

2023

# ANNUAL REPORT

**LEADERS**  
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

# Making Lives Better, **TOGETHER.**

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Leaders Education Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit 501c3 organization that Gives Forward to our community. The Foundation unites community members and organizations to bring educational resources and opportunities to educators and students of all ages in West Tennessee.

Leaders Education Foundation provides educational grants, scholarships, and resources to our community that supports lifelong learning, workforce development, and education.

**We believe in empowering our community for good.**

**GIVEFORWARD**

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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As the President of the Leaders Education Foundation, it brings me great pride to share the strides we've made toward our mission of Making Lives Better, Together. Our dedicated team has worked tirelessly throughout the past year to extend our influence and effect positive change. Thanks to the unwavering commitment of our volunteer board, staff, and community partners, we've provided access to education and resources to a larger number of students, educators, and community members.

A significant accomplishment this year has been a new partnership with Georgia-Pacific Dixie®, which will allow us to double the number of workforce readiness scholarships in 2024 and in the years to come. Workforce Readiness Scholarships

presented by Dixie® allows us to grant scholarships to deserving students pursuing Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, easing the financial burden of education. This is in addition to the collegiate scholarships we award annually.

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Together, we're making a tangible difference in the lives of countless students and families throughout our community.

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In tandem with our scholarship programs, we've broadened our outreach efforts to support more

# MEETING AGENDA

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April 16, 2024

CALL TO ORDER  
AND INVOCATION  
Ron Hill, Board Chair

APPROVAL OF  
2023 MEETING MINUTES  
Ron Hill, Board Chair

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT  
Ron Hill, Board Chair

PRESIDENT'S REPORT  
Leigh Anne Bentley, President

NOMINATING  
COMMITTEE'S REPORT  
Ron Hill, Nominating  
Committee Chair

CLOSING REMARKS AND  
ADJOURNMENT  
Ron Hill, Board Chair

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**RON HILL**  
Board Chair



**EDDIE HAYES**  
Vice Chair & Secretary



**KAREN TAYLOR**  
Treasurer



**MARY LOU ADAMS**  
Board Member



**YVETTE BLUE**  
Board Member



**GREG HAMMOND**  
Board Member



**EDDIE MAE PIRTLE**  
Board Member



**STEPHANIE RILEY**  
Board Member



**STANLEY SANDERS**  
Board Member



organizations within our focus area. Initiatives such as the Jackson Grown Leader Fellowship, Jackson Symphony Music Academy, and Ballet Arts school performance have benefited from our increased involvement. Continued support for the READ team, WestTeach, the Future Star Youth Summit and local Imagination Library chapters have seen ongoing support in 2023. Furthermore, our LEADS educator grant programs have continued to thrive, with over \$35,000 awarded to West Tennessee teachers and classrooms, which has increased to include not only classroom grants but also grants for professional development and teacher appreciation. These programs offer vital resources and assistance, and we're proud of their impact on our communities.

None of this would have been achievable without the generosity and dedication of our donors, sponsors, and

partners. Your support and commitment to our cause have been truly remarkable, and we are immensely grateful for your ongoing involvement. Together, we're making a tangible difference in the lives of countless students and families throughout our community.

Looking ahead, we remain steadfast in our mission. With your continued support, we're confident that we can further expand our reach and amplify our impact in the years to come.

Thank you for standing with us in our efforts to enrich education and empower our community through the Leaders Education Foundation.

Kind regards,

*L.A. Bentley*  
**LEIGH ANNE BENTLEY**  
President

## OFFICERS AND STAFF

The leadership of the Leaders Education Foundation is comprised of a volunteer board of directors, officers, and staff donating their time, talent and treasures. The Foundation is grateful for their service and commitment to help provide resources and opportunities to help launch educational opportunities for community members.



