

2020–2021 Pebble Tossers Teen Leadership Program Speakers, Bios and Topics

Jann H. Adams, PhD

Associate Vice President for Leadership Initiatives and Lead Director of the Andrew Young Center for Global Leadership
Morehouse College.

Bio: Jann Adams’s primary responsibilities include planning, implementation, and oversight of the Andrew Young Center for Global Leadership, including the development of multiple student and faculty initiatives to advance leadership and social justice training and research at the College. The re-envisioned AYCGL includes four institutes: The Institute for Research, Civic Engagement, and Policy; the Leadership Studies Program; the Institute for Social Justice Inquiry and Praxis; and the Institute for International and Experiential Education, for which she is director. Jann is responsible for establishing a new Office of International Education which oversees the internationalization of the curriculum and works to enhance and increase study abroad programming at the College. Finally, she serves as the director of the Morehouse College Oprah Winfrey Program, a flagship scholarship program that has existed at the college for 30 years.

Topic: Dr. Adams and her team will introduce the importance of youth understanding the history, values, and beliefs of their society and how to develop their own individual strengths and leadership styles. The presentation will work on their understanding of the importance of developing strong ethics, values, and ethical reasoning to promote awareness, understanding, and tolerance of other people, cultures, and societies.

Leslie A. Anderson, M.S., LMFT, Ph.D.

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
Associate Professor
The University of Southern Mississippi

Bio: Leslie Anderson has more than a decade of experience in the mental and behavioral health field. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor in the School of Child and Family Sciences at The University of Southern Mississippi. The cornerstone of her scholarship involves deliberate actions towards amplifying the voices of the underserved and underrepresented and centering the experiences of those who live on the margins.

Topic: Dr. Anderson will work with the teens on introspection and self-reflection to discern a better sense of self-awareness and global awareness. She will emphasize that service is more than “helping the needy” or attempting to capture an Instagramable selfie, but that serving others is about being able to see yourself in the eyes of those you seek to serve.

Beth Bristow

Educational Consultant: College Planning + Test Preparation

Beth Bristow Tutorial Services

Bio: With more than twenty years of experience in education, Beth Bristow specializes in academic coaching, test preparation, as well as college planning. Ms. Bristow first identified her unique ability to inspire students with a motivating and multi-sensory approach when she began tutoring as a freshman in college. She served as an admissions counselor for a private college in North Carolina. Working behind the scenes enabled her to see how certain students were able to better market themselves in the admissions process. Helping students create their own well-developed angle to differentiate themselves from a pool of applicants became a personal goal that complemented her passion for tutoring. She has directed several privately-owned learning centers where she developed SAT and ACT preparation materials, customized academic programs, and served as an educational consultant.

Topic: As an expert in the field of education, Ms. Bristow will impart insight into what colleges look for in new students from engagement in community service to essay writing to well-rounded extracurricular activities. She will discuss the 10 most important factors in college admissions and how teens can begin to prepare.

Alex Desiderio

Director, Recruitment + Employee Engagement
Woodruff Arts Center

Bio: Alex Desiderio has more than twenty years of experience as a motivational speaker on leadership. Mr. Desiderio's role is to oversee the recruitment and on-boarding of new employees to the organization, across all Arts Partners. He provides support for all members of the team in areas of management, leadership, communication and conflict resolution through engaging and thoughtful workshops.

Topic: With 20+ years of experience in the nonprofit community, Mr. Desiderio will lead teens through a Volunteer 101 tutorial and speak to the importance of developing a personal presence.

Titania Jordan

CMO and Chief Parent Officer
Bark.us

Bio: Titania Jordan is the Chief Parent Officer of Bark.us, an internet safety solution that helps parents and schools keep children safer across social media, text messaging, and email. As the former host of NBC Atlanta affiliate WXIA's weekly television show Atlanta Tech Edge, Ms. Jordan had the honor of covering the latest in tech news and talent across both the city and the globe. Past roles also include serving as the CMO of KidsLink, co-founder and CMO of PRIVET, and Executive Director of Band of Coders Girls Academy. Ms. Jordan travels the country serving as a tech expert and was named a tech innovator and a mother of invention by The Atlantan in 2015.

Topic: Joining Bark in its early days, Ms. Jordan will discuss the impetus for Bark's founding and how to grow a successful business based on a recognized need in the community. She will share the importance of cyber safety for teens and highlight trends in digital citizenship and the importance of having a clean and reputable digital presence.

Malcolm Mitchell

Founder

Share the Magic Foundation, Inc.

Snapshot Bio: SuperBowl Champion, author, and philanthropist, Malcolm Mitchell is a native of Valdosta, Georgia and graduate of the University of Georgia. During his freshman year in college, Mr. Mitchell developed a love of reading. Initially, reading was a challenge, however, through perseverance, books became an avenue for expanding his curiosity, creativity and learning. In 2015, Mr. Mitchell authored and published a children's book, *The Magician's Hat* and created a youth literacy initiative called Read with Malcolm. In 2016, he went on to establish a 501c3 organization, Share the Magic Foundation with a sole purpose: to transform children's lives through literacy.

Topic: Putting your passion into action: Among Mr. Mitchell's numerous awards and accomplishments both on and off the field, he considers discovering a love of reading his greatest achievement. Mr. Mitchell will share his personal story, discuss the importance of literacy, and discuss his foundation and importance of service learning.

Michelle Schroeder

Artist Educator

Columbus Academy

Bio: Michelle Schroeder is a renowned artist educator specializing in music, movement and drama at Columbus Academy. Ms. Schroeder is a CAPP certified Positive Psychology Practitioner and recently completed certification as a Resiliency Trainer at The Flourishing Center in NYC. She is passionate about educating people about the benefits of living life with purpose using the principles of PERMA-V and the VIA Character Strengths. She is a proud wife and mother and a founding member of Available Light Theatre.

Topic: Ms. Schroeder will focus on Positive Psychology and being able to recognize emotions in order to have a healthy digestion of emotion which leads to the ability to bounce back from adversity and have more success at feeling happiness throughout our lives. She will also discuss the importance of relationship skills, empathy and self-awareness.

Cherie Wilson

Director, Community Relations Manager
Bank of America

Snapshot Bio: As Community Relations Manager, Cherie Wilson supports the office of the Market President to deliver one company to clients, colleagues and the community and deliver on the Bank of America commitment to make financial lives better through the power of every connection. In the community, Ms. Wilson is passionate about empowerment and overall health and wellness issues related to girls and women. She serves on the community board for Atlanta Medical Center and for the past 7 years, Ms. Wilson has worked passionately on domestic violence awareness and prevention efforts internally and externally.

Topic:

Ms. Wilson's message to the teen leaders will focus on her background as a passionate volunteer and advice on how to present your own service ideas by telling a story that is also inclusive of things like metrics and statistics, and how a life dedicated to community service can evolve throughout a lifespan, through different careers, and lifestyle changes.