

Inclusive PERSPECTIVE



Arkansas Foodbank DFA-U Day of Service Back Row: Jonathan Taylor, Autumn Hemphill, Dylan Masters, Chelsey Smart, Ashley Davison, Shanquita Berryman, Stephanie Bartley, Tommy Nabors, Jim Payne, Terrill Gilliam, Ebony Jones, Toniesha Sergeant, Brian Lawson, Scottie York, Harold Walls, Mya Hunter; Middle Row: Tiffany Moorer, Christopher Henry, Princess Danzy, Margaret Pace, April Robinson, Shaun Smith, Breanna Harris, Marsharlette Lester; Front Row: Tammy Martin, Christina Hulett, Ann Allen, Felisha Conner

DFA University Day of Service

A group of 28 DFA University (DFA-U) mentors and candidates took time to give back to the community in February by volunteering at the Arkansas Food Bank. The Food Bank is a state-of-the-art facility located at 4301 W 65th Street in Little Rock at the Donald W. Reynolds Distribution Center and was built for the organization in 2011. After receiving a tour of the enormous freezers and food storage areas, the group spent several hours packing snacks for children who experience food scarcity over the weekends. During the tour, the group learned that there are more than 515,000 children, seniors and families in Arkansas who experience hunger.

The DFA-U candidates and mentors also learned that Arkansas is second in the nation for food insecurity. According to the Food Bank, one in five Arkansans does not know where their next meal may come from. Working families exist on low-wage jobs that do not pay enough to meet housing and medical expenses and also leave enough money to buy food. Approximately one-third of households in Arkansas report making tough choices like these every month.

The majority of those turning to the Food Bank for help are low-income families, children, and senior citizens. However, working families with young children are now the fastest-growing group at emergency food programs in local communities. Nearly 35 percent of the households served are among the working poor and many families are turning to the Food Bank for the first time. By volunteering at the Food Bank, DFA-U participants were able to help improve accessibility of nutritious foods to impoverished children in Arkansas. If you would like to volunteer at the Arkansas Food Bank, go to the website for more information: <https://arkansasfoodbank.org/volunteer/>.



The Blessing Box

Princess Danzy knows what it's like not to have everything she needs, and her response is to give back. An alumna of DFA University, she has single-handedly set up two blessing boxes in Little Rock where anyone in need can pick up food, diapers, or clothing items. One is located at the corner of Martin Luther King Jr Dr. and Daisy L. Gatson Bates Dr. and the other is just beside Feed First on Baseline Rd.

As a Senior Regulatory Enforcement Agent for the DFA, Alcoholic Beverage Control ("ABC") Division, Danzy's job duties take her to

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Pictured: Princess Danzy with a full blessing box.

Meet the Interns!

DFA Spring Internship Program

HANSSA



Hanssa Hanif teamed up with the DFA Office of Intergovernmental Services (IGS) for the spring internship program. She attends the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and is studying Web Design and Information Technology. Ms. Hanif is learning the office business processes, from her mentor Jenna Gilliam who is an IGS Grants Manager. Ms. Hanif's assignments include, reviewing invoices and journal reports for errors and other administrative tasks.

Ms. Hanif's hobbies are learning languages, photography, traveling, sports and yoga. In fact, she is already accomplished in five languages so far: English, Urdu, Hindi, Sindhi, and Memoni. She said she is most proud of coming out of her comfort zone and trying new things, such as an internship outside of her field of study. It helped her gain new skills which she enjoyed a lot.

KAYLA



Kayla Clemens attends the University of Central Arkansas and is working on a degree in Accounting. The focus of her internship at the DFA Office of Individual Income Tax (IIT) is tax investigation and auditing. She works closely with DFA Tax Auditors to learn error corrections and fraud prevention tasks as well as process tax returns with guidance from her mentor, Tommy Burns, the IIT Fiscal Division Manager.

Ms. Clemens is shocked to learn just how many duties the DFA is responsible for. During the spring intern program, she has been exposed to many divisions within DFA and learned the different responsibilities required of each section.

NADIA



Nadia Griffin is gaining valuable on-the-job experience in the DFA Corporate Tax Section, with the help of her mentor Scott Fryer, Corporate Tax Assistant Administrator. Ms. Griffin is learning State tax coding procedures and amended return processing. Her favorite aspect of the internship program has been the helpfulness of her co-workers to teach her about their expertise. When asked what surprised her most about her internship with DFA, she said she is "surprised by the number of returns the DFA section receives year around, which could seem overwhelming."

Ms. Griffin's proudest accomplishment is graduating Magna Cum Laude from the HBCU, Philander Smith College. She is a talented young professional who shared that she could sing, dance, cook, and enjoys hanging out with her friends.

