



# United Future Leaders

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4 2015

CIVILITY \* ETHICS \* LEADERSHIP

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Parent Letter to UFL Staff
- UFL from the Student Perspective
- UFL "taking it out to the world" through research
- UFL Ambassadors

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## What is leadership, you ask?...

United Future Leaders is dedicated to preparing youth to lead and serve others on a daily basis. Over the past two years your child has been empowered to explore and engage in a variety of activities and challenges to not only define what leadership is, but to live it in their daily lives.

*So what is leadership?*

**Leadership is recognizing your own gifts and talents and helping others discover theirs.** Leaders have a healthy sense of identity. Identity development is a lifelong journey, influenced by past and present experiences. It is important for leaders to learn the unique abilities and interests that make each of them "one of a kind"

**Leadership is belonging.** A sense of belonging allows students to understand and identify where they fit. Being a part of supportive groups and friendships can influence positive decision making and help students realize the value of their contributions. Leaders help others belong by inviting them to be a part.



**Leadership is being respectful and accepting of others differences.** One of the most important qualities of a leader is that of civility. Students must understand it is important to be respectful to others in all situations, but even more so when placed in a leadership role.

**Leadership is setting goals with meaning and purpose.** Many students find it simple to understand the concept of goal-setting. However, students may

find it challenging to identify the reason for setting those goals. To stay focused and motivated on achieving goals, leaders must be able to identify the purpose of their goals.

**Leadership is realizing your abilities.** It is important for students to know they possess abilities and skills and have the confidence to try new activities and improve upon the skills that may not necessarily come natural to them. It is also important for leaders to value and appreciate the competencies of others.

**Leadership is serving others, expecting nothing in return.** One of the most important ways we can use our knowledge and leadership skills is to help others. Leaders serve others on a daily basis. Students learn that service should be carried out from the kindness of your heart, expecting nothing in return.

## Leadership Is Good!

—Gloria Gonzales, Director, UFL

## Dear UFL,...A parent perspective!

**The UFL staff have the privilege of working with hundreds of incredible families in Lubbock and the surrounding areas! Below is a message received from a supportive mom of an amazing young leader!**

*UFL would like to say THANK YOU to all of our parents & families for their continued support and advocacy of our program!*

Dear Gloria and Kayla~

It has been so refreshing and rewarding as a parent to have our oldest son, Nathan, be involved in a positive youth program like UFL in 5th and now 6th grade. Thanks to both of you for, at various times in your busy schedules, taking the time call or stop to tell me, in such caring and thoughtful detail, how much you are enjoying our precious Nathan. I'll be the first to admit this transition from elementary to middle school has been among the hardest for us as parents, and without the strong support and kind hearts we have had the blessing to be working with at Miller and Hutch in the UFL program, it would have been much, much more difficult. During our parent meeting, your staff so passionately spoke to us about our children's strengths and leadership qualities, which made a world of difference as we approached the big middle school transition. Even though we work hard as parents to foster and be intentional about recognizing those special qualities in our son, there was something so special about hearing that from you!

Thank you for doing things far above and beyond your job descriptions and being such great professionals and role models for our children! The UFL program sets the tone and high expectations for students and helps support them in becoming confident, capable and well rounded young leaders, and as a parent I'm so grateful for that! Through modeling such great professional practices, you are teaching and leading our children by example. As someone who works in a university environment, I also know and appreciate that your staff and volunteers are benefiting from working with our students as well. We have many choices when it comes to after school activities and involvement, but nothing holds a candle to leadership skills, growth opportunities and social and emotional development Nathan receives in UFL. Most of all, knowing he is loved, cared for, noticed and valued means more to me as his mother than I could ever, ever express! Our daughter is now a 3rd grader, and we can't wait for her to be a part of the program in 5th grade as well. You all have been a huge blessing in Nathan's life over the past 18 months, and in mine!

Thanks for all you do!  
Mitzi J. Ziegner, M.Ed.

# Grad SPEAK!

## UFL Program Delivery

### Create Your Own Experience

My favorite activity this semester was the sixth grade theme activity entitled "Create Your Own Experience". In this activity students are asked to take a look in the mirror and essentially "tell me what you see." Some difficult questions are asked, including:

- ⇒ How do you see yourself?
- ⇒ Do you like how you see yourself?
- ⇒ How do others see you?
- ⇒ Do you like how others see you?

