

# Inclusive PERSPECTIVE



## *The Value of Giving*

Arkansas Food Bank provided an opportunity for DFA-U members to sharpen their leadership application skills, while lending a hand to help and learn more about the communities the Department serves daily. Volunteers from DFA-U alumni, current DFA-U candidates and mentors, and the leadership team joined together to put their teamwork, communication, and process improvement skills to the test!

How did it go? As might be expected, the small and mighty DFA team produced enormous results. Thirty-three members of DFA-U were divided at several working stations, to be instructed on their specific tasks in the process. The shared goal was to prepare a considerable amount of after school program snack packs accurately, and efficiently, within a three-hour window. The volunteers filled and sealed bags with food items, sorted the bags into boxes equally, and then sealed and stacked the boxes on pallets for delivery. Easy right? That's where individual skills are applied.

Each station had to quickly find a rhythm, a method for their high paced productivity. Did I mention that each group had strangers among them? While DFA employees serve the same audience, they don't always know all of the players behind the curtains across the DFA divisions. Each group quickly established order, developed a process, and implemented procedures to complete their assignments with their new team.

Servant events, such as volunteering at the local food bank, allow teams to develop, network, and build stronger bonds, especially during crunch time. DFA's mission to provide responsive, cost-effective and timely support services to Arkansas policymakers, public agencies, and state employees as they serve Arkansas's citizens is always in the forefront for the desired culture of the Department. That's why servant leadership has been a foundational aspect of the DFA University Leadership program. At the end of the morning the tally came in and the results proved success. DFA-U members packed enough bags during their three-hour event to feed 3165 kids, right here in Arkansas!



DFA University embarked on an exciting journey to the Arkansas State Capitol during the spirited month of December. Reflecting the joyous holiday season, the capital was adorned with shimmering lights, sparkling decorations, and a contagious festive vibe. As the group walked through the halls of power, they felt a sense of inspiration and awe. The visit provided an invaluable opportunity to learn about where the inner workings of government take place. The group made a stop at one of the Capitol’s top attractions, The State Treasury, where DFA-U members got to visit the vault and hold a chunk of cash for themselves.



DFA-U 3 Members Left to Right: Latasha Lewis, Theotis Washington, Caitlyn Morehead, Michelle Dixon, Timothy Keltner, John Shackelford, Kimberly Grundy, Teresa Onick

## DFA Divisions Collaborate to Give

The DFA partnered with Our House for a Holiday Food and Winter Coat Drive. Our House, a nonprofit dedicated to serving homeless Arkansas, empowers homeless and near homeless families and individuals to succeed in the workforce, in school, and in life through hard work, wise decision-making, and active participation in the community.

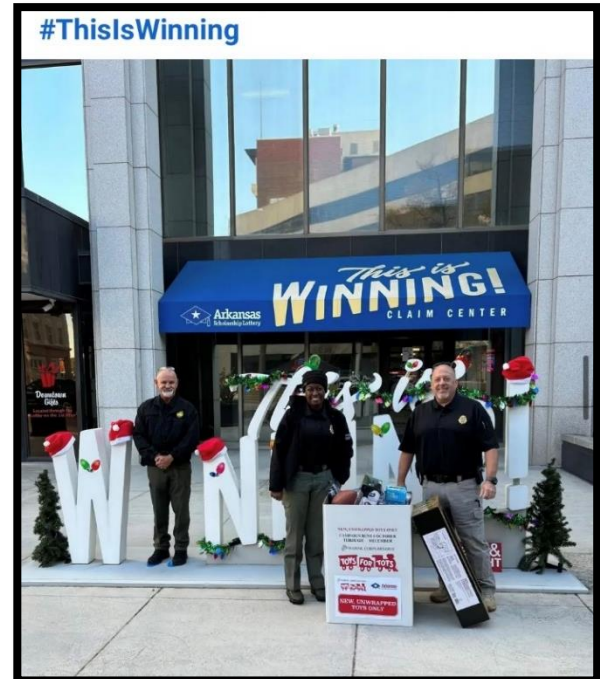
Our DFA employees pulled together, with personal contributions to give back to families in need during the holiday season. This drive event produced several cargo vans full of needed items, from combined offices from around the State! Many of the DFA divisions worked together to support local partnerships.

The DFA Office of Arkansas Lottery (OAL) partnered with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program, for a one-day drop-off event at their Little Rock Claims Center. Here OAL collected toys for needy families. Our own DFA Alcohol Tobacco Control was gracious in its support of the event as well.