**LEIGH ANNE BENTLEY**  
President



**LEIGH O'NEILL**  
Vice President



**SHEA BROWN**  
Director of  
Community Impact



**TAYLOR RISLEY**  
Assistant Treasurer



**EDIE WHITMAN**  
Assistant Secretary



**CATHERINE TEEL**  
Accounting



**TYLER MOSELY**  
Accounting



**SCOTT HEIT**  
Marketing



**ROSS KYZAR**  
Marketing



**AMY LOVINS**  
Marketing

## CORPORATE SPONSORS



CONFLUENT STRATEGIES



OpenLending



JESSI BELL PRUETT



In 2023, L.E.A.D.S. Grants expanded from classroom initiative grants to also include grants for K-12 teacher appreciation projects and for educators' professional development. Over \$35,000 was awarded to educators throughout West Tennessee.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS**

- CHRISTA FRYE**  
Bethel University
- AMY JACQUES**  
Nova Early Learning Center
- MISTY LEWIS**  
Community  
Montessori School
- VACHENZIA MCKINNEY**  
Geeter K-8 School
- SARAH NEWSTOK**  
Libertas School of Memphis
- TAMMY PRATER**  
Jackson State  
Community College

**TEACHER APPRECIATION GRANTS**

- SHARON CLARK**  
Sunny Hill  
Intermediate School
- JOSIE CURRIE**  
Jackson Academic  
STEAM Academy
- REGINA DELOACH**  
Sherwood Elementary
- CHRISTY GRAVES**  
Middleton  
Elementary School
- JODY HINSON**  
Rutherford School
- APRIL HUGHES**  
Scenic Hill  
Elementary School
- VACHENZIA MCKINNEY**  
Geeter K-8 School
- KIMBERLY QUINN**  
Denmark  
Elementary School
- SHEMON REAVES**  
Arlington Elementary School
- KIM THOMPSON**  
Dyer School



## CLASSROOM GRANTS

**MATT BARKER**  
Freed Hardeman University

**JENNIFER BURKHEAD**  
Denmark  
Elementary School

**SHARON CLARK**  
Sunny Hill  
Intermediate School

**SHANNON DAVIS**  
Alexander  
Elementary School

**CALANDRA  
ELLISON-WILLIAMSON**  
Liberty Tech High School

**ROBIN FERGUSON**  
Denmark  
Elementary School

**MEAGAN FERTIG**  
Elmore Park Middle School

**MISSI HARDIN**  
Community  
Montessori School

**WHITNEY HOGG**  
Rose Hill School

**SARAH HUBBARD**  
Elmore Park Middle School

**JACOB KENT**  
Libertas School of Memphis

**CHARO LOVINGS**  
Isaac Lane Elementary

**LAUREN MALECHA**  
Chester County Middle

**SUSAN MENARD**  
North Parkway  
Middle School

**PORSHA MILAN**  
Rutherford School

**SHEREKA PHINNESSEE**  
Parkview Prep Academy

**GEORG & BETSY PINGEN**  
Union University

**SHEMON REAVES**  
Arlington Elementary School

**JESSICA JOY ROBERTS**  
Libertas School of Memphis

**JAKE STOFFREGEN**  
South Side High School

**DANIELLE SHAW-JONES**  
North Side High School

**MEAGAN SPENCER**  
Freed Hardeman University

**CAROLYN STEPHENSON**  
Jackson Academic  
STEAM Academy

**RACHEL TAYLOR**  
Elmore Park Middle School

**KELLY WILLIAMS**  
Isaac Lane Elementary

# COLLEGIATE SCHOLARSHIPS

Leaders Education Foundation awarded \$25,000 in scholarships ranging from \$1,000–2,500 and included a video submission scholarship that focused on the financial well-being of students. Other scholarships were determined based on financial need, community service and academic achievement.