Students are invited to write a reflection, which they can leave with a facilitator or take with them, regarding their thoughts about these questions. As you can imagine strong emotions come up with these questions, and sometimes tears are shed during their reflection. The UFL staff work tirelessly to make this a positive experience and turn these tears into moments of joy, acceptance and empowerment. I had a very memorable experience with one of my students this year who was very open to discussing her feelings about these questions and her own self-confidence. It has been a truly satisfying experience to see this young lady embrace her inner and outer beauty throughout this semester. The time that we spent learning what our students felt about themselves was invaluable to our goal of creating and developing the children's leadership skills. The responses given during the activity were sometimes surprising, and at other times heartbreaking however, no matter the reaction all reflections were inspiring. Throughout the semester self-esteem and self-confidence grew among our young leaders as we continued to learn about the ways we develop identity, cope with bullies in positive ways and stand up for others. It is unfortunate that our students will inevitably face challenges during their adolescence, however with the leadership training they receive through UFL, and specifically this activity, I am confident in their competence to tackle and overcome these obstacles. I am so proud of the 2015 class of UFL Students; I can't wait to work with them as UFL Ambassadors! –Lizz Onasanya, Graduate Assistant



### Tarp Flip

When working in a group, positive and encouraging communication breeds trust among members and leads to all feeling valued and motivated to achieve a group goal. This sense of motivation and feeling of significance was illustrated in our physical activity, "Tarp Flip." In this activity, students are challenged to work together to accomplish a physical and mental objective while on a large 12 by 10-foot tarp. We give students two guidelines: 1) use supportive and positive communication, and 2) work together to accomplish your given mission while having each member remain on the tarp at all times! For the first challenge, students begin by standing on one side of the tarp and are instructed to flip the tarp completely over to its other side without stepping off of the tarp. During the second challenge, students are to fold the tarp as many times as they can, again without stepping off of the tarp.

As students worked together to achieve their mission, I sometimes added in an additional guideline that confined group communication to only one person talking. In deciding which student would continue having talking privileges, I would choose a student that was typically more quiet among the group. In doing so, the more talkative students were compelled to engage by listening while affording the quieter student the space and opportunity to share their perspective while guiding their peers toward success.



Throughout this semester of programming, some of my favorite and most cherished moments were from this activity – from seeing students be encouraged by their peers and empowered in their actions in roles they do not typically hold or are not necessarily comfortable in – The look of deep satisfaction and sheer joy as they realized they expanded their capabilities beyond what they thought they were able to do. Further, seeing the positive and encouraging responses of their peers. —Jenny Adams, Graduate

### All for the Love of a Snicker!



Some say ignorance is bliss; this was true for me until I facilitated the "UFL Nutrition Label Facts and Ingredients" lesson. Prior to this lesson I had an idea of what a nutrition label was, but I had never fully understood how to read one hence it never played a factor to my food selection while shopping. It is important for both kids and adults to understand how to read a nutrition label because it makes us aware of exactly what we take into our bodies. As leaders this ensures healthy living for both our followers and ourselves though educated food selection. This lesson has been my favorite thus far because of the enlightenment that occurred while facilitating the activity with our UFL students. I confess I have a sweet tooth and my affinity for candy is really strong, so my naive motto was "A Snicker bar a day keeps the doctor away". As the lesson commenced at one of our 5<sup>th</sup> grade campuses, we shared the nutrition facts about different food products, which included the infamous Snicker bar. We began discussing the different amounts of sugar content in each product and I received the shock of my life when I heard that a regular Snicker bar contains 30 grams of sugar; 5 grams more than the recommended daily sugar intake for adults!! This disturbing information shot holes in my motto and made me rethink my food and snack selection. We concluded that candy, snacks and other types of food are not necessarily "bad", but are meant to be eaten in MODERATION. From serving size to percent daily value, the information on a nutrition label is very important and should be considered when selecting food, particularly for young leaders that have a big job ahead of them. I have come to find out that the UFL lessons

not only develop 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students into great leaders, but they also develop both the facilitators and everybody else who comes in contact with the messages of our curriculum. I look forward to learning right along with our students about being a healthy, competent leader in the upcoming lessons! –Sola Osunsan, Graduate Assistant



# Meet the UFL Team



## Full Time Staff



### Gloria Gonzales

Gloria has served as the director of UFL since its inception in 2007 and has seen the program grow and flourish over the years. "Guiding youth to lead and serve while helping them realize the value of their contributions is truly a gift I cherish. Their enthusiasm and spirit truly fill my heart with joy and inspiration and challenge me to be a better person."



