

## Leadership Fayette County class recognized

June 24, 2015, by Rachel Davis for the Fayette Tribune

A graduation banquet was held on May 17 at the Oak Hill Holiday Lodge to honor the students and families of the Leadership Fayette County (LFC) class of 2015. Honorable Dwane L. Tinsley, United States Magistrate Judge, addressed the graduates and inspired them with his words, "If you believe in yourself and have conviction, [your dreams] will become your reality... I stand before you this afternoon as an example of having a dream and believing in myself."



*The Honorable United States Magistrate Judge Dwane Tinsley, commencement speaker, is pictured with the Leadership Fayette County Class of 2015: Trace Crum, Jared Morris, Wesley White, Cameron Heeter, Steven Blume, Blake Pack, Noah Riner, LFC chairman Dave Pollard, Brianna Canterbury, Emily Smallman, Rachel White, Emma Ellis, Elise Atha and Kaddie Wolfe.*

Congratulations LFC class of 2015 graduates: Oak Hill High School students Cameron Heeter, Noah Riner, Kaddie Wolfe, Rachel White and Elise Atha; Fayetteville High School students Emma Ellis, Blake Pack, Wesley White and Trace Crum; Midland Trail High School students Jared Morris and Steven Blume; Valley High School students Brianna Canterbury and Emily Smallman; Beckley Christian School student Keagan Vickers.

The banquet is named to honor the late C.R. "Bud" Hill Jr, who was instrumental in helping to start the Leadership Fayette County program. Scholarships, in the amount of \$1000 each, were awarded in honor of Jon A. Dragan Memorial, Ansted Lions Club, Ramsey Memorial, United Bank, New River Gorge RDA, Appalachian Power, Carrie Beth Bowling

Memorial, Hamilton, Burgess, Young & Pollard, Kenneth Eskew Memorial, Melba White Memorial, Charles Mahan Memorial, and Don Elmore Memorial.

Those who successfully complete the LFC curriculum are awarded a scholarship to the college of their choice. In 2012 funding allowed the program to expand to offer select sessions to all students who complete the application and interview process. The ultimate goal is to provide Fayette County youth with the information and tools needed to enable them to make the choice to return to Fayette County upon completion of their higher education; promoting essential leadership qualities while providing first hand experiences in the business, government, and tourism sectors of Fayette County. Each year, since 2001, students are selected by an application and interview process to participate in the program throughout their eleventh grade school year.

The program provides the opportunity for students to develop personally and professionally through public speaking and teambuilding exercises; how to assess themselves and their teammates as resources, and so much more, all while having an enjoyable hands-on experience.

Leadership Fayette County was born of the county's planning process. The County Chamber, County Commission and the County Board of Education partnered in launching the program. Since that time, graduates have come back to the county as teachers, accountants, marketing directors, EMS personnel, and have earned admittance into highly competitive universities including medical and veterinary.

In 2013 the program earned recognition from Harvard Kennedy School and the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation as a "Bright Idea" and exemplary community development program. Also in 2013, the Capstone Program at WVU studied the program and attributed hundreds of thousands of dollars in local economic growth to Leadership Fayette County and its umbrella organization, the Fayette County Education Fund, Inc.

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Welcome the LFC class of 2016: Oak Hill High School students Dominic Re, David Love, Emma Pino, Tiffanie Carter, and Blake Wingrove; Fayetteville High School students Sarah Koontz, and Hannah Franklin; Midland Trail High School student Logan Johnson; Valley High School students Thomas Kinzer, Rachel Peal, Kaitlyn Coleman, and John Cook; Meadow Bridge High School students Brooklyn Critchley, and Micah Farr.

“We received a large number of applications for a limited number of slots. We appreciate the eagerness for academic success of all those who applied and the talent was impressive; however, we are unable to accommodate everyone into the program. We wish them all the best in their academic endeavors,” explained Dave Pollard, program chair.

Scholarships and programming are made possible by donations to the 501c3 Fayette County Education Fund, Inc. For more information on how you can support Leadership Fayette County, contact Dave Pollard at 304-640-3778.