Thank you to all who supported these DFA events. You are instrumental to both DFA’s daily commitment to the citizens of the state and for representing DFA in going above and beyond the call of your service.



DFA Holiday Food Drive & Winter Coat Drive Station



DFA Office of Arkansas Lottery Toy Drive supported by the DFA Arkansas Tobacco Control  
Pictured Middle: Princess Danzy, DFA-U Alumna

# TEAM TALK:

## Introducing the faces of DFA University 3!



DFA University is in its third year of growing leaders from within. This year's class includes 22 candidates who are expected to graduate in May 2024.

**THERESA** Taylor..... *Office of Information Services (OIS)*



**THE BOOK THAT HAD THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON ME WAS:** *Still Here*, Langston Hughes (Poetry)

**FAVORITE PLACE IN ARKANSAS:** The northwest area

**FANTASY VACATION DESTINATION:** Maldives, the water is beautiful.

**MOST UNUSUAL TALENT:** I love writing and reading poetry.

**WHAT MAKES ME LAUGH THE MOST:** Comedy shows

**BEST ADVICE I'VE EVER RECEIVED:** Experience is skillsets developed over time.

**DEBORAH** Wilson ..... *Office of Corporation Tax*



**THE BOOK THAT HAD THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON ME WAS:** *The Green Mile*. I just sat in silence for a while after watching that movie.

**FAVORITE PLACE IN ARKANSAS:** Conway, it's home!

**MY FIRST JOB WAS:** Baskin Robbins (I was only 16 and was trusted with a key to the store.)

**PEOPLE MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO FIND OUT:** My husband and I own a blueberry farm, Caney Creek Berry Farm.

**MY GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** My two children and four grandchildren.

**BEST ADVICE I'VE EVER RECEIVED:** Save your Annual Time! Mr. Joe Ellis preached that to me over 20 years ago, and eventually, I listened.

**THE QUOTE THAT RESONATES THE MOST WITH ME:** “Sonder is the realization that everyone you see everywhere is living a life just as vivid as your own. While they’re just an extra in your movie, you’re one in theirs.”

**FANTASY VACATION DESTINATION:** New Zealand in the winter

**MY FIRST JOB WAS:** Paintball referee

**MY MOST UNUSUAL TALENT:** Axe throwing

**THREE WORDS TO DESCRIBE ME:** Caring, friendly, bald

**CAREER ADVICE TO MY YOUNGER SELF IS:** The work product is not nearly as important as the work environment.



**MY FIRST JOB WAS:** Air gate operator for 101 Livestock Auction

**A TYPICAL SATURDAY NIGHT FOR ME INCLUDES:** Playing Fortnite with my husband, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law.

**MY GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Becoming a mother

**THREE WORDS TO DESCRIBE ME:** Kind, respectful, smart

**SOMETHING I THINK EVERYONE SHOULD TRY AT LEAST ONCE:** Float down the Buffalo River.

**BEST ADVICE I’VE EVER RECEIVED:** Don’t assume; ask questions.



**MY FIRST JOB WAS:** Waitress at the Bonanza Restaurant in Pine Bluff, AR.

**A TYPICAL SATURDAY NIGHT FOR ME INCLUDES:** laying on the couch and watching a good movie with my kids.

**THE QUOTE THAT RESONATES THE MOST WITH ME:** “The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing.” Walt Disney

**THREE WORDS TO DESCRIBE ME:** Kind, driven, and considerate.

**SOMETHING I THINK EVERYONE SHOULD TRY AT LEAST ONCE:** Grow or catch your own meal. to appreciate the value of food.

**BEST ADVICE I’VE EVER RECEIVED:** Stop, take a breath, and say “I don’t know” when I don’t know.



**MY FIRST JOB WAS:** Clerk II for DFA Eastend Revenue (High School Summer Program)

**A TYPICAL SATURDAY NIGHT FOR ME INCLUDES:** My mother and I watching a good movie on the Hallmark channel.

**FANTASY VACATION DESTINATION:** Hawaii

**THE THING THAT MAKES ME LAUGH THE MOST:** The things my youngest grandson says, and my friends' crazy stories.

**MY GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Receiving my bachelor's degree in business management.

**CAREER ADVICE TO MY YOUNGER SELF IS:** Always keep learning and enjoy what I am doing.



**MY FIRST JOB WAS:** Dishwasher at Pizza Inn

**A TYPICAL SATURDAY NIGHT FOR ME INCLUDES:** Watching movies with my two favorite people (Hubby and son).

**THE QUOTE THAT RESONATES THE MOST WITH ME:** "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better." Maya Angelou