### Kayla Sherman

Kayla has worked with UFL since 2012. She is currently pursuing her Masters at TTU in Family and Consumer Sciences Education. "This year has been an amazing adventure for UFL! We have implemented so many new projects and are increasing our impact in so many ways! I love my job and our UFLers more than words can express!"

## Graduate Assistants

### Jenny Adams



Jenny has worked with UFL since 2011 and is currently pursuing her Masters here at Texas Tech in Youth Development and Educational Leadership. "Our students challenge me and help me grow every day! Their zeal for life is so refreshing and invigorating and I am so grateful that we get to experience this adventure together!"

### Sola Osunsan



Sola has been a UFL graduate assistant for 4 months. He is a graduate student at TTU majoring in STEM Data Science. "The one thing I love about UFL is the lessons we facilitate do not only benefit the students but also the facilitators as well. I've grown so much just from being a part of UFL."

### Lizz Onasanya



Lizz is working towards a Master of Business Administration with a focus in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. "Becoming a part of the UFL Team has fulfilled me in a much greater way than I ever expected. Being a newcomer, I did not know what to expect however as we jumped headfirst into the semester I discovered a love for the development of children and the great benefit of UFL's program teachings for every child."

## Student Assistants

### Emily Espinoza



Emily is a junior at TTU pursuing a degree in Human Sciences. She plans on graduating in May of 2017. "UFL has given me the opportunity to influence and to be influenced by young minds in a positive and fun environment."

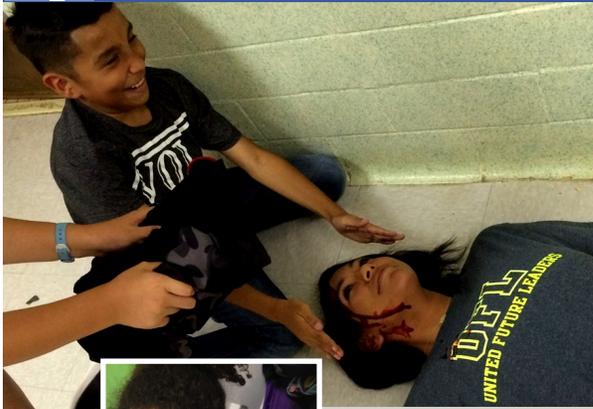
### Stephanie Eubank



Stephanie is an undergraduate student at TTU pursuing a degree in Multidisciplinary Studies (Elementary Education K-5) and plans to graduate in May of 2017. "UFL is a great program that empowers kids to think farther than themselves and become great young members of society. I am so grateful that I get to make an impact in this program and help our students learn and grow."

## And that's not all... TTU Student Volunteers

As the number of UFL youth participants continues to increase with each coming year, the UFL program relies heavily on the help of dedicated TTU students who volunteer as mentors and program facilitators on a weekly basis. **This year, we welcomed 75 new volunteers from diverse majors and colleges** (TTU, South Plains College, Lubbock Christian University). These students commit to serve a minimum of 3 hours per week, totaling over 30 hours in the fall semester alone. Your students are in good hands with these amazing role models present to guide them in their leadership development!



United Future Leaders

294 likes  
82 people are talking about this

Status

Photo

Life Event

Places

What's on your mind?

Hey UFLers! What is do you like about UFL?

like . share . comment

Gloria Gonzales, Kayla Thomas and 54 others like this.

Photos (10)



UFL snacks are the absolute best! Learning how to be healthy, awesome leaders! (6 photos)



**Nicholas Gonzalez** I learned about nutrition, how to treat others and how to be a leader!

**Bianca Quintana** My favorite activity from UFL was First Aid Competence!

**Claudia Villa** I learned how to care for people in case of an emergency.

**Zaine Bustamante** In the future when I look back, I am going to be happy about the times I had in UFL because it showed me how to be a leader!

