



# TGMI NEWS 2015

Tennessee Government Management Institute

Winter Edition

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## Message from the Chair

Vicky Hutchings (Class of 2012)

Fulton Sheen wrote “Each of us makes his own weather, determines the color of the skies in the emotional universe which he inhabits.” And could there not be a more true statement? However, sometimes life throws us a curve ball that makes us forget that we are solely in charge of our own destiny.

I had the great good fortune of attending the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People workshop offered through our department. And I can say unequivocally that it was one of the best courses that I have taken. Part of the credit goes to our facilitator, who I give a shout out to, Geneva Glenn. She, as one member of our class stated, “could facilitate a class on the use of the yellow pages and

make it interesting!” But what makes this class stand out from the others that I have taken is the focus – it is not about how to improve your management skills or deal with difficult people; it is focused on reminding you that the results of your life are yours to define. And note that I use the word ‘remind’. If you are an alumni of TGMI, TGEI, or LEAD – or if you are in a management role within your agency, you have already exhibited one or more of the seven habits of highly effective people. But as stated earlier, it can be easy to forget who has control when life takes an unexpected turn.

If you have the opportunity to take this course – do so. You will walk away with a renewed purpose for



both your personal and professional life.

In closing, I want to thank you for allowing me to serve as your Chair for 2015. It was a wonderful experience. Make a pledge next year to attend one Alumni event – you will find that it was well worth the time.

Have a wonderful holiday and a very happy new year!

~Vicky Hutchings  
2015 TGMI Chair



## Promotions, Educational and Professional Achievements



**Nneka Norman-Gordon (Class of 2012)** was promoted in November to the Director of Operations in the Public Information and Legislative Office of the Department of Human Services. Prior to her new role, Nneka served as a member of the Comptroller's Legislative Team.



**Tina Fox (Class of 2012)** earned a Graduate Certificate in Public Administration Executive Leadership in July and a Master's Degree in Professional Studies in Strategic Leadership in August both from Tennessee State University. She also participated in Command College through Tennessee Department of Correction in August.

**Steve Gatlin (Class of 2008-II)** earned his Master of Science in Criminal Justice from Bethel University. He participated in commencement exercises on December 5. He completed the degree with a 4.0 GPA!

**Phyllis Hodges (Class of 2008-II)** was promoted to State Director for the School Nutrition Program for the Department of Education.



**April Romero and Trish Holliday (Class of 2008-I)** were presented with their Black Belts at the TGL Conference in October.



**Trish Holliday (Class of 2008-I)**, better known now as "Doc Holliday", attained her Doctorate in Education from David Lipscomb University. She defended her doctoral thesis in October. Congratulations to Dr. Holliday!!



**Caira Garcia (Class of 2013)**, Department of Intellectual and Development Disabilities Director of Program Operations in the East Region, was appointed to the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE) 2015 Board of Examiners.



**Sherree Hall Crowder (Class of 2006)**, Director of the Affirmative Action Program, and the Civil Rights Division (CRD) Affirmative Action Program Staff won the 2015 Best Practices Award at the Southern Transportation Civil Rights Training Symposium (STCREC). The STCREC, which is comprised of eight southern states, awarded this to the Affirmative Action Staff for its work on the annual Diversity Fair.



**Marcus Dodson (Class of 2014)**, Manager of Infrastructure and Security for the Treasury Department, received the Agency IT Professional of the Year award, by the State's Information Technology Management Association (ITMA). The award was presented to him by the State Treasurer, David Lillard. In the nomination submitted, some of the comments were, "Marcus has exceptional leadership skills, and provides guidance to his team, modeling to them his continued commitment to "customer satisfaction."

**Bren Thompson (Class of 2006)** was selected for the 2015 Information Technology Management Association award Outstanding IT Career Achievement.



**Curtis Clan (Class of 2008-I)** passed the Certified Information Systems Security Professional exam in July. The vendor-neutral CISSP certification is the ideal credential for those with proven deep technical and managerial competence, skills, experience, and credibility to design, engineer, implement, and manage their overall information security program to protect organizations from growing sophisticated attacks.



