WestStar on the Rise!

WestStar has grown by leaps and bounds this year. We are hosting three new conferences; the RisingStar Summit, FutureStar Summit, and the West Tennessee Regional Entrepreneur Conference. Along with our very popular Working Women’s Conference, African American Leadership Conference, and 2012 Class (they’re an exciting group) we’ve had a busy year so far! Flip through these next few pages and read about this year’s class, our new and established conferences, and how you can become involved with an event that interests you!

Dueling Pianos Fundraiser Update

We thank Frank McMeen, Miss Ollies and our Alumni for helping us to raise $1,060 for WestStar!

Have you received your 2011-2012 WestStar Alumni Directory? If not, you might not be current on your WestStar Alumni Association dues. Contact Jackie for inquiries. weststar@utm.edu

“One of the true tests of leadership is the ability to recognize a problem before it becomes an emergency.”
Arnold Glasow
WestStar is in the process of updating the WestStar Speakers Bureau. We are basically starting from scratch, so if you were previously in the Speakers Bureau and want to remain active, please fill out a FORM.

Our office receives quite a few requests each year asking for speakers on certain topics. Requests come from all over West Tennessee from different organizations. Many civic organizations, such as Rotary and Kiwanis, have requested speakers to fill a presentation spot at one of their meetings. Often the only criteria is that they be a WestStar graduate. Once we have compiled a list of current speakers we will publish them on our website, www.utm.edu/weststar.

When you fill out the form, make sure to include any topic you are willing to speak on. It may be your WestStar experience, a topic in your role of employment, or a community issue you have a passion and knowledge for.

The only criteria for remaining active in the WestStar Speakers Bureau is to be a WestStar graduate and be a current member of the Alumni Association. If you would like to be a Lifetime Speakers Bureau member, all you have to do is become a Lifetime Alumni Association Member. (I know, shameless plug.)
The first annual FutureStar Leadership Summit was held on March 16th at the University of Tennessee at Martin. This year was our pilot year for the Summit and we only asked students from Weakley County to attend. The summit started with team building skills with Judy Renshaw and the UTM ROTC. The students then went on an individualized campus tour concentrating in their area of interest for a future career. Darron Billings was the keynote speaker and taught the students about overcoming their obstacles and perceiving people for what is on the inside, not what they look like on the outside. Our Summit concluded with a drum circle conducted by Dr. Julie Hill of UTM. Dr. Hill stressed the importance that everyone counts, from the loud drum people to the soft squeaker people. Everyone has a voice that should be heard.

Next year we hope to expand the Summit to two or three other nearby counties with the hopes of adding counties each year until all West Tennessee is represented. As the Summit progresses through the years, we hope to recruit some of our Alumni to help coordinate which students will be eligible to come. **If you work in the school system in your community and would be willing to help, please let us know.** We will expand slowly to keep the integrity of the program, but look forward to adding all the WestStar counties in the future years.

**FutureStar Leadership Summit participants; March, 2012**

We had another record breaking attendance for the Working Women's Conference. Our theme this year was “Come to our Picnic”. The conference opened with Dr. Lisa LeBleu and Dr. Teresa Collard explaining how to “Fill Your Basket with Happiness”. If you missed them, you missed a treat of humor and music as they gave tips to keeping a happy mindset. Next, we explored the treasures of Tennessee with Ms. Lori Nunnery, Class of 2011. She updated us on the newest tourist information for Tennessee and showed us the most recent Tennessee tourism commercial. Ms. Jacqueline Taylor from Union University taught us about the differences in personalities from the different generations that were represented at the conference with her presentation, “Who's at your Picnic?”. “It’s Raining, Now What?” was presented by Mr. Lee Johnston, Executive Director of the Covington-Tipton County Chamber of Commerce, Class of 2004. He informed the participants of ways to maintain emergency preparedness in our homes and workplaces. We ended the day with Mr. Richard Schoebel, Assistant Athletics Director, UT Martin. Being a former FBI Counterterrorism agent, he presented “Watch Out For the Big Bad Wolf” which focused on keeping children and adults safe from potential predators.

**Next year’s conference is scheduled for February 15, 2013 at the Boling University Center.** The theme will be “Queen for the Day”. Keep a look out for more news about next year’s conference. If you know a lady who would like to be Queen for the day, send us her email and we’ll make sure to get her on the Women’s Conference email list.