**Keegan Campbell** You need to have the right kind of experience to be a great leader!

**McKinley Lamberson** I love when we all work together on projects and games!

**Ebony Constancio** I enjoy UFL because I can try new things and learn at the same time!

**Bennett Cardelli** UFL has taught me more than I know, have known, or will ever know about all of the healthy things I should eat like carrots, strawberries and watermelon.

**Ansley Aguilar** UFL helps leadership come easier by all the different lessons we learn!

**Jason Sabinas** I have learned about leadership and how it helps me become a better person. All of the lessons will help me in my future by saying no to wrong things!

**Emma Brady** My favorite thing about UFL is getting to spend time with my friends while learning valuable life lessons. I have learned to always follow my True North!

**Daniel Williams** UFL can teach anyone how to Promote Our Positives.

**Samuel Segura** I like the activities because we are able to goof around and be serious at the same time!

**Lexy Tadlock** Don't let anything bad get in your way of being successful. Step back and take it out to the world!



@unitedfutureleaders



## unitedfutureleaders

United Future Leaders Lubbock UFL is an after school leadership program, which focuses on civility, ethics, and leadership. Check out what some of our UFLers say about the program and leadership!!

167 posts

349 followers

374 following



**jai castillo** I liked making new friends this year and I enjoyed last year too because everyone was funny! #fun #blindfolds #friends



**kaytlyn rangel** I loved meeting new friends and having people to talk to! #relationships



**brett hall** UFL will change your life and turn you into a better leader! #leadership #UFLisawesome



**leo shih** "I was really surprised that I had a "swag" leadership style instead of a "hipster" style! #UFLtalk



**destinie garcia** I learned new responsibilities! My mom see's lots of improvement! #proud



**kaleb gaona** I like UFL because I get to meet new people and we get to talk. I have learned how to be a leader in specific situations and if you are a leader one day, you will know how to act!" #takeaction



**juan carlos salazar** I love UFL because we learned how to be leaders and we learn how to help people when they are hurt. I am happy to be a graduate of UFL. #leadershipislearning



**julia welsh** My favorite activity from UFL was "Born Identity" because Olay (my favorite facilitator) was the class clown! #comebackOlay #funnyleaders



**jalin anderson** UFL has taught me how to help others in life or death situations. #UFLbaseball #crazygoggles #concernedlooks



**brooklynn johnson** UFL gives me the support of friends and instructors!



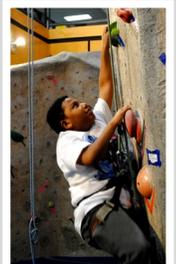
**andrew adams** When life gives you lemons, join UFL!"



**alexys nerios** "I really like the smoothies we had for snack because they were healthy and delicious! #superfoodsmoothies



**ava lopez** You're learning something but having fun!

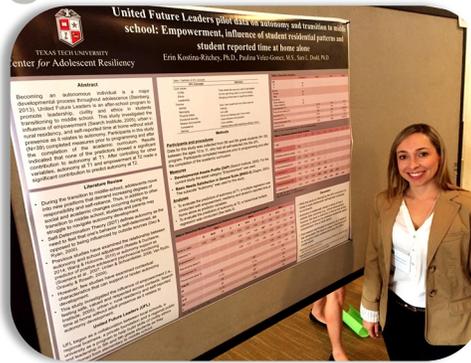


**zane johnson** #climbingleader

# UFL: Driving Research to the World!

Hello UFL families and friends! My name is Paulina Velez and I am the new graduate research assistant working at the Center for Adolescent Resiliency. I am originally from Colombia (South America), and I am completing my doctoral degree in Human Development and Family Studies at Texas Tech University. I joined the Center in June and it is my job to analyze the data collected from our participants.

One of the reasons we ask students in our program to complete surveys, before and after they complete the curriculum, is to help us evaluate how our students are doing in terms of their social and emotional development. Some of the things that we are interested in learning is how students are doing in terms of becoming more autonomous individuals. This is important because during the transition to middle-school, adolescents move into new positions that demand increasing degrees of responsibility and self-reliance. Thus, in



addition to other social and academic changes occurring during the transition to middle school, students and parents may struggle to navigate autonomy development.

