




Looking to Home Grown Leadership



2016 City Coordinators





DVULI staff welcomes a recently recruited team of City Coordinators. They are actively identifying potential participants for the class of 2016, so please remember them in your prayers as they embark upon the journey of “Trusting The Process”! If you know urban youth leaders in their cities that are good candidates for the DeVos investment, please contact our office. (Pictured bottom left. L-R)

Keith Wilks - Newark

Tim Neufeld - Fresno

Jua Robinson - Boston

Jermaine Reynolds - Orlando

James Sutton - Birmingham

Editorial Correction

In our July 2015 issue of *On The Level*, the byline for “A Time to Refrain” on page 4 indicated the wrong contributor. Thao Nguyen should have been given credit for this contribution. Our apologies!

Thao Nguyen (Houston 2003) is a Texas Work Advisor with Texas Health & Human Services. She also assists young pastors in the International Ministry at Second Baptist Church. Thao is a member of the 2015 DVULI Think Tank.





Like Daddy, Like Daughter

by Michelle Cole Reynolds (Orlando 2010)



Our transition was by no means perfect. My predecessor (also my father) trusted that I could carry on his legacy at Every Kid Outreach (EKO), a ministry he founded in 1991.

When I became the Executive Director five years ago, all I had to go on was the more than 20 years of observing my father's approach to leading the organization both as his daughter and later as a staff member.

He never sat me down to train or walk me through how leading a ministry should be done. I was left to apply what I'd learned from watching him.

Though there were many valuable lessons, the three that stuck most were: his dedication to a lifestyle of service, a belief that everyone matters to God, and the importance of building quality relationships.

Live a lifestyle of service

Ministry was never a 9-5 job; it was my father's life. Truthfully, it was our life because our family shared my father with the community. My dad would give our material possessions away if a need greater than the one our family had was presented. Since those days, we've both learned a lot about balance from going through the DeVos training. I know if he could do it over again there would be noticeable changes in his methods, but that doesn't change the example for passionately serving others that was set before me.

God determines who matters

My father embraced everyone. He never dismissed a person because they were different or from somewhere unfamiliar. Additionally, it didn't matter to him what someone could or couldn't do, or what they were going through. It was important to him to be a listening ear when others needed someone to hear them and to be a voice when theirs seemed to be silenced.

Build quality relationships

My father appeared to have friends everywhere we went. He wasn't the kind to wave and keep going. As a leader he wanted to remember people and be certain that their interaction was genuine. He didn't think too highly of himself, but he was careful to ensure others felt good about their connection with him.

Recently I came across an old writing assignment from my 9th grade school year. The assignment was titled *Goals*. In it I wrote, "My dream and ultimate goal is to one day take over my father's EKO ministry and do what I love to do, which is to help people."

As the current Executive Director of EKO, not only was I handed the baton from my father, I was also handed my destiny.



Michelle Cole Reynolds (Orlando 2010) is the Executive Director of Every Kid Outreach. She is passionate about helping others realize their potential and walk out their godly purpose. Michelle is a member of the DVULI 2015 Think Tank.





Successor Planning

Equipping New Leaders To Go The Distance

by Gary L. Wyatt, Sr. (Se



attle-Tacoma 2014)

Pastor Gary Wyatt served as the Seattle DeVos City Coordinator during the 2014 training year. It was evidenced that Gary has an infectious passion for imparting to next generation leaders all that his ministry experience, education and life choices have afforded him. After more than 21 years as the lead pastor of SureHouse Open Bible Church, an urban ministry in the inner city of Tacoma Washington, this devout husband, father, pastor, recording artist and community leader is about to release his pastoral duties into the hands of one of his sons. As Gary embraces this task, he confidently shared three areas of guidance that will help his successor experience sustainability in ministry.

It has been quite a journey! I have often referred to pastoring a church as “a rollercoaster ride” because of its very high highs and very low lows. I am glad to say that even at this point in the journey, my hands are still in the air and I might scream from time to time, but it’s all an indication that I will not (and cannot) get off until the ride comes to a complete stop!

A few years ago I decided to engage in succession planning after being inspired by some information that I received at a pastors training event. I felt it was an excellent idea, and moreover the timing was right to identify my successor, and prepare our congregation for what would inevitably take place. For some time now at SureHouse Open Bible Church our Executive Board and church membership have entrusted certain decisions around leadership and key position transitions in my hands.



