



LEADERSHIP WINSTON-SALEM

Igniting Community Leadership



2025

Annual Report to the Community

The Executive Director's Reflections

Dear members of our Winston-Salem family,

As we reflect on the 2024–2025 fiscal year, I am excited to share highlights from what has truly been a remarkable year for Leadership Winston-Salem.”

We marked a record-breaking year of generosity as we surpassed our 40th Anniversary Campaign goal of \$80,000, raising \$130,294. This extraordinary outpouring of support reflects the strength of our alumni, donors, and corporate partners, and ensures that our impact will continue to grow. The Class of 2025, the “Most Iconic Class Ever”, graduated with the largest Flagship class gift in LWS history at \$31,061, while our INSIGHT Class also set a new record, raising \$11,150, the largest gift ever from their program. We also reignited the tradition of Alumni Action Learning, completing the first project in several years with A Bed and a Book, demonstrating once again how our alumni give back to strengthen our community.

Engagement across our alumni network reached record-setting levels. From the Opening Retreat Welcome Line and Homecoming to Volunteer Appreciation and our Community Conversation on the childcare crisis (a collaborative effort with REACH Women’s Network and Greater Winston-Salem, Inc.), participation and enthusiasm were at an all-time high.

We also launched new opportunities for connection, including Community Coffees and Wine Down Wednesdays, both of which quickly became favorites for alumni and community friends alike. And our Celebration event was the best yet, with a new location, live music, food, and dancing—a fantastic way to cap off our 40th anniversary year.

We are especially grateful for the leadership of Melissa Thompson, our 2024–2025 Board Chair. Her thoughtful guidance, steady engagement, and unwavering cheerleading spirit helped make this an unforgettable year of progress and momentum.

As we look ahead, we are energized by the successes of this past year and excited for the opportunities to come. We are committed to setting new records in engagement, service, and impact, while continuing to nurture leaders who will shape the future of our community.

With deep gratitude for your support and partnership,



Executive Director

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Our Mission

Educating, Connecting, and Energizing
leaders to serve and improve the
community.

"I greatly appreciate Leadership Winston-Salem because it create space to bring together individuals from different backgrounds, industries, and interests. Rarely are we afforded the opportunity to meet and become close with such diverse individuals and discover opportunities to utilize our capabilities and networks to improve the community we love."

Walter O. Farabee, *Flagship '21*
Senior Manager, Community Engagement
Reynolds American, Incorporated



"Leadership Winston-Salem provides that rare space and time to cultivate learning, growing, and collaborating across all our experiences in a shared act of true civic engagement. The program has helped me build exciting new relationships, benefit from shared knowledge about complex community needs, and ultimately empowered me with new resources for collective problem-solving that will greatly benefit not only myself, but also my institution and Winston-Salem. I graduated truly energized about this city's future because of the powerful commitment of LWS and my fellow leader-participants to making Winston-Salem an even better community."

Michele Gillespie, *INSIGHT '24*
Presidential Endowed Professor, Wake Forest
University



Sabrina Allen - Allegacy Federal Credit Union
Kate Allman - Winston-Salem TEACH
Jessica Aveyard - Innovation Quarter
Jennifer Banks - Big Brothers Big Sisters of America
Timisha Barnes-Jones - Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools
Elise Barrella - Dfx Consulting, LLC.
Ann Beery - The Variable
Jalah Blackmon - Next Stage
Chelsea Bradford - Piedmont Federal Bank
Lorena Bradford - LliBott Consultorios Médicos
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Amanda Dezarn - Healthcare Access
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Raymond Ferrell - AlphaBEST
Curtis Friday - Forsyth Wins/Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods
Victoria Gillett - Wildfire
Caleb Gossett - Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Piedmont Triad
Brooks Harden - Truist
Whitney Harness - Delta Arts Center
Madison Hoffstetter - Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist
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Meecie Moore - Siemens Energy
Nicole Moore - Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist
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Oscar Ruiz - Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools
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Rachel Ryding - Wake Forest University School of Medicine
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Mike Sullivan - Clemmons Food Pantry
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Grace Thompson - Junior Achievement of the Triad
Jeremy Thorne - Stimmel Associates
LaQuesha Varn - Forsyth Technical Community College
Kerry Wiggins - NC League of Conservation Voters Foundation
Angie Wilson - Crisis Control Ministry
Veronica Wiltshire - One Health
Owen Wood - The Budd Group
Sam Zivin - Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools

ACTION LEARNING PROJECTS 2025

Children’s Law Center

Coach Jolyn Roberts, Flagship ‘18

Experiment in Self-Reliance

Coach Jennifer Brown, Flagship ‘14

Horizons Residential Care Center

Coach Brad Zabel, Flagship ‘06

National Cycling Center

Coach Eric Hermanson, Flagship ‘23

Parenting PATH

Coach Andrea Bohn, Flagship ‘18

Sawtooth School for Visual Art

Coach Kenneth Holly, Flagship ‘16

Second Harvest Food Bank

Coach Jimmy Bennett, Flagship ‘21

Asst. Coach Harold Holmes, Flagship ‘90

Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools

Coach Kyle Armentrout , Flagship ‘23



“Participating in Leadership Winston-Salem was an enlightening experience that deepened my understanding of how our city is led – its strengths, its challenges, and the opportunities where we, as community leaders, can make a lasting impact. It not only broadened my perspective but also inspired me to step forward with greater purpose, empathy, and commitment to building a stronger Winston-Salem together.”

Ashley Carroll Hooker, Flagship ‘25

Registered Interior Designer, LAMBERT Architecture + Interiors

“My experience with Leadership Winston-Salem was both eye-opening and empowering. The program broadened my perspective on the challenges and opportunities within our community, while connecting me with leaders who share a passion for service. The friendships, knowledge, and inspiration I gained continue to fuel my commitment to engaging with Winston-Salem in meaningful and lasting ways.”

Lyons Gray, Flagship ‘85
Community Volunteer



How Action Learning Projects Move Missions Forward

Sawtooth School for Visual Art: Strengthening Our Community's Creative Core

Since 1945, Sawtooth School for Visual Art has provided hands-on, high-quality art experiences for people of all ages, backgrounds, and skill levels. We are proud to be a cultural hub for the Triad, fostering community through the act of making for 80 years.

As a nonprofit organization, Sawtooth relies on the generous support of foundations, grantors, and individual donors to make our work possible. Tuition only covers a portion of our operating costs, and we have been seeking new ways to engage our most dedicated students through patron initiatives that emphasize the important role their support plays in our broader mission.

Over 700 students are currently enrolled in our Membership program, making it a natural starting point to foster further engagement. Over the past year, our LWS Action Learning Team developed a detailed plan to enhance our membership program and offerings—not only by adding new levels and perks that appeal to a variety of students, but also by exploring innovative ways to make members feel more involved in our growth and wider cultural community.

By surveying current members, conducting thorough research on peer institutions, and considering fresh perspectives in the field, our Action Learning Team generated excellent suggestions and new ideas for us to implement as we revamp this program in the upcoming year. We were amazed by the amount of work they did and the detailed proposal they provided. We'll also never forget their final presentation for the entire Flagship Class, which was hilarious, insightful, and a true reflection of Sawtooth's creative spirit.

Our 80th year is a transformative one for Sawtooth. Known for our historic building downtown, our presence in Winston-Salem has recently expanded with new studios at the Intergenerational Center for Arts and Wellness, as well as two kilns located on the grounds of the North Carolina Museum of Art, Winston-Salem.

As we continue to grow as an organization and serve more people across the Triad, we are deeply grateful for the support from Leadership Winston-Salem and the innovative thinking of our Action Learning team. Their help is invaluable and will make a significant impact as we aim to strengthen our community's creative core and celebrate another extraordinary 80 years.