**Dr. LeBleu and Dr. Collard with our Emcee Mary Kate Ridgeway ’01**

**We had a record breaking attendance of 300!**

**Needless to say, we have a lot of fun!**
The African American Leadership Conference held in Jackson, TN at the West Tennessee Education and Research Center was a huge success again this year. Like last year, we broke attendance records from previous years with an astounding 170 registrants! From the evaluations that were tallied, it looks like it was also one of the best in terms of quality speakers and information presented to the participants.

The morning opened with the keynote speaker, Dr. Reginald Coopwood, president and CEO of the Regional Medical Center at Memphis. Captain Patrick Willis and Deputy Chief Barry Michael from the Jackson Police Department spoke on “Gangs & Meth/Drugs: Things You Need to Know”. Next, Melissa Cox-Rayner, Class of 2010, moderated a panel entitled “Education: Human Resource Directors Panel.” The panel discussed what human resource directors are looking for in potential hires. The next speaker, Rev. Guy Hendree of Elcanaan Baptist Church, received rave reviews of his “The Power of Forgiveness” presentation. He was followed by Sharron Murden of CB&S Bank who spoke on “Secutiy & Identity Theft: Loans/Special Programs for Small & Minority Businesses” and Dr. Theresa Woodard of Woodard Medical Clinic in Brownsville, TN who spoke on “Knowing and Understanding Your (Health) Numbers”. These speakers did an outstanding job and presented valuable information that the participants can take back to their communities.

We thank each of the speakers and participants that made this conference a success. And of course, we could not have pulled this off without our dedicated committee of WestStar Alumni.

**Award Winners**

We are pleased to present the annual African American awards to two outstanding leaders this year. The Emerging Leader Award (under 40 years of age) was presented to Ruth Cohill. Cohill is a student services counselor/recruiter at the Tennessee Technology Center in Ripley. She is a graduate of WestStar, Class of 2006, and the Tipton Organized to Achieve Leadership class. We are pleased to award Ruth Cohill this award for helping to change and impact her community for the better.

The Outstanding Leadership Award was presented to Nell Huntspon of Jackson. Her accomplishments include having served on the Jackson-Madison County election commission, the Jackson County School Consolidation Board, and is a life member of the NAACP. Perhaps she is best know for though in the African American Conference community is the beautiful flower arrangements she creates every year for the conference.

Congratulations to both our leaders for an outstanding job in making their communities better.
ALUMNI MEETINGS - Many counties throughout the region have chosen to meet through the year to keep in contact with the WestStar Alumni in their areas. This not only makes your communities stronger by bringing together top leaders in a community, but it also strengthens WestStar and West Tennessee as a whole. We encourage each county to meet at least twice a year. Many of the counties already have set dates for the year. If you already know your county’s dates for the year, please let us know and we’ll help get the word out for you.

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP UPDATE - The following is a list of Alumni who have completed their payments for becoming a WestStar Alumni Lifetime Member. You can become one too with a gift of $1,000 to the WestStar Leadership Program within the course of one year. Most of our Lifetime Members are overachievers (we love overachievers) and still give to various parts of the program, but they are no longer required to pay their annual dues to be current in the Alumni Association.

Paige Ashe-McLean
Turner Askew
Allen Barker
Joe Barker
Deidra Beene
David Belote
Jan Boud
Jason Brigance
Jerry Brigance
John Bucy
Keith Carver
Cheri Childress
Hughes Clardy
Shannon Cotter
Charley Deal
Terry Drumwright
Ed Dugger
Nick Dunagan

Bobby Dyer
Randy Etheridge
Marvin Flatt
Lindsay Frilling
Bud Grimes
Virginia Grimes
Brenda Gullelde
Jerry Hartsfield
David Hayes
Dee Henderson
Dennis Henderson
Cathy Holland
Lee Ann James
Dotty Jones
Vicki Lake
Jo Matherne
Frankie McCord
Frank McMeen

Kathy More Cowan
Tina Morris
Ronnie Neil
Sylvia Palmer
Tom Payne
Madelyn Pritchett
Pat Riley
Evelyn Robertson, Jr.
James Ross
Doug Roth
Bob Rutledge
Robert Smith
Emily Sullivan
Sharon T. McKinney
Andre Temple
Lisha Tuck
Barbara Virgin
Garry Welch
Alumni Updates and Achievements