As I began to pray about my approach to succession planning, God made it clear that my son, Solomon, would succeed me. While this didn’t totally come as a surprise, it did mean that I would have to train him on how to strap in, hold on, and remain seated until this same rollercoaster ride comes to an end for him. The thriller in all of this is that he would have to do so amid cultural shifts, peril and lawlessness - both inside and out of the church - that I, perhaps, didn’t have to face.

To prepare my son for ministry succession in this climate, there are three essential focus areas that I believe will position him well for what lies ahead:

First training

The first instruction for my son is to give him a clear understanding of how to construct a mission/vision statement. I have done this by reminding him of God’s mission/vision statement found in St. John 3:16 which says:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

I’ve taught my son that God’s mission is to get people who are perishing to believe in His Son, with a vision of them securing eternal life. God accomplishes His mission through His passion for the world, and

His partnership with His Son Jesus. My son understands that ministry mission and vision must be birthed out of a burden, fueled by passion, born with partners, and have an eternal purpose. Therefore, even if Solomon changes the current mission and vision statement of SureHouse, it should come from an inner burden and passion.

Second training

Next I am training my son on ways to build a loyal ministry team around him to facilitate the successful execution and implementation of the mission and vision. Together Solomon and I have begun to identify parishioners who have leadership potential. Initially, we discussed first looking for people who were either born again in our ministry, or came to Christ through his witness. Those individuals are what I call the true “SureHouse-ites”. They have our ministry’s DNA rooted in their spiritual genes. However, when it comes to looking for potential leaders in the community outside of SureHouse, I have taught him to seek out people who are loyal in times of adversity and opposition. They must be *sunny and rainy day* leaders who vow to endure their specified *tenure of service*.

I chose to instruct Solomon on tenure of service because my son’s generation does not view ministry like I was taught. When I started, I was told to be a *long-lifer* and to stay in the place where you are planted, no matter what. I’ve seen this present church-consumer-generation change churches like changing a supermarket! My son will have to look for leaders who will agree to be loyal and serving for at

least 1-3 years with the option to renew, rather than hoping they will be church long-lifers.

The more personal reason I stress loyalty as a major criteria for selecting potential leaders is because I have found that disloyalty, which is a by-product of pride, breeds discontentment, division and discord. Loyalty, in my experience, is birthed in humility, which in most cases produces unity among groups and teams.

In the Bible, it was pride that produced disloyalty and caused a division in Heaven. Lucifer and some of his followers had to be expelled (see Ezekiel 28:17; Jude 1:6). Whether my son finds leaders who are born again here at SureHouse, or they transfer from another church - they must be loyal.

Third training

The final lesson for my son is to look closely at understanding and engaging with the neighborhood demographics where SureHouse is based. This is a very difficult yet vital piece of the training because the neighborhood is rapidly changing and taking on a different form. When the church was first established, the neighborhood was predominately Black. Now it’s predominately White, and that number is steadily climbing due to urban renewal and yes, unfortunately for some, gentrification.