COLE



Cole Reese has joined the DFA internship program in the Office of Field Audit, in Bentonville, where he is continuing to build professional skills that coincide with his area of study. His mentor is Kelly Johnson, DFA Tax Auditor Supervisor. Mr. Reese is an Accounting and Finance major at the University of Arkansas.

In his spare time, Mr. Reese likes to stay active by lifting weights and playing basketball or pickleball. To relax he enjoys watching movies and reading. When asked if he could live in any other time, when would he choose? He said, "I would choose the sixties and seventies because I am a fan of the music and movies that were coming out around that time."

He shared another role he will be adding to his skillset soon: *Girl Dad!* He is expecting the arrival of a new baby girl in August, whose name will be

MARIA



Maria Roman is studying Accounting and Finance at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Her internship with the DFA Office of Accounting is helping her to prepare for her career goal of obtaining a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) license. Her mentor is Jessica Primm, DFA Technical Accounting Manager.

As an ambitious leader, Ms. Roman is actively seeking opportunities on and off campus to develop skills that will shape her into an ideal candidate for future opportunities. She is the treasurer for the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and is responsible for providing an accurate record of funds available for their council. Off campus, she donates her time to local organizations such as the Arkansas Food Bank, St. Theresa Catholic Church, and the Dee Brown Library.

POSITIVE ENERGY

...is the day-
to-day
substance of
good leadership.

...is the "Active
Ingredient" in
the "Doing" of
leadership.

...brings good
leadership to
life in the real
world.

—Charlie Collins
DFA Commissioner of Revenue

The Blessing Box Continued...

low poverty areas near Baseline and the 12th Street areas. She says she has seen first-hand that the people that live in these areas do not have a lot of resources. “Many people are not able to get the food they need,” she said adding that she asked herself, “What can I do?” She said she had heard about boxes in Sherwood, and she wanted it to be a “no-judgment type thing.” “If I can just put out baby wipes or sanitizers and they can get what they need, that’s all I want to do,” she said. Since first starting the blessing boxes in December of 2018, Danzy has spent over \$2,300 of her own money during the first year for food items for the boxes. She has discovered that the most popular items are toothbrushes and toothpaste. Putting up the boxes wasn’t a walk in the park. Danzy was required to go through the City of Little Rock’s code enforcement and demonstrate that the boxes would not block any right-of-way or would not be within ten feet of any stop sign. Danzy says she knows there are some who abuse the blessing boxes and some who have vandalized the boxes for unknown reasons. Currently, the MLK box is broken, and Danzy is working to reconstruct a metal box in place of the broken wooden one.



Pictured: Princess Danzy's Blessing Box

She says Home Depot donated the wood for the original boxes and she received help building the boxes from an employee in the southwest Little Rock Home Depot office. The box on Baseline has been repaired multiple times, but this does not discourage Danzy because she says, “I believe there is good in people.” Even for those who vandalize the boxes, Danzy says, “There’s a heart in there somewhere and I’ll find that crack in the door.”

She said one day a man approached her with an attitude and he complained the boxes were always empty. She told him, “Well I’m filling this one up now and you’re first in line so help yourself.” Danzy said he came with an attitude but he left smiling. Danzy says she hopes to expand the boxes so that there are at least six boxes around town. Her dreams include putting books in boxes along with a variety of food and clothing items. During Covid, Danzy says she purchased ten backpacks and carried them in her car to give to anyone who called. She gave all of them away except one. If you would like to contribute to the blessing boxes, you can donate to Princess Danzy on Cash App: **\$boxesofpulaski** or Facebook: **Blessing Boxes of Pulaski County**.



Pictured: Princess Danzy, DFA ABC Senior Regulatory Enforcement Agent

Get to the Know the DFA University Team!

2022-2023 DFA-U Candidates



How long have you been working for DFA? I have been working for DFA for the past two years and as a contractor for 13 years prior to taking on a full-time position here at DFA.

What's something you find challenging about your work? As the manager of multiple teams, I have found the greatest challenge is dividing my time amongst each of them, keeping on a timely schedule, and not losing track of the activities that are most important. The best method for me to stay on track with work tasks and keep everything organized is to map out my week and month. I take advantage of workflow management tools and organize task mapping applications with reminders across all my devices and e-mail.

If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be? My job is exciting at times and new challenges are presented each day. If anything, I would like to focus on creating clear career paths for employees who take on many tasks in the areas I manage. I believe with a clearly defined path, and goals to achieve, it will ultimately benefit everyone. I would like the system in which their career paths lay changed to encourage growth in both responsibility and pay.

John D. Allen



Service Desk Coordinator
DFA Office of Information Services

How long have you been working with DFA? I started as a DFA Intern and have now been in a full-time position with DFA for a little over one year.

What piece of advice would you give yourself at the beginning of your career? Never stop going/striving for more, it's easier to keep going rather than to stop.

What's your top career highlight? Being able to be a part of the DFA University Leadership Program.