**DANIELLE ROGERS**  
\$2,500 Financial Wellness  
Video Scholarship



**ABBY GROOM**  
\$2,000 Financial Wellness  
Video Scholarship



**BRIANA BANES**  
\$2,500 Leaders Credit Union  
Martha Britt Scholarship





**CHANDLER MAYNARD**  
\$2,000 Leaders Credit Union  
Martha Britt Scholarship



**JACOB LOGAN**  
\$1,000 Town & Country  
Realtors Scholarship



**JALEN BROOKS**  
\$1,000 Ellis Insurance  
Scholarship



**KEYLEE HARVILL**  
\$1,000 JMCSS Founders  
Scholarship



**MADELYNN MALONE**  
\$1,000 Community Scholarship  
Gibson County



**ELLA PALMER**  
\$1,000 Community Scholarship  
Obion County

# COLLEGIATE SCHOLARSHIPS



**CARLY TOWNSEND**

\$1,000 Community Scholarship  
Shelby County



**JUDSON BEAVER**

\$1,000 Community Scholarship  
West Tennessee



**LAYTON BROOKS**

\$1,000 Community Scholarship  
West Tennessee



**MALEAH BURKE**

\$1,000 Community Scholarship  
West Tennessee



**JOSIE HALFORD**

\$1,000 Community Scholarship  
West Tennessee



**AVERY HOLLOWAY**

\$1,000 Community Scholarship  
West Tennessee



**NORAH KENDALL**

\$1,000 Community Scholarship  
West Tennessee



**KATHARINE LARKINS**

\$1,000 Community Scholarship  
West Tennessee



**JOSEPH LATTUS**

\$1,000 Community Scholarship  
West Tennessee



**LAUREN McCLAIN**

\$1,000 Community Scholarship  
West Tennessee



**KATHERINE ROBESON**

\$1,000 Community Scholarship  
West Tennessee

# WORKFORCE READINESS SCHOLARSHIPS

presented by **DIXIE**



Leaders Education Foundation awarded scholarships to support West Tennessee students who are enrolled in Workforce Readiness programs or are pursuing industry certifications through West Tennessee community colleges or the Tennessee College of Applied Technology.

**BRITTANY BOND**  
Jackson State CC

**JAMES BANKS**  
TCAT Jackson

**DYLAN BUCK**  
TCAT Jackson

**DAVID FAUSTINO**  
Jackson State CC

**TELEASHIA HOBSON**  
TCAT Jackson

**CHRISTA HOLLEY**  
Jackson State CC

**TRACY JONES**  
Jackson State CC

**JADEN MACLIN**  
Jackson State CC

**TOM MAJOR**  
TCAT Jackson

**DAYMON PALMER**  
TCAT Jackson

**LYNDSAY REASONS**  
Jackson State CC

**ANALISSE RIVERA**  
TCAT Jackson

**PEYTON ROOK**  
TCAT Jackson

**DANYA SMITH**  
Jackson State CC

**FRANCHESTA SWIFT**  
TCAT Northwest

# NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

In accordance with our Bylaws (available upon request), we are notifying our members that the Board will have three (3) currently serving Directors' terms expiring at the Leaders Education Foundation's fifth annual meeting in April 2024. The new terms for these Directors shall be for three (3) years each. Director Mary Lou Adams will regrettably not be able to serve another term. We thank Director Adams for her leadership and service to the Foundation.

In accordance with the Foundation's bylaws, Section 4.03, the Chair shall appoint before each annual meeting at least two (2) Board members and up to three (3) members from the

general membership to serve on the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall submit to the full Board and membership a list of nominees not later than thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting.

Board Chair, Ron Hill, has appointed Karen Taylor and himself from the Board and Spencer Pratt, Seth Rudd, and Karen Freeman from the general membership to serve on the Nominating Committee for 2024. Board Chair Hill served as the 2024 Nominating Committee Chair. The Nominating Committee has completed its' responsibility of providing the following as Director Nominees to be presented to the membership.