Specifically, we were curious about what factors help students become autonomous. Recently we evaluated if feeling safe, valued, and respected by others (what we refer to as empowerment), helps students develop autonomy. This was an important step for UFL

since some of our themes focus on fostering belonging, physical safety, and emotional security. Our most recent findings showed that when students feel empowered, they also report feeling more autonomous. Therefore, by helping our students feel safe, valued and respected, we are helping them develop into more autonomous individuals! These findings were presented at the 2015 Society for the Study of Human Development meeting in October. As researchers, we are also taking it out to the world by sharing with others the strengths of our students and program!—Paulina Velez, Graduate Research Assistant, Ph.D. Candidate

*“By helping our students feel safe, valued and respected, we are helping them develop into more autonomous individuals.”*

## Researching data and data in research, UFL making a mark in the world

*“None of our recent publications or presentations would be possible without your participation!”*

UFL has had another big year! As the number of students participating continue to grow so does the reach of UFL beyond our greater West Texas community. Paulina wrote in this newsletter how important it is for us as researchers to gather as much information (data) as possible on all our students. She pointed out this data collection allows us not only to check to see if the UFL program is meeting the needs of our students but did you know that it also allows us to “tweak” curriculum delivery? I like to think of this as researching what our data is telling us about our programming.

Research participation is just one more way that UFL programming is student driven! The time that students invest in taking our programming surveys pays huge dividends in future programming. Beyond programming one of the other exciting direct dividends of student surveys is the

research component of UFL. Just as important as researching what our data is telling us about our programming is anchoring all of our broader research in data.

This time last year I shared in our newsletter how research focusing on the use of technology in UFL was presented at the International Leadership Association (ILA) annual meeting. This newsletter I am excited to share that the ILA presentation was selected to be a part of a new book sponsored by the American Sociological Association section on Children and Youth. The chapter “United Future Leaders: A case for the use of technology in youth programming and hidden curriculum” is in print! This chapter focuses on the use of technology in the UFL program in addition to providing “tips from the field” for those who are considering technology use in youth programming.

In addition to the technology chapter your UFL leaders were selected for a second book chapter “Mentoring the mentors: A systemic approach to formal and informal training of collegiate leaders” published in *Mentoring and Mentorship in the Arts and*

*Humanities*. The book is expected to be available in 2016. We have several other publications based on UFL research in various stages of creation but in the meantime we are keeping busy with presentations at professional conferences. This fall we were once again selected to present at the ILA conference, which was held in Barcelona Spain, and in spring we will be presenting at the American Educational Research Association in Washington DC.

It is an exciting time in UFL research as we use data to “dig deeper” into ways to better serve our students and the UFL program gains well-deserved programming recognition! I hope that you will join me in congratulating our UFL leaders and students. None of our recent publications or presentations would be possible without their participation. I hope that each of you will remain active in the UFL family by choosing to participate in the Ambassadors program. With a ten year UFL anniversary approaching we are already considering exciting ways to commemorate the anniversary (and of course gather great longitudinal data)! —Erin Kostina Ritchey, Post Doctoral Research Associate

# UFL Ambassadors

## *New Opportunities, Same Great Leadership*

In 2013 the UFL staff finalized the official name for UFL participants that continue involvement beyond the 5th and 6th grade after school program; now proudly known as UFL Ambassadors! We have had an amazing 2 years developing a streamlined approach to community service activities and leadership training for long-term participants and their families. UFL Ambassadors are invited to remain connected with the program through a minimum of six service events, fellowship activities, and leadership development workshops throughout the year. With the implementation of the Online Service Log system, young leaders are able to maintain a record of their community service involvement, which will serve as a great tool for developing future resumes and applications for scholarships, college and employment. We are incredibly proud to announce that former participants in the program, now sophomores in college, consistently return to program events throughout the year to assist with UFL activities and serve the Lubbock community. —Kayla Sherman, Assistant Director

**Although our project continues to grow and provide new opportunities, the same mission remains in our hearts:  
to develop young leaders who positively impact their individual, peer and social culture by  
"Taking it Out to the World!"**

## *Youth Voice "THINK TANK"*

After attending the Youth Development Initiative (YDI) Conference in April 2015, the UFL staff started thinking about the **POWER of YOUTH VOICE**—*the distinct ideas, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and actions of young people as a collective body.*