How did you get into your current field or position? I was one of the DFA Office of Child Support Enforcement's first interns. After finishing my internship, I decided to apply for a full-time position at DFA.

What's a skill you'd like to improve on? A skill I would like to improve on is public speaking.



Mya Hunter
Administrative Analyst
Office of Administrative Services

Harold Walls



Grants Analyst
Office of Intergovernmental
Services

How long have you been working with DFA? Two years.

What inspires you? I am inspired by other people's success stories.

What's your top career highlight? The highlight of my career was getting a job with the State of Arkansas here at DFA.

In what ways do you demonstrate leadership at work? I show leadership qualities by arriving at work on time, completing work tasks timely, and I am always willing to learn.

What is the most exciting part of your job? The most exciting thing is when we all have a gathering to celebrate an accomplishment.

Where did you work before this position? I began working for DFA as a Financial Support Specialist and then for the Office of Child Support Enforcement before my current position as a Grants Analyst.

How long have you been working with DFA? My career with the DFA started January 9th, 2022, in Document Examiners Preparation.

What's a skill you'd like to improve on? My ability to take over a situation. I would love to learn to be more confident in delegating tasks.

What piece of advice would you give yourself at the beginning of your career? Raw talent will only get you so far, take instruction and learn the institutional knowledge required to succeed at the next level.

How did you get into your current field or position? My understanding of legal matters and hunger to know the law have gone hand in hand with hearing officer activities.

What's your top career highlight? In 2018, after working my way all the way up from grounds keeper, I started my first property management position. By 2020 I was running all four properties in Arkansas for the company.

Scottie York



Hearing Officer
DFA Revenue Services Division

How long have you worked at DFA? Sixteen years.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years? In ten years, I hope to be a District Manager or higher in the DFA Division of Revenue.

Where did you work before this position? Before coming to Revenue, I worked for the Pulaski County Assessor's office mapping property, keying data, filing paperwork, and answering phone calls. I was also a ride-along to help the business assessor check on properties.

What's the most exciting part of your job? Meeting new people from all walks of life and trying to help people to the best of my ability. I feel when you put a smile on someone's face it makes my heart smile and that's enough for me.

Tonya Spivey



DFA Local Revenue Office Manager
DFA Revenue Services Division

LEADERSHIP: Charlie's Chapter...



In the physical world, the second law of thermodynamics says that things naturally tend toward decay, dissolution, dispersion, and randomness. The fancy word for this is Entropy. Another law says that to restore or direct or reverse this natural state toward disorder, energy must be added to the system. Energy comes in different forms; heat, pressure, movement, etc., but some form of energy is required to bring more order to the system.

Just like energy is required to organize, move, build, or otherwise direct our physical world, human energy is required to lead in our human world. This requirement applies at all levels of leadership: individual, organizational, national, and global. Since we are interested in leadership that improves things for people, a leader's energy must be positive (not negative). What is required to perform good leadership? Here are three consistent requirements:

1

Assessing, understanding, and accepting - from every relevant facet, the current state of reality. Where are we now? What are the actual conditions we exist within? Who is here, there, and other places? What have we done or not done? Job one, determining and accepting reality, is essential to avoiding failure through wishful thinking. Be prepared for what you discover because reality is virtually always harsh, certainly harsher than expected or desired. Failure by wishful thinking is characterized by a "shoot the messenger" behavior set in a leader or organization. This behavior is born from expectations of receiving messages that support wishful thinking, rather than a desire to better learn about reality from the messenger's message.

2

Vision crafting. Once "where we are, who we are and what we do" is clearly understood, the leader can craft a direction the organization can follow to grow into the "where we will be, who we will be, and what we will do" of the future. Providing vision and direction is more "like setting the sail on a boat, knowing you can't change the wind,"¹ than it is like picking the center point on a target and attempting to hit it with a rifle shot. Setting the course is a bridge to the future, a future that the leader is guiding the team toward creating.

3

Decision making. This is the process of bringing the vision to life. Decision making is the act of moving theory or dreams into existence, into reality as a tangible noun (person, place, or thing). The goal in decision making is to "measure twice and cut once." But "measure" is not decision making. You must "cut" in order to have a decision. Deciding not to decide (now) is a decision, but simply not deciding isn't a decision.

In summary, three constants of leadership action are grasping reality, direction setting, and decision making. For an organization, leadership is all about people and successful leaders move their people from wondering, "What am I getting from working here?" To "I like who I am becoming from working here."² Focus on the constants of leadership in daily practice, and you will continuously improve your leadership results.

DFA-U Day of Service



Harold Walls, Shanquita Berryman, Terrill Gilliam, Mya Hunter



Toniesha Sargent, Stephanie Bartley, Christopher Henry, Breanna Harris



Felisha Conner, Jonathan Taylor



Margaret Pace



Ann Allen, Jim Payne, Tiffany Moorer



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