**YVETTE BLUE**  
2nd Term  
April 2024–April 2027

**STAN SANDERS**  
2nd Term  
April 2024–April 2027

**LINDA RIZZUTO**  
1st Term  
April 2024–April 2027

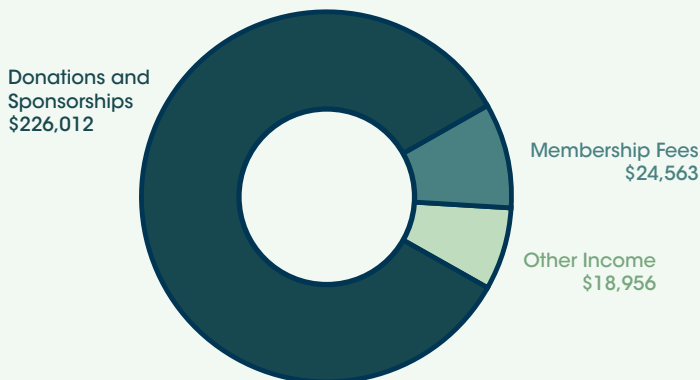
Thank you for allowing us to serve as your 2023 Nominating Committee.

Ron Hill  
Spencer Pratt  
Karen Taylor

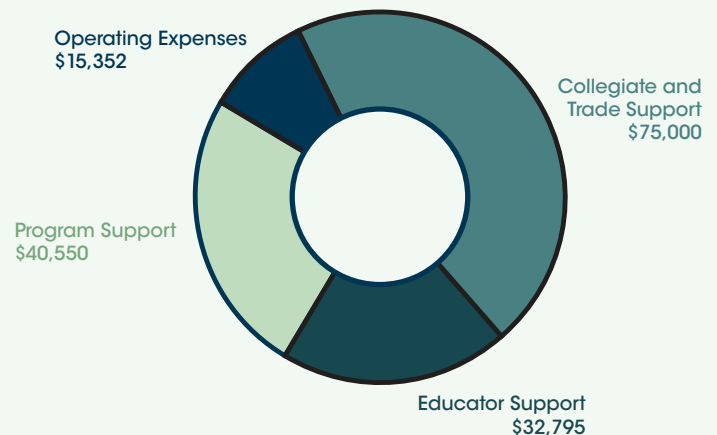
Seth Rudd  
Karen Freeman

## 2023 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

### REVENUE



### EXPENSES



# 4TH ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

April 18, 2023

Chair Ron Hill called the 4th Annual Membership meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. at 1490 Union University Parkway, Jackson, TN. He explained that due to limited capacity, members have been encouraged to attend virtually via Facebook live with a limited in-person audience.

Chair Ron Hill lead the invocation and then welcomed the students from Arlington Elementary School. The students led everyone in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and singing the National Anthem.

Chair Ron Hill called upon Secretary Eddie Hays to determine whether a quorum was present. Secretary Hays confirmed that a quorum was present.

Chair Ron Hill called for the reading of the minutes of the 3rd Annual Membership meeting conducted on April 19, 2022. A motion was made to dispense with the reading of last year's minutes, which are included in the 2022 Annual Report. The motion carried and the minutes were approved as presented.

Chair Ron Hill introduced the other Foundation Board Members who are:

- Mr. Eddie Hays, who also served as Vice-Chair and Secretary
- Mrs. Karen Taylor, who also served as Treasurer
- Mrs. Mary Lou Adams
- Ms. Yvette Blue
- Mrs. Eddie Mae Pirtle
- Ms. Stephanie Riley

Chair Ron Hill called upon Foundation President Leigh Anne Bentley to present the President's Report.

President Bentley thanked Chair Hill and the Foundation Board for their leadership and service. She stated that fulfilling the mission of Leaders Education Foundation is a labor of love and takes a village including the Foundation's volunteer staff, members, and corporate sponsors, all of whom she thanked for their service and/or support.

She reported that the Foundation installed a charter wall this past year at Leaders Credit Union's Oil Well branch to honor and

commemorate the charter sponsors and charter members who have supported the Foundation from the beginning.

President Bentley then reported that, in 2022, the Foundation launched its new Workforce Readiness Scholarship program. Through this new initiative, the Foundation awarded scholarships to deserving students working on completing their career technical education programs. The 2022 Workforce Readiness scholarship recipients are listed in the Annual Report.

