

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **LADIES LEARNING TO LEAD PERSEVERES THROUGH THE STORM TO HOST 13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE FOR GIRLS**

**Tallahassee, Florida-** The largest Leadership Conference for girls in North Florida came in the wake of the largest tornado disaster that the city has seen in nearly 80 years. Over 200,000 homes in North Florida were without power, experiencing major damages, with many events cancelled and two fatalities.

Amidst extreme challenges for parents, girls, and volunteers, and continual tornado and flood watch warnings over the weekend, Ladies Learning to Lead (L3) persevered to host its 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Leadership Conference for girls on May 17-19, at Florida State University.

The statewide 3-day/2-night “weekend at college” prepared middle and high school girls for college, careers and the real world. Over 160 girls and volunteers came from across the State of Florida, and some from Georgia and Texas. Several of the 67 girls from Tallahassee were still experiencing hardship or power outages due to the storm. L3 provided clothing, food, and shelter for girls for the weekend, allowing parents to stick around for relief.

Although the organization was helping others, they too experienced damage. Prior to the event, some donors were unable to give due to damage to their homes and businesses, while others shifted funds to disaster relief. Due to system outages, almost \$20k in state funding was delayed for the group along with access to their local bank with ATM machines down preventing deposits. To top it off, the group experienced power outages and pipes bursting on campus during their event, incurring flood damages to their items.

Founder and Board President, Samantha Vance, took the bull by the horns and called on the community for help. *“No one is ever successful alone. We have a community of leaders, parents, and supporters who want to see our girls succeed.”* She contacted several community leaders, board members, sponsors, and friends of L3 to assist. And Tallahassee stepped in.

Executive Director, Fadriena Sutton says, *“We are so grateful to our sponsors, especially our title sponsor, the Florida Lottery who we secured partnership with to increase opportunities and education support for girls in the State of Florida.”*

The Florida Lottery has contributed more than \$8B to the Bright Futures Scholarship Program, enabling over 980,000 students to attend college! Thanks to the Florida Lottery’s dedication to education, students can pursue their passions while attending college. Florida Lottery leadership attended the L3 Conference, awarding scholarships to six young ladies from across Florida.

The Leadership Conference took place in an environment where inspiration and education go hand-in-hand, resulting in intense sessions and passionate discussions. During the Conference, young ladies took a tour of Florida State University, participated in discussions on financial management, networking & connecting, college success, health and wellness, and received AI training and certificates.

Ladies Learning to Lead successfully executed an event that addressed the gaps in opportunities for girls and women in the educational system, college admissions, and the job market. Since its inception fourteen years ago, L3 has served over 7,800 girls from across Florida and Georgia, exposing them to inspiring speakers, informative panels, STEM training, resume writing, mock interviews, networking opportunities and a spirit of collaboration.

Sutton says, *“Young ladies accepted to attend this program received opportunities that they may not have otherwise.”* #

Ladies Learning to Lead is a Florida nonprofit 501(c)3 organization focused on providing underserved girls with a competitive advantage preparing them for college, careers, and life. Learn more about to conference at [www.L3Conference.org](http://www.L3Conference.org) or how to support at [www.L3Ladies.org/donate](http://www.L3Ladies.org/donate)