This summer we implemented a special 2-day workshop for a select group of active UFL Ambassadors to participate in "Think Tank" brainstorming sessions to explore how youth desire to learn about leadership. These ideas and those developed in future "Think Tank" sessions will be used to develop a **"Youth Voice Curriculum for Young Leaders"** entirely from the perspective of adolescents. This event was truly enlightening, as our young leaders embraced the opportunity to **SHARE THEIR VOICE** and help develop ideas to impact their peer leaders. The UFL staff look forward to implementing future Youth Voice "Think Tanks" with our incredibly intelligent and inspiring UFL Ambassadors.

## Lubbock Dream Center

### UFL Ambassador 2015 Fall Service Event

The UFL Ambassadors and families came out in numbers for the second year of supporting the Lubbock Dream Center in their mission of "meeting people's basic needs and building relationships with them [to] open the door for spiritual needs to be met [bringing] social transformation".

Over 30 young leaders, UFL staff members and parents decorated paper bags used to disseminate Thanksgiving groceries to over 350 families in the Lubbock community, helped put together and carry out weekend meal packages for community members in need and assisted with the set up for weekend worship services. It truly was a wonderful morning of service, leadership and understanding of the needs present in our community! This is an annual event, so be looking for another opportunity to serve the Lubbock Dream Center in October 2016!



*UFL parents, staff, and students...*

## *Why do you volunteer?*

***“We, as ambassadors of United Future Leaders, commit to execute and fulfill our mission by using our abilities and knowledge with a positive attitude to impact others.”***

*“So I get reminded and see first hand how good we have it! So my kids can see how good they have it! It makes me feel good inside to help and see the needs of others being met! I want my kids to have compassion and a different perspective of how others live. I do not want them caught up in their fish bowl. I love seeing what others do with their hearts to help others. It moves me every time. Big hearts make me smile big! Thank you for allowing us the opportunity.”— UFL Parent*

*“I volunteer because there are people who need my help!”  
—UFL student,  
10th grade*

*“I volunteer to make the world a better place, to give back and because it is FUN!” —UFL Parent*

*“I volunteer because I like to help people in need.”—UFL student, 6th grade*

*“I volunteer to give back to my community and to give others opportunities like I have been given. God tells us to help one another and to give to others. You never know, volunteering for someone or a group may be the highlight of their day!”—UFL student, 5th grade*

*“I volunteer because it is the easiest way to have a positive impact on the community. That makes it easy to have an impact locally to make the world a better place. What you think is a small impact can and will have bigger implications!” —UFL student, 12th grade*

*“I volunteer to help others and learn how to be a great leader!”—UFL student, 5th grade*

*“I volunteer because UFL is a fun on-going experience...and come on...who doesn't want to have fun?! Also because of the possible future...this program will look good on your resume and will provide further choices in future goals! —UFL student, 7th grade*

*“I volunteer because it is the right think to do! Volunteering shows that I want to be a part of a vibrant community that cares for each other.” —UFL student, 11th grade*

*“Like milk...it does the body good! Volunteering helps keep me humble—it reminds me just how fortunate I am and how blessed my life really is. Volunteering makes me put myself, my needs, my wants, my fears and my expectations to the side and allows God to work through me for the good of others without the expectation of anything in return. Funny thing...I always receive much more from the experience than I ever imagined I could be giving!”—UFL parent*

*“To show other people that they are important. To show them they mean more than spending time watching TV or other things. It is also a way to be helpful, respectful and giving!”—UFL family*

*“Volunteering and helping others is a great way to impact our community. It's a blessing to those who serve and to those we serve!” —UFL Parent*

*“I volunteer because it's fun!”  
—UFL student, 8th grade*

“I have enjoyed getting to know loads of new people through the lesson of identity. UFL has taught me how to become a better leader to anyone and everyone by being respectful to others and letting them have their own opinions in activities --Jacey Allison

# UFL



UNITED  
FUTURE  
LEADERS

UFL can be a life changing experience if you pay attention. I have learned new terms like civility, mission & purpose, abilities and identity. Leadership is GOOD!! —Charlee Chambers

Check us out on the web:

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/hs/ufl/>



# Take it out to the World!