves."

According to Nelson, since 2016 more than 300 girls have benefited from the LEAD program, but there is still work to be

done. Statistics show in Forsyth County, one in three girls struggle to achieve stability in adulthood and girls in our community are more likely to end up in poverty or homelessness.

"To sum it up, LEAD gives a future and we need you to be in their corner. Currently we're in two middle schools and we have our Saturday community program. There are

eight more Title I schools that need us," Nelson told those in attendance during the soiree.

"... We can make a remarkable impact in this community."

Along with raising funds for the program, the soiree held at the Village Inn Event Center also served as an opportunity for LEAD to highlight some of their supporters and girls who are enrolled

in the program. This year's honorees were Karl Yena and Heather Scales. The LEAD Girl Award was presented to Brittany Shuff, a senior at Carter G. Woodson and the first LEAD Girl to graduate from high school. Shuff, who will attend Fayetteville State University in the fall, is a leader who is always willing to go above and beyond to help others.

Nelson said, "She's a leader. Always willing to head up projects and even stays late on Saturdays to help me clean. She's eager to go to college and take on the world and I know she will."

After accepting her award, Shuff read a poem she wrote about her experiences with LEAD Girls NC called "A Black Girls' Undefined World." The poem talked about overcoming obstacles and reaching your dreams.

She read, "... I'm going to choose to stand before you as I am and I'm going to walk my path with integrity and there's no one who will be able to stop me from being me."

An unofficial tally of the funds raised during the event last weekend topped \$17,000. During the soiree, Nelson personally thanked individuals and organizations that made donations to the program.

For more information on LEAD Girls NC, visit [www.leadgirls.org](http://www.leadgirls.org).

## 82 students honored during 39th Human Relations Student Awards Banquet

BY TEVIN STINSON  
THE CHRONICLE

For nearly 40 years the city's Human Relations Department has partnered with the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools system to host the Human Relations Student Awards Banquet and this year the event was bigger than ever.

The banquet, held annually at the Embassy Suites hotel, is designed to honor students who exemplify positive human relations in their dealing with others on such issues as race, religion, and cultural differences. This year's event honored 82 students from every school in the district and several private schools as well.

While speaking with

The Chronicle before the start of the banquet on Thursday, Feb. 28, Wanda Allen-Abraha, director of the city's human relations department, said she was excited to have the opportunity to continue the tradition of honoring young people in our community who are sometimes overlooked because they don't play sports or get straight "As".

"We are really excited to be able to continue to focus on students who don't always get recognized and that don't always get rewarded, but they are salt-of-the-earth, cream-of-the-crop students who do excellent things for the community," continued Allen-Abraha. "... They do things for the elderly, they helped victims of the hurricanes, they do things for other students who are bullied. One child even learned sign language to be able to communicate with a child who was deaf in her classroom."

"Those are the type of kids we're celebrating today. So it's always exciting and an honor to be able to do this every year."

While enjoying dinner,

the student honorees and their more than 600 guests listened to the keynote address delivered by Alfreda Smith, the principal at Northwest Middle School and the 2018 Principal of the Year. Mayor Allen Joines was also on hand to thank the honorees for their willingness to help others and make Winston-Salem a better place for everyone. He also presented Allen-Abraha with a proclamation marking the event and the work the Human Relations Department does to bring students together.

"...I want to offer my sincere congratulations to each and every one of you. Thank you for what you're doing not only in your school, but in our community as well," said Joines. "It's been said before, but we are here tonight honoring students that exemplify good human relation skills. Reaching out to others whether it be on race issues, cultural issues or whatever it might be to say we can work together, go to school together and have a very meaningful life together."

After dinner and the



Last week the city's Human Relations Department hosted the 39th Annual Human Relations Student Awards Banquet.

keynote address, the students made their way across the stage to receive their awards. With giant smiles each student

accepted their awards as they were congratulated by several community leaders including Interim Superintendent Dr.

Kenneth Simington, and Police Chief Catrina Thompson.

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