## Adoption and Birth Announcements (*Future TGMI Graduates*)

**Sandra Brown Anderson (Class of 2004)**, who already has three grandsons to enjoy, was blessed with a precious granddaughter named Dalaya. However, what's extra special was that she was born on Sandra's birthday! Granddaughter and grandma will be celebrating their birthdays together on January 16, 2016, when Dalaya turns one year old!



**Zach Nixon (Class of 2011)** and his wife adopted their first child, James Ryan Nixon, on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Born October 21, 2015, James was 8 lbs. 15.7 oz. and 21 inches long. After almost three years waiting for their little miracle, Zach and his wife received the wonderful news during the TGL conference! Congrats to Mom and Dad!



**Amy Tosh (Class of 2014)** and her husband welcomed their second daughter, Sadie Mae Tosh, on April 20, 2015. Sadie surprised mom and dad by arriving a month early!



### Retirements

**Jeanne Smith (Class of 2008-II)** retired from Finance & Administration after 30 years of service with the state. She is now working for Cumberland University with their online and professional studies program.

**Katie Longsmith (Class of 2008-II)** recently retired from the Bureau of TennCare.

### *Remembering a Friend*

**J. Don Johnson (Class of 2005)**, passed away suddenly on October 6, 2015. Don was a great friend to all and will be greatly missed.



## 2015 Williamson County World of Possibilities Career Exploration Day



TGMI alumni joined several other exhibitors on November 19, 2015, at the Williamson County Agricultural Exposition Park in Franklin hosting Williamson County 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at their Fourteenth Annual World of Possibilities Career Exploration Day. Each year exhibitors are asked to share information about their occupations to assist students as they begin making decisions about future education plans and career paths. The 2015 Career Day was a big success. The event was very well organized with schools coming and going throughout the day and lots of students. Lots and lots of students!



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Sondra Howe (Class of 2001), Stephen Reksten (Class of 2008) and myself (Tresa Jones, Class of 2009) greeted and talked with students curious about state government. Some students asked standard questions like “what are some benefits your company offers to its employees” and “what do you do on a typical day in your occupation”. Others asked things like “do you



work in the capitol” and “do you work with Governor Haslam”. We even had some unusual questions like “do you have any bandages” – this from a female student who may have been suffering blisters from walking around in dress shoes. (I’ve been there myself and could totally relate!) Parents and teachers also stopped by to express their thanks for our participation in the event. We heard some positive feedback from students interested in technology, accounting, and legal positions to name a few. Many of the students seemed surprised to hear about all the different positions the State has to offer. One young man commented that it was like a big jigsaw puzzle with all the pieces coming together. It was a great opportunity to share information about who we are and what we do.

Be on the lookout in the coming year for the next Career Day event and other opportunities to engage with the community. I promise you’ll have fun working with some old friends, meeting new ones, and spreading the good word about government leadership. You might even meet a future commissioner, and years later you can say you knew them when.

~Tresa Jones  
(Class of 2009)

## Other News



**Mary Griffin (Class of 2008-I)** and her daughter, Anna, vacationing on Holbox Island off the coast of Cancun. They swam with Whale Sharks in the ocean and now Anna is headed to Western Kentucky University for college. “Go, Big Red!”



**Tresa Jones (Class of 2009)**, aka “Miss December”, was chosen to have one of her pictures featured in the 2016 “Postcards from Tennessee” calendar! Every year the Printing and Media Services Division in the Department of General Services produces a Tennessee calendar and hosts a contest offering amateur photographers an opportunity to win a spot in the calendar. Her photograph of the Old Mill in Pigeon Forge will appear in the calendar for the month of December 2016.

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## Making a Difference in the Community

### Make-a-Wish Campaign

TGMI raised **\$1,470** for the Make-A-Wish foundation. Our donation will help the Middle Tennessee MAW Chapter grant a wish to a child battling a life threatening illness in the Middle TN community. **THANK YOU** to the following donors who helped make a difference!!