In Partnership,



Executive Director
Sawtooth School for Visual Arts

Visit Us
www.leadershipws.org



Sarah Becker - DHR Global

Kevin Bitterman - Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts

Ashleigh Brock - Wake Forest University

Terry Brock - Wake Forest University

Adena Cytron-Walker - Student and Community Volunteer

Charlie Cytron-Walker - Temple Emmanuel

Jillaine Dellis - Henkel Corporation

Pete Fala - STITCH Design Shop

Traci Fala - Pure Barre

Jena Folger - Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist

Cristen Gizdic - Community Volunteer

John Gizdic - Novant Health

Paul Harrison - Salemtowne

Paul Jeffrey - Community Care Center

Britt Parrish - Entrepreneur

Joe Parrish - The Variable

Luis Pinto - Reynolds American, Incorporated

Leah Sheaffer - Self Employed

Eric Sadler - Eric J. Sadler, DDS PA

Ingrid Schunder - Miracles in Sight

James Silver - Boston University

Julie Silver - Wake Forest University School of Medicine

Kerrie Tarwasokono - Community Volunteer

Nathanael Tarwasokono - Allegacy Federal Credit Union

Kalisha Turman - Community Advocate

Kevan Turman - Winston-Salem State University

John W. Ward, IV - Northwestern Mutual

Kimberly Ward - Southern Pharmacy Services

Michael Willett - First Bank

Fabby Williams - Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools

Sharon Wojda - City of Winston-Salem

Angel Wright-Lanier - City of Winston-Salem

RECORD-BREAKING GENEROSITY: LWS COHORTS GIVE THE LARGEST CLASS GIFTS IN OUR HISTORY!



With deep gratitude and pride, we celebrate the INSIGHT Class of 2025 for making history with their extraordinary class gift of \$11,150 - the largest ever from an INSIGHT cohort. This generous contribution reflects your collective commitment to advancing equity, fostering leadership, and supporting the future of our community. Most importantly, 100% of these funds will go directly toward scholarships for future Flagship participants, helping ensure access to the LWS experience for emerging leaders across all sectors. With the Flagship Class of 2026 now officially underway, your legacy is already at work removing financial barriers and opening doors for the leaders who will shape Winston-Salem's future.

INSIGHT 2025: Thank you for your vision, your generosity, and for setting a powerful new standard of impact.

It is with great pride and appreciation that we congratulate the LWS Flagship Class of 2025 - the MOST ICONIC CLASS EVER! Through extraordinary dedication and collective effort, the class raised an unprecedented \$31,061 for their class gift, by far the largest in Leadership Winston-Salem's history. This remarkable achievement reflects your shared commitment to servant leadership and to the future of our community. We extend our heartfelt thanks to each member of the Class of 2025 for going above and beyond. As we prepare to welcome the Flagship Class of 2026, your legacy is already at work providing scholarship support and enhancing programming that will shape and inspire the next generation of leaders.

Flagship 2025: Thank you for your generosity, your passion, and for setting a new standard of excellence. Your impact will be felt for years to come.



Dear Leadership Winston-Salem Family,

As you read this annual report and reflect on the progress we have made, know that every achievement was made possible because of you. Your support allows us to educate, connect, and energize leaders who are ready to tackle complex challenges and drive meaningful change in our community.

During FY25, we welcomed 70 new participants, bringing fresh energy and perspectives to our programs. Building on that momentum, FY26 has brought our largest cohort yet—74 new leaders—who have begun their journey with energy, enthusiasm, and a commitment to making a difference. They are already engaging in innovative Action Learning Projects, applying their skills to address real community challenges. At the same time, we continue to celebrate the many ways our alumni advance our mission through leadership, service, and community engagement. These achievements reflect the growing momentum of Leadership Winston-Salem and none of it would be possible without your support.

Through a generous two-year grant from Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts, we recently launched the Leadership Winston-Salem Creative Community Scholarship Initiative. This funding, combined with your support, allowed us to award more than \$40,000 in scholarships to participants in our current class with financial need, expanding access and opening doors for local artists and arts-based professionals. We believe that when creative minds are included in leadership spaces, our entire community thrives. This initiative ensures that diverse voices and talents continue to shape Leadership Winston-Salem's mission to develop informed, committed, and engaged leaders for our community.