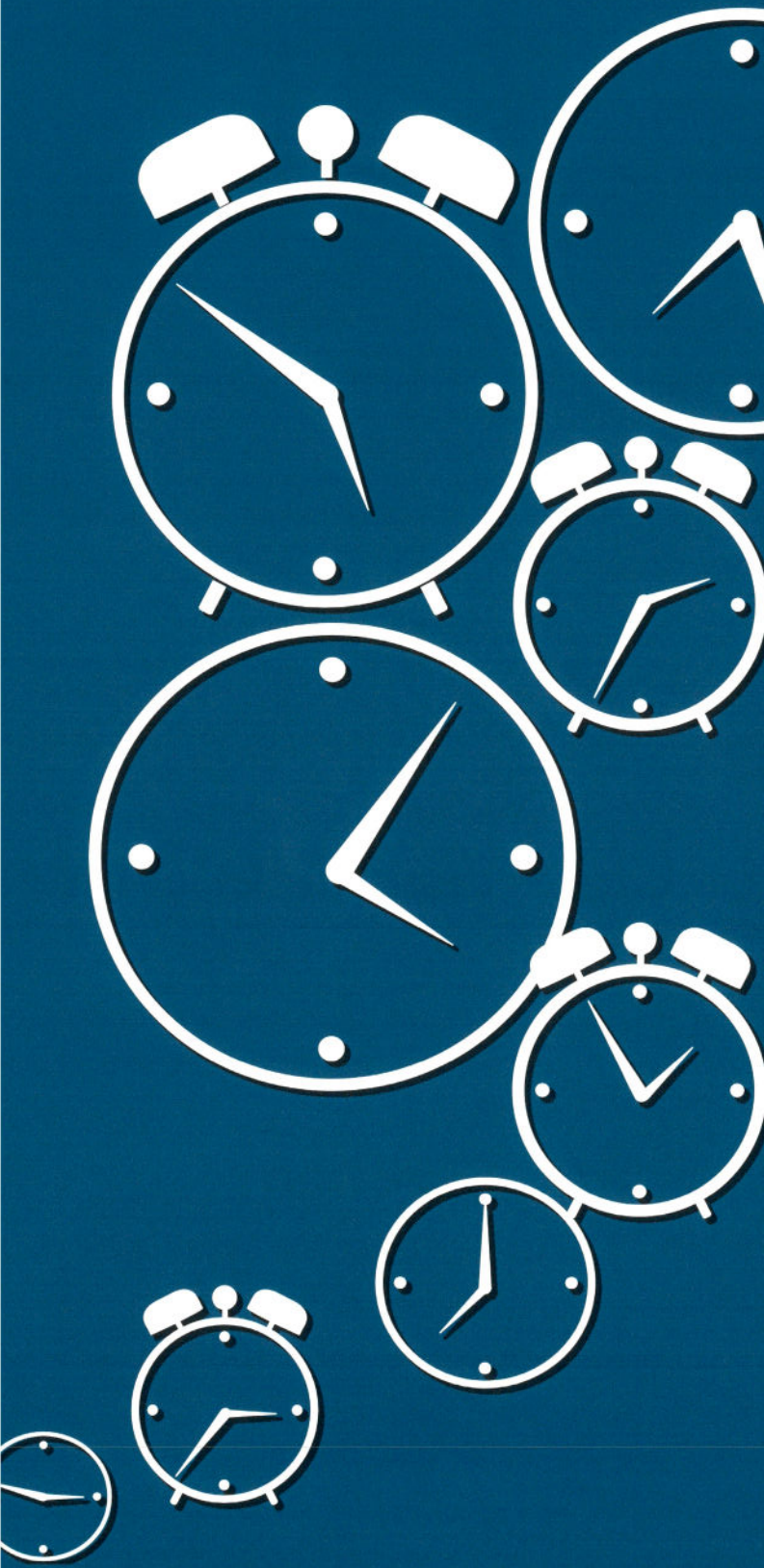
Some key questions my son will have to grapple with are; will he change the music and preaching to fit the demographic, or will he keep the same worship style that has always worked for our ministry? Does he keep the ministry in the community or move to another neighborhood?

He will also have to deal with the question of how the current membership is going to adapt to the changing culture and the new demographic.

There are so many expert opinions on this subject. I personally never conducted ministry in our community based upon demographic. I always focused the ministry based on my calling and what I am able to *cook well*. The calling was to this community, and not to the demographic. What I have always prepared, (music, preaching and administration style) people have come from the community and from miles around to receive. Perhaps as my son gets to know this evolving demographic he’ll learn how to serve more of what’s preferred. If that’s his burden, passion, mission and vision, he will have my full support. I believe it’s highly probable that I’ll be changing my spiritual diet when I get unstrapped and exit this rollercoaster. I look forward to seeing my son who, has been waiting in line, have his turn at lifting his hands and screaming!



Gary Wyatt (Seattle-Tacoma 2014) is the Lead Pastor of SureHouse Open Bible Church and a Gospel recording artist. His passion is for empowering next generation leaders. Gary is a member of the DVULI 2015 Think Tank.