**FANTASY VACATION DESTINATION:** Maldives; close second, African safari.

**THE THING THAT MAKES ME LAUGH THE MOST:** Currently silly pet and voiceover videos.

**MY ALL-TIME FAVORITE PROJECT:** Me! I'm a constant work in progress.



**MY FIRST JOB WAS:** Burger King

**A TYPICAL SATURDAY NIGHT FOR ME INCLUDES:** Wine and a movie

**FANTASY VACATION DESTINATION:** Kruger National Park

**THE QUOTE THAT RESONATES THE MOST WITH ME:** "Nothing you wear is more important than a smile."

**FAVORITE PLACE IN ARKANSAS:** My home, a place of love and peace.

**BEST ADVICE I'VE EVER RECEIVED:** Forgive and trust GOD!



# PROMOTIONS:

DFA wishes to recognize a few DFA-U members and an alumnus who have earned a promotion during the last quarter of 2023

**Deborah Wilson**, DFA Division Manager, Office of Corporation Tax

**Dylan Masterson**, Program Fiscal Manager, Office of Accounting

**Michelle Dixon**, Research Project Analyst, Office of Individual Tax

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

## The start of DFA's 2024 Internships is NOW!

Spring DFA Internships began on February 5, 2024

*Interns are selected for the offices of:*

Budget  
Child Support Enforcement  
Corporate Tax  
Field Audit  
Individual Income Tax  
Revenue Legal Counsel

### Summer Internships

begin May 27, 2024, and end August 2, 2024.

Apply Now:

State Job Site: [arcareers.arkansas.gov](https://arcareers.arkansas.gov)

Student Recruitment Site: [Handshake](#)

Email: [recruitment@dfa.arkansas.gov](mailto:recruitment@dfa.arkansas.gov)

DFA is pleased to announce several interns have accepted full time positions at DFA!

Please join us in welcoming our new colleagues to the DFA Family!

## Intern Spotlight



**Ajano Williams**  
Tax Auditor I  
Office of Field Audit  
(Central District)



**Jenna Lewis**  
Tax Auditor I  
Office of Field Audit  
(Central District)



**Nathan Evans**  
Tax Auditor I  
Office of Individual Income Tax

# Top Floor to Front Door: Building Connection Bridges



Beth Butler Fadel Executive Director of Disability: IN North Carolina and Jonathan Taylor, Executive Director GCDD



The Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) is a federally funded, self-governing organization charged with identifying the most pressing needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our state. The Council promotes integration, inclusion, and independence for Arkansans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). GCDD Director and DFA-U leadership team member, Jonathan Taylor leads the council to identify the most pressing needs of the IDD community in Arkansas and address those needs by conducting outreach, fostering change, and supporting capacity-building efforts.

The GCDD closed out the year by hosting the Arkansas Business Summit 2023, in Fayetteville, with its partners Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS), Disability: IN Arkansas, and Arkansas Chapter of the Association of People Supporting Employment First Arkansas (APSE). The theme, *Top Floor to the Front Door* addressed the common disconnect many companies face when executing Disability Accessibility and Inclusion policies. The message was designed to assist attendees with breaking down barriers between supervisors and employees with disabilities, who are entering the workforce.

*Top Floor to the Front Door* offered real-world stories, skills, and strategies for business and service providers who want to hire people with disabilities. DFA Human Resources Recruiter, Courtney Brown, attended the event to learn practical advice on how to build relationships as well as how to recruit and manage employees with disabilities and mental health conditions.

Visit [www.gcdd.arkansas.gov](http://www.gcdd.arkansas.gov) for more information about the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD).



Courtney Brown & Jonathan Taylor



Arkansas Business Summit 2023

# A Peak into the Lessons of DFA University: The Third Year Class

DFA-U provides a unique opportunity for its members to be exposed to a variety of leadership perspectives and styles. Each monthly session is packed full of opportunities to hear from DFA administrative leaders and chances to meet and interact with key leaders from the local community.