Your support is the foundation of Leadership Winston-Salem's success and a driving force in strengthening our community. By making a one-time gift, setting up a recurring monthly donation, or giving in honor of someone special, you help grow our programs, fund scholarships, and empower local leaders to make a lasting difference. Every contribution, large or small, directly sustains leadership development and ensures that financial barriers do not prevent talented individuals from participating. You can give using the enclosed envelope or securely online at leadershipws.org, and designate your gift to either the general fund or the scholarship fund to support Leadership Winston-Salem programs and participants.

Thank you for your commitment to building strong, capable leaders in our community. With your continued support, Leadership Winston-Salem will keep cultivating talent, empowering local leaders, and creating meaningful, lasting impact across our city.

With deepest gratitude,

Denise A. Smith

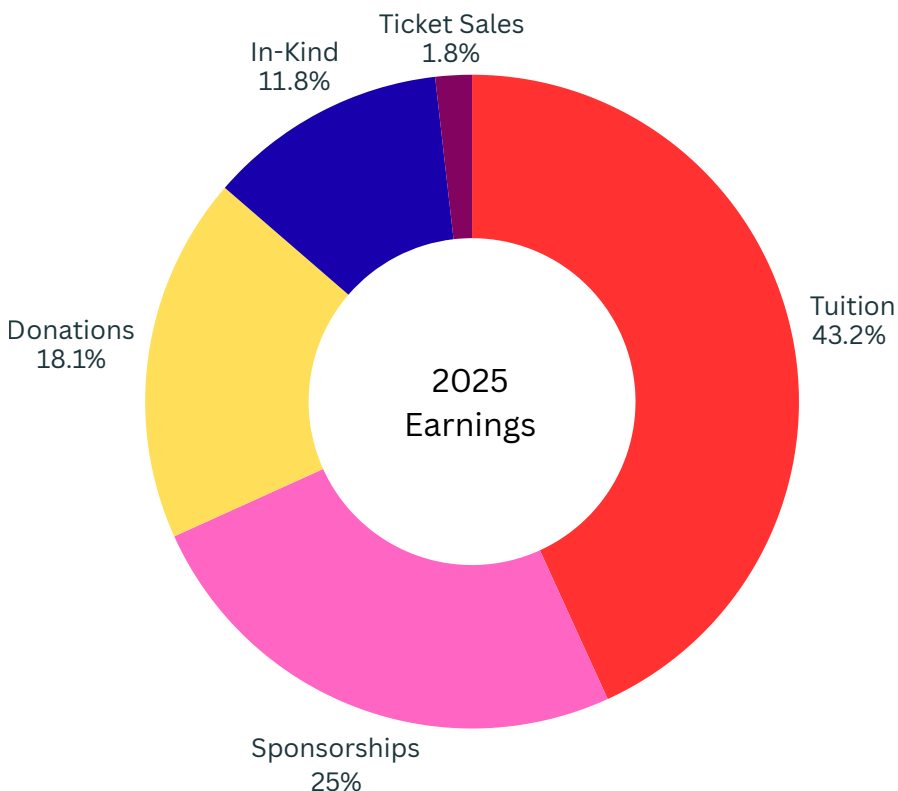
Director of Philanthropy

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



OUR NUMBERS

- Tuition
- Sponsorships
- Donations
- In-Kind
- Ticket Sales



\$690,024 TOTAL INCOME

338 2025 DONORS

102 NEW ALUMNI



LEADERSHIP IGNITOR DONORS

\$2499 +

Jim Bennett
H. Andrew Brown, III
Claire Chevalier
Carol Hoover
Joe & Britt Parrish
Luis Pinto
C. Edward Pleasants

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\$1000 - \$2499

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Jonathan Schedler	Jamila Young
Ingrid Schunder	Nancy Young
Raven Scott	Brad Zabel
Taryne Seatz	Vicky Zickmund
Tiffany Secoges	Sam Zivin

"Leadership Winston-Salem is my definition of ownership in our city. The engagement, commitment, and bringing together of citizens is the picture of this organization. That's why I choose to give recurring support; because consistent investment makes it possible for LWS to sustain its programs, provide scholarships, strengthen connections, empower leaders, and create lasting impact across our entire community."