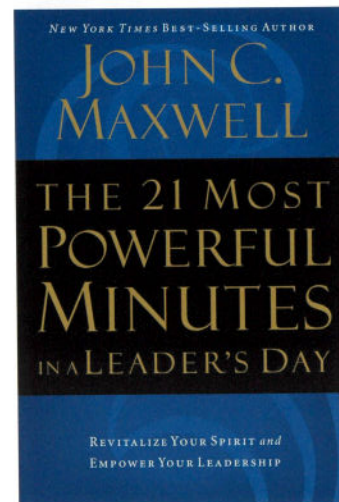
The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day

Reviewed by Jerry Torrez (Denver 2012)

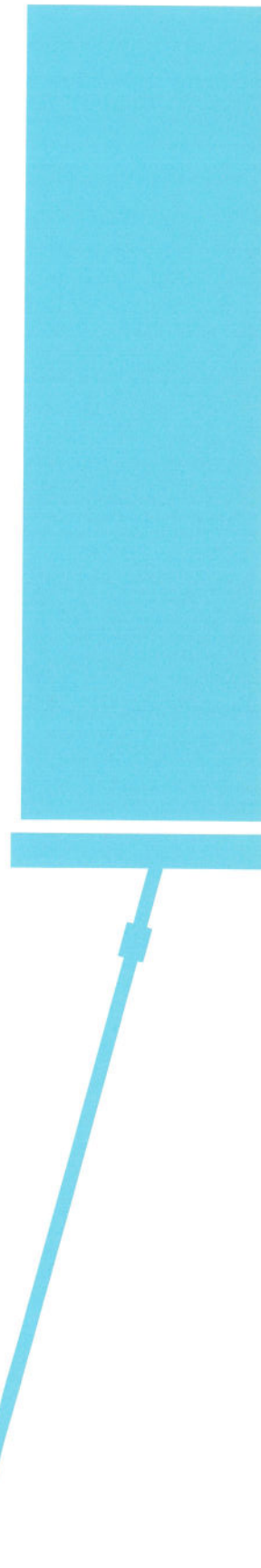
“Everything rises and falls on leadership.” This quote from John Maxwell has stuck with me for almost 10 years as I journeyed through the ups and downs of leadership. In my early years I couldn’t wait until “I have arrived.” After years of leadership and mistakes, I realized I will never arrive but will always be on the journey of self-improvement as a leader. During this journey there have been a few go-to books for me on leadership, but *The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader’s Day* by John Maxwell has definitely been my favorite and a book I continue to reference.

This book gave me practical insight into leadership while providing the scriptural foundation for those leadership principles. This book is NOT meant to be read in one sitting, but rather provides 21 weeks of daily lessons on leadership that are based on known biblical characters, their stories, and the principles that guided them to become successful leaders of their people. John Maxwell uses the Bible to demonstrate winning principles such as effectiveness, influence, empowerment, sacrifice, timing and teamwork in dealing with leadership issues through a particular theme on a daily basis.

After five lessons John Maxwell summarizes the ideas that have been discussed and includes a specific prayer that will help put those ideas into practice. All of this takes less than 21 minutes a day. It’s a great tool for self-reflection, devotional time and journaling. For readers who have made the Bible a part of their lives, they will find John Maxwell’s visions and statement of laws highly appealing and rewarding.



New Trainers on Board





T

his year, DVULI welcomed five new alumni to the lineup of DeVos curriculum trainers.

- Bridgette Bowman (Memphis 2013) 4th Local Workshop “Resource Networking”
- Kim Kossie-McKee (Houston 2005) 1st Local Workshop “Personal & Ministry Assessment”
- Domingo Mota (Los Angeles 2005) 2nd Local Workshop “Community Youth Development”
- Antoine Richardson (Kansas City 2008) 3rd Local Workshop “Scenario Planning”
- Max Rodas (Cleveland 2013) 4th Local Workshop “Resource Networking”

Over time, these alumni have demonstrated the ability to be both good facilitators and experienced practitioners in the topics they were chosen to train. They are passionate about urban ministry, lifelong learning, and providing guidance to other leaders in the field.

“I am excited to see the goal of having all alumni trainers coming to fruition,” says Ron Carter, DVULI Director of Training and Resources. “We have full confidence in their ability to instruct and support our future participants learning experience with DVULI.”

This new cohort of trainers will function as co-facilitators this year and in 2016 before assuming sole facilitator responsibilities.

Reunion 2016 **FORWARD**



September 14-17, 2016
Pittsburgh, PA

What's in a DVULI Reunion?

by Gerald Bell

Perhaps you're one who said to yourself "Why was I chosen?" when you were nominated and accepted into the DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative. No matter how many years ago that may have been, the mission of investing in leaders like YOU has not changed.

If you have never attended a DVULI reunion, we trust you've had good reasons. However, because the reunion is part of the Initiative's continued investment in its graduates, we hope all alumni will strongly consider accepting the invitation.