In the fall of 2023, in a Leadership presentation featuring characters from *The Wizard of Oz*, Joseph Wood shared with the third-year cohorts, the importance of staying on the journey even when it becomes disheartening, frightening, or difficult. With interactive audience participation, Wood's explored leadership through the eyes of Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Lion. As a former county judge, gubernatorial cabinet member and children's author, Wood shared his own rich life experiences with humor and wisdom and left the audience with lessons on how to lead well.

Likewise, Charles O. Stewart, a former local financial executive, shared his personal motto of "opportunity plus preparation equals success." His inspiring speech included first-hand stories of his own life, where he was prepared for the golden opportunities offered to him.

Most recently, this DFA-U class was honored to be eagerly greeted by former Senator Joyce Elliott. Elliott shared leadership and learning experiences from her prior service at the State Legislature, as well as public speaking illustrations from her vast career in education.

Through a combination of interactive skill-building, mentor guidance, and real-life leadership expertise, this program exposes DFA's aspiring leaders to the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their roles. By actively participating in DFA-U, individuals gain a preview of the personal and professional growth opportunities that lie ahead, setting them on a path toward leadership excellence.



Joseph K. Wood



Charles O. Stewart



Joyce Elliott

"The DFA-U program has pushed me to be a better individual and expand my talents. I have placed myself in very unfamiliar territories because the information that I have gathered, and support received from all the DFA-U staff and participants has equipped me to take on these new challenges, with so much confidence."

*Toniesha Sargent*

DFA Tax Auditor Supervisor,  
Southern Field Audit District, Pine Bluff Office

## ASEA ELECTS DFA SUPERVISOR TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

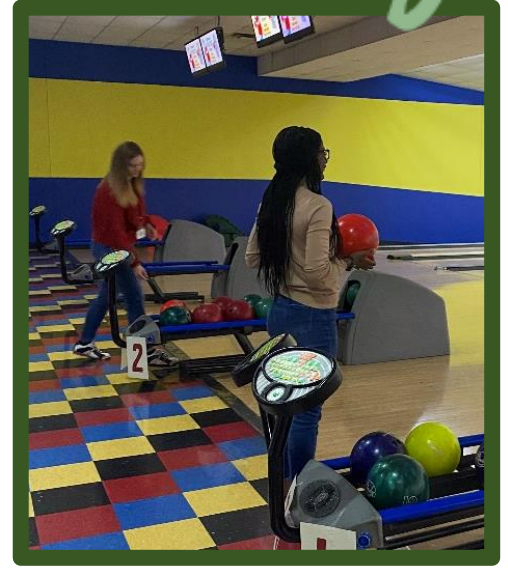
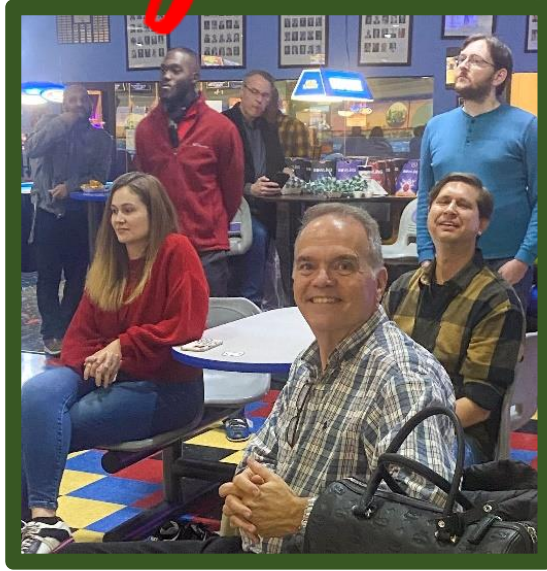


Congratulations are in order for DFA-U Alumna and current DFA-U mentor, Toniesha Sargent. Sargent was recently elected by the Arkansas State Employees Association (ASEA) as a board member for District 4, which covers Arkansas, Jefferson, Lincoln, Lonoke, Monroe, and Prairie counties. DFA is proud to have a representative onboard to represent the DFA team.





# THE *Holidays* WERE *Rolling*



## AT DFA-U!



DFA-U celebrated its annual Alumni Holiday Party at Millennium Bowl, with a little friendly competition.



# 1<sup>st</sup> Place

Margaret Pace – Toniesha Sargent – Tamala Kelly –  
Amy Valentine – Stephanie Bartley – Robert Brech



## DFA-U 2023 Bowling Champions

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Place

Terrill Gilliam  
Caitlyn Morehead  
Scottie York  
Timothy Keltner  
Cassandra Otey  
Simon Dorrough

