

July 2024

# Future Leaders Academy Celebration

Promising Young Leaders and Inspiring Mentors



We're thrilled to share news from our 3rd annual Future Leaders Academy Celebration event in June, an all-too-rare in-person opportunity to bring core

members of the Future Leaders Academy community together.

From near and far around the state of Minnesota, young leaders, mentors, family, friends, community and board members traveled to downtown Minneapolis to gather, share and be inspired by the great leaders in our presence.

Leadership is not about age, position or personality, but rather about how you go about living your values, linking them to your goals and how you go about achieving them. Critically, it's also about listening, self-awareness and supporting others in their own leadership and goal achievement journey and contributing to the greater good in the process.

All of these qualities were on display during our celebration. Future Leader graduates, recent alumni, new 2024-2025 Future Leaders and our fabulous mentors all brought a special energy, optimism and wisdom to share with us all.

[Dr. Buffy Smith](#), t2pRI board member and dean of Dougherty Family College at the University of St. Thomas (MN) then delivered a profound talk on **what it means to be a mentor leader**.

Dr. Smith's message and call to action for mentor leaders, as compiled by Doug Lennick, is as follows:

- **"encourage"** others through the sharing of their own challenges: "You have to talk about your challenges, your fears. They need to know that you've been through some things." Vulnerability and humility go a long way in encouraging others.
- **"elevate"** others: "You want to make sure everyone is reaching their highest potential. You want them to thrive, not survive. People already have their own survival strategy." Because there is no end to better, there is no end to elevate.

- **"empower"** others: "Empowerment is not speaking up for those who can't speak up for themselves. You help people find their voice. A mentor leader empowers those around them to make a difference and find their voice. A mentor is called to serve everyone"

We each have the opportunity to serve as a mentor leader in our attitudes and actions each day. We're confident Future Leaders Academy graduates are leading the way.

Congratulations to 2024 Future Leaders Academy graduates:

- [Hawa Abdella & Mentor Magarita Jules](#)
- [Elijah Arnett & Mentor Sarah Oknick](#)
- [Ibrahima Fall & Mentor Brian Hammer](#)

Congratulations to 2024-2025 Future Leaders who kicked-off their mentorship on June 1st:

- **Lilian (Lily) Flores & Mentor Elena Beckius**
- **Yasmin Hajihassan & Mentor Tenbit Emiru**
- **Sasha Kirk & Mentor Michael Goff**
- **Enkhsolongo (Solo) Sangibat & Mentor Courtney Lashomb**

We were excited to see and hear 2023 Future Leaders Academy graduates [Mason Bierbaum](#), [Ella Fix](#) and [Gabe Schmidt](#) actively participating in this year's event as well.

In the newsletter this fall, we look forward to featuring each of our 2024-2025 Future Leader-Mentor teams and learning more about their work together this year.

We'll see everyone again, plus members of our 2025-2026 Future Leader cohort, during our next celebration in June 2025. Can't wait

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***Do you know a Future Leader?***

Do you know a young person aged 16-23 who would enjoy collaborating with us, learning with us, and sharing their leadership journey as a member of the Future Leaders Academy?

**We're accepting applications for the 2025-2026 Future Leaders Academy - our 4th cohort! - anytime through December 1.** The program begins in January 2025. [Learn more](#) about the program. [Apply now!](#) Share our [program flyer](#) with a friend.

***Are you or is someone you know a Mentor!?***

We're accepting Mentor applications for the 2025-2026 Future Leaders Academy program. Mentor onboarding begins in March 2025. We provide training and cultivate an intentional community to succeed and grow as a Mentor. [Learn more](#) about the mentorship. [Apply now!](#)

Contact Executive Director Brian Hammer, PhD:  
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[think2perform Research Institute](#) has funded research and leadership development programs since its founding as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) in 2016.

Learn more about our:

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