Ruby Kirby '10 - Sterling Awards 2012 Winner

Melissa Cox-Rayner '10 - Sterling Awards 2012 Winner

Susan Todd '06 - Sterling Awards 2012 Winner

Lyda Kay Ferree '99 - Sterling Awards 2012 Winner

Dr. Blake Brown '09 - awarded Milan’s 2012 Man of the Year

Sherry McCarter '95 - Accepted a new job with the Humboldt Chamber of Commerce as Executive Director

Seth Zamek '02 - Celebrated 4 year anniversary of his business (Senior Helpers) opening. Seth was also named to the South Carolina Alzheimer’s Association Board of Directors

Ruth Cohill '06 - 2012 Recipient of the African American Leadership Conference Emerging Leader Award

Paige Ashe-McLean '08, Our first WestStar baby is 4!!! Ashlan was the first baby to be born to a class member during the program.

We would love to hear from you! Have you recently been promoted, accepted a new job, received an award or recognition, enjoyed a new milestone in your life such as a birth or marriage? Let us share your good news with the WestStar community.

Email jjohn253@utm.edu with your news to be added in the next newsletter.

West Tennessee Regional Entrepreneur Conference
June 19th, 2012
Jackson, TN

West Tennessee Education and Research Center

“Why small business makes a BIG difference.”

We welcome any small business owner, potential business owner, or business professional to register.

Details to follow soon.

Registration fee is $35/person.

Booth space available. Email weststar@utm.edu for more information.

Visit our website frequently to check for upcoming events.
**TACL CONFERENCE 2012** - The 2012 TACL Conference has been scheduled for **October 24-26, 2012**. This year the conference will be held in the exciting city of **CHATTANOOGA**! Any WestStar Alumni is invited to attend. If you are looking for innovative information on how to help your communities leadership program succeed, this is the conference to attend. (We’ve seen a draft of the agenda and believe me, you don’t want to miss this.) Click [HERE](#) to view more information.

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**2011 ROBERT M. SMITH OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP EDUCATION AWARD**

The 2011 Robert M. Smith Outstanding Leadership Education Award recently was presented to Rosemary Bridges at the State Leadership Conference in Cookeville, TN.

This award is to recognize an individual who has made significant contributions to the advancement of leadership education either by virtue of a major achievement within the past year or over a number of years through his or her dedication and service to leadership development within Tennessee.

Rosemary Bridges has been President of the South Tipton County Chamber of Commerce since 1988. She has served as President of West Tennessee Chamber of Commerce Executives (WTCCE) and President of Tennessee Chamber of Commerce Executives (TCCE). She is a 1992 graduate of WestStar and a 1997 graduate of the U. S. Chamber Institute.

Bridges currently serves on the Mississippi River Corridor Project committee, the Tennessee Tourism Commission, and is Chairman of the Tipton County Education Foundation. She has served on the Advisory Council of Dyersburg State Community College, the Advisory Committee at Baptist Memorial Hospital-Tipton, and the Advisory Committee of the Tennessee Technology Center at Covington.

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Pictured: Keith Absher, Beth Pippin, Jackie Johnson, Ted Moore, Steve Guttery, Judy Renshaw, Rosemary Bridges, Barbara Virgin, Vicky Bunch, Amy Turnage

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West TN 2011 TACL Conference Attendees
Photo Board

Doug Roth, Andre Temple, and Diane Abbott visiting the class at the Jackson Session.

FutureStars having fun in the drum circle

Alexandra Wardlaw, Lessie Fisher, and Linda Jones, Class of 2012

Frank Wagster and Jim Garland, Class of 2012

Keep your contact information up to date! Send an email to weststar@utm.edu if you have recently changed jobs or location. We want to keep in touch!

Click on the Facebook and Twitter icons to get real-time WestStar updates!

554 University Street
Administration Building, Room 321
Martin, TN 38238
Phone: 731-881-7298
Fax: 731-881-7019
E-mail: weststar@utm.edu
www.utm.edu/weststar

“ There is no higher religion than human service. To work for the common good is the greatest creed. ” - Albert Schweitzer

WestStar20

Westar Leadership Program

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