Other support provided in 2022 includes:

- \$25,000 awarded to high school seniors as collegiate scholarships
- \$20,000 awarded in L.E.A.D.S. grants to educators
- Partnership with the United Way's READ Team to financially support their expansion of services and resources, including taking books to children in different areas of West Tennessee with their Words on Wheels (WOW) Wagon
- \$7,000 matching gift to the Jackson Art's Council for its Art Box initiative
- Sponsored twenty-one (21) students across West TN in the FutureStar Youth Summit hosted at UT Martin

At the meeting, a special presentation of \$20,000 was awarded to the United Way's READ Team to continue supporting their program.

President Bentley then reported that since the inception of the Leaders Education Foundation Scholarship program, there has been a notable rise in both the total number of scholarships awarded and the dollar amount disbursed. These scholarships are designated for high school seniors who have demonstrated exceptional academic achievement and leadership qualities within their schools and communities. Before announcing the 2023 scholarship recipients, she noted that the Board had formed a Scholarship Committee, who she recognized and thanked for their service and who are Mrs. Mary Lou Adams, Mrs. Stephanie Riley, Ms. Yvette Blue, and Ms. Linda Rizzuto. The Scholarship Committee led by Committee Chair Adams reviewed all of the applications and selected the recipients. President Bentley then individually recognized each recipient of a 2023

scholarship, of which twenty were given for a total of \$25,000 awarded. The 2023 Collegiate scholarship recipients are listed in the Annual Report.

In 2022, the Foundation awarded twenty L.E.A.D.S. Education Grants. Through this program, West Tennessee educators were eligible to enter for an opportunity to win a grant of up to \$1,000 each. The 2022 LEADS Grant recipients are listed in the Annual Report.

President Bentley then introduced the 2023 Nominating Committee Chair, Mr. Spencer Pratt. Committee Chair Pratt recognized his fellow 2023 Nominating Committee members who are Ms. Yvette Blue, Mr. Ron Hill, Mr. Seth Rudd, and Mrs. Karen Freeman. He reported that at this time and based on the Board's approval, the Nominating Committee submits to the membership the following slate of Nominees for the Foundation's Board of Directors:

- Mr. Ron Hill  
2nd term (April 2023 – April 2026)
- Mr. Eddie Hays  
2nd term (April 2023 – April 2026)
- Mr. Stan Sanders  
1st term (April 2023 – April 2024)
- Mr. Greg Hammond  
1st term (April 2023 – April 2026)

Chair Ron Hill thanked the 2023 Nominating Committee for serving. As there were no further nominations, he asked for a motion to accept the slate of nominees. A motion and second were made to accept the nominations. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Ron Hill then thanked those members joining in-person and virtually for attending the 4th Annual Membership meeting. He thanked all the Foundation's sponsors, members and donors and encouraged everyone to continue donating and, if not a member, to join the Foundation. With no other business to be discussed, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

**EDDIE HAYS**  
Secretary

**RON HILL**  
Chair

# BECOME a member



“Always walk through life as if you have something new to learn, and you will.”

— VERNON HOWARD

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When an individual or organization chooses to give to the Leaders Education Foundation, their impact can last a lifetime.

Becoming a member of the Leaders Education Foundation means you will make an impact in your community. As a member, your contribution gives you the unique opportunity to participate in the Annual Meeting of the Foundation’s membership, as our volunteer Board of Directors outlines how we plan to Give Forward. You will be updated through our newsletter and social media with how your membership is directly impacting your local community. You will also have direct access to share the Foundation’s scholarships and grants to students or educators who would benefit from these valuable opportunities.

**To become a member of the Leaders Education Foundation, visit [leadersgives.org](https://leadersgives.org) and select “Give.”**

Donations of all sizes are appreciated, and you automatically become a member with a one-time \$10 donation. Donations over the \$10 membership fee may be given in honor or in memory of a loved one.

**LEADERS**  
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

# LEADERS

EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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