Priscilla Green, *Flagship '22*
Customer Care Manager, American Airlines

"As an alum of Leadership Winston-Salem, I donate through a monthly recurring gift because I know first-hand the lasting impact this program has on both individuals and our community. My experience challenged me to see leadership in new ways, deepened my connections, and inspired me to step up in meaningful service. By giving each month, I'm helping ensure that future participants have the same opportunity to grow, connect, and make a difference in Winston-Salem."

Chelii Broussard, *Flagship '24*
Assistant Director of University Student Activities & Engagement-Special Programs & Major Events,
Winston-Salem State University

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Benton Convention Center, Bruh-B-Que, Career Center High School, City with Dwellings, Collective Vibe, Crossnore Communities for Children, Don Flow, Du'Licious Catering, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Fiddlin Fish, Forsyth County Central Library, Forsyth County Government, Forsyth County Sheriff's Office, Imprints Cares, Intergenerational Center for Arts and Wellness, Lot 63, LWS Alumni Volunteers, LWS Board Members, Mayor Allen Joines, Mayor Pro Tempore Denise Adams, MUSE, Police Chief William Penn, Pork, Beef and Bird, Radar Brewing, Ramkat, Salem Lake Marina Center, Sawtooth School for Visual Art, Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Sylvia Gwyn, The Historic Magnolia House, Twin City Catering, University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Union Station, Wake Forest Biotech Place, Winston-Salem Police Department, Winston-Salem Journal, Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools



CELEBRATION 2025

Honoring 40 Years of Leadership, Service, and Community Impact

In 2025, Leadership Winston-Salem marked a milestone: 40 years of cultivating leaders who have strengthened our community. Since 1985, more than 2,000 alumni have completed the program— each challenged to see leadership in new ways, build meaningful connections, and step into service with purpose. This anniversary highlighted the collective impact of four decades. Alumni have shaped Winston-Salem across every sector—business, education, government, healthcare, and the nonprofit community. Their work has rippled outward, creating stronger organizations, deeper collaborations, and a more connected city.

Celebration 2025 honored both our newest graduates and this powerful legacy. The evening was a true community celebration, complete with live music by Soul Jam, raffles, drawings, and an atmosphere of joy and pride. A highlight of the evening was receiving a proclamation from Mayor Allen Joines, Flagship '89, recognizing Leadership Winston-Salem's four decades of impact. The event captured the spirit of our past, present, and future—a milestone celebration that truly reflected the organization's enduring legacy of leadership and community impact.



STAFF & BOARD MEMBERS

THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR ACHIEVING 100% PARTICIPATION IN GIVING TO OUR ANNUAL FUND AND 100% SERVICE ON AN ADDITIONAL LWS COMMITTEE.



Katherine Perry
Executive Director



Denise A. Smith
Director of Philanthropy



Abbey McCall
Alumni Engagement Director



Freida Mitchell
Program Director



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Zina Johnson



Sherry Lee



William Penn



Carol Reeve



Nathanael Tarwasokono



Corey Walker



LaMonica Sloan Wilhelmi



Terry Williams



Paul Wollner



LEADERSHIP LEGACY

Continue the Journey. Deepen the Impact.

Join a network of lifelong leaders committed to learning, service, and connection.

Who it's for:

Alumni over the age of 65 who are ready to re-engage and reignite their passion for community.

Program Highlights:

Six interactive sessions (10 a.m. – 1 p.m.) with lunch included, inspiring speakers, and hands-on learning.

Focus:

Revisit Winston-Salem's journey—where we've been, how we've grown, and where we're headed next through the voices of those shaping our community's future.

Interested?

email: kp@leadershipws.org