You may be thinking, "Now what's in a DVULI reunion for me?" Consider this list a rather short answer to a loaded question:

- Enriching motivational speakers
- Specialized workshops
- Powerful worship
- Eye opening experience for your spouse
- Reengagement of relationships
- Strategic ministry discussions
- Relaxation and a departure from the daily grind
- Infusion of God's presence
- Updates on ministry happenings
- New supportive friendships
- Big genuine hugs
- Loads of entertainment and recreation
- Intense competitions
- Space to reflect
- A few perks and some give-a-ways
- Incredible eating options
- Extra sleep
- Plenty memorable photo ops
- All expenses paid - except travel
- Another chance to think "Why me?"

Our next DVULI Reunion will take place in Pittsburgh, PA on September 14-17, 2016. All alumni and spouses are invited. (Adults only)

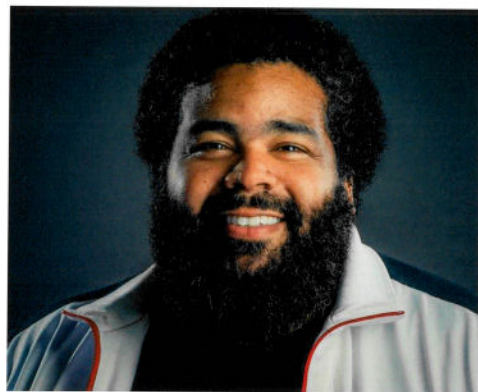
Help DVULI fulfill its mission and join the hundreds of other alumni from our 34 DeVos cities. Come enjoy three days of being recharged and propelled FORWARD in your personal life and ministry.

Visit: reunion.dvuli.org

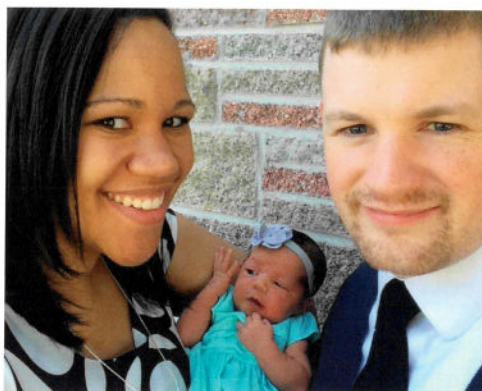
Save The Date

Alumni Updates

For more visit: facebook.com/dvuli



Frank Reynoso (Orlando 2010) earned his Master's degree in Bible and Theology



Jessica Taylor (Portland 2013) and Eric welcomed Addison Faith Taylor on May 21, 2015



Oanh Maroney-Omitade (San Antonio 2001) and James welcomed Zoe Elisha on March 30, 2015



Alvin Sanders (Cincinnati 2014) was named Senior Vice President at World Impact



Wesley Reyes (Cleveland 2013) and Cyndia welcomed Isabelle Reyeson on July 28, 2015



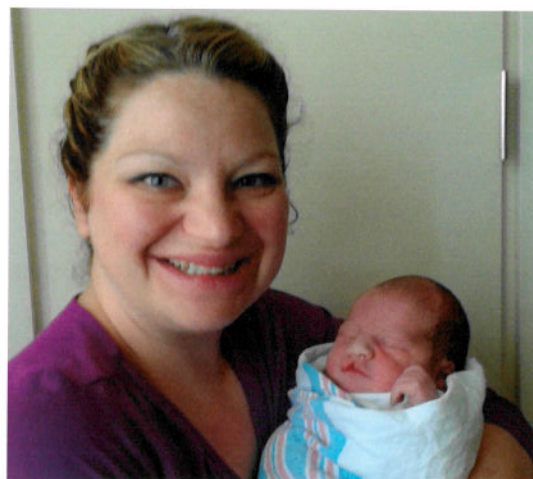
Harold Sparrow (Boston 2000) is the new President and CEO of the YMCA of Greater Hartford



Jesus Origel (Pittsburgh 2012) and Hannah welcomed Isabel Selena on July 17, 2015



Brandon Grant (Columbus 2015) and Tyka were married on June 27, 2015



Nicole Baker Bernacet (New York 2010) and Jon welcomed Micah Dale on May 21, 2015



Sasha Pilgrim (Newark 2014) married Wes Ifanon on May 30, 2015