- ◆ Amy Tosh
- ◆ Brenda Bright
- ◆ Cynthia Stewart
- ◆ Janet LaRosa
- ◆ John Allen
- ◆ Julie Nichols
- ◆ Kathy Smith
- ◆ Leah Eldridge
- ◆ Lisa Pugh
- ◆ Michael Ross
- ◆ Melinda Crutchfield
- ◆ Melissa Wiseman
- ◆ Michelle Smith
- ◆ Nicholas Brindle
- ◆ Patsy Grooms
- ◆ Philip Davis
- ◆ Shana Teasdale
- ◆ Sherita Woods
- ◆ Sondra Howe
- ◆ Stephen Reksten
- ◆ Tresa Jones
- ◆ Vicky Hutchings



### Second Harvest Food Drive

Over 1,400 cans of food were collected to donate to Second Harvest!

That's over **1,000 pounds** of food!!

- 1st Place: Class of 2014, 652 Cans
- 2nd Place: Class of 2013, 483 Cans
- 3rd Place: Class of 2009, 107 Cans

### St. Jude Children's Hospital

During the TGMI Annual Breakfast, we collected **\$148** to donate to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.



# 2015 TGMI ANNUAL HOLIDAY

## BREAKFAST AND MEETING



**THANK YOU** to the 2015 TGMI Holiday Breakfast Planning Committee!!

- Linda Cone
- Susan D. Cunningham
- Donna Duarte
- Caira Garcia
- Michelle Hamblin
- Julie Nichols
- Nneka Norman-Gordon
- Joy Pierson
- Michelle M. Smith
- Bren Thompson
- Melissa Wiseman
- Vicky Hutchings

### THE MOST HONORABLE OF CALLINGS

*Maya said, "Be the rainbow in someone's cloud."  
 Joseph Campbell, "Heroes give their life for something greater than themselves."  
 Edith Wharton says, "Be the candle's light or its mirrored reflection."  
 I say, "Find joy in serving someone other than one's self."  
 This Holiday Season examine your intentions  
 Reaffirm your purpose and your call  
 It is the soldier who serves with compassion  
 Who will never come to a fall  
 Find your mission and stand for things greater  
 Be the legacy of great warriors who went before  
 When one beside you is losing strength in the battle  
 Be the one their strength to restore  
 Tennessee has stood as finest example  
 Of all the best government servants can be  
 We are the core of what has built this reputation  
 Continue your achievement for all to see  
 Never succumb to foul contentions  
 Always set your goals and your destination high  
 Tennessee Government is the most honorable of callings  
 A calling answered by you and I*

*Melvin Jones, Jr., ©  
December 2, 2015*

*"Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."*

*— President Theodore Roosevelt*



The 2015 TGMI Steering Committee wishes everyone a very Happy Holiday season and a peaceful and prosperous New Year!!



2016 TGMI Steering Committee Meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of every month from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm. 275 Stewarts Ferry Pike, One Cannon Way, Room 1152

### Upcoming Events for 2016



January 12, Steering Committee Meeting  
3:00 pm to 4:30 pm

January 14, Second Harvest Volunteer Event  
5:30 pm to 8:00 pm

Date TBD, Nashville Predators Game

Date TBD, Nashville Sounds Game

November 10, Williamson County Career Exploration Day

Additional information regarding all events will be posted on the [TGMI website!](#)

### 2015 TGMI Steering Committee

Vicky Hutchings (Class of 2012)  
Chair

Michelle Smith (Class of 2013)  
Vice Chair

April Romero (Class of 2008-I)  
Past Chair

Bruce Balcom (Class of 2013)  
Past Class President

Julie Nichols (Class of 2013)  
Past Class Steering Committee Member

Doug Willis (Class of 2014)  
Present Class President

Lori Hedge (Class of 2014)  
Present Class Steering Committee Member

Nneka Norman-Gordon (Class of 2012)  
Member-at-Large

Cynthia Stewart (Class of 2008-I)  
Member-at-Large

Susan Burdette (Class of 2008-I)  
Member-at-Large

Tresa Jones (Class of 2009)  
Member-at-Large

Trish Holliday (Class of 2008-I)  
DOHR Ex-Officio

If you would like to submit ideas, announcements or articles for future newsletters, please send them to your class reporter or to:  
[Michelle.M.Smith@tn.gov](mailto:Michelle.M.Smith@tn.gov)  
[Julie.Nichols@tn.gov](mailto:Julie.Nichols@tn.gov)



Michelle Smith (Class of 2013)



Julie Nichols (Class of 2013)