

## **Training the Trainers: ATD Hosts Yearly Conference**

By: Danielle DeFerraro

While training and development professionals are the ones normally in front of the classroom, the Association for Talent Development Kentuckiana chapter (ATDKY) makes sure that at least once a year their professionals get a chance to see the view from the other side of the classroom.

“It’s really an interesting change of perspective,” said Lisa Johnson, VP of Membership for ATDKY. “It reminds us of what it’s like to be more of a student – to try and follow what someone else is saying, what the people on the other side are going through. It helps us develop a more learning-friendly approach.”

The group sponsors a one-day conference each year and opened last week’s ATDKY Day of Learning with a keynote address addressing diversity and inclusion by A.J. Hubbard from Humana. Hubbard emphasized the human element, suggesting, “When we focus on the human experience and act with kindness and compassion, diversity and inclusion come naturally.”

Leaders in the ATDKY chapter hope hosting the conference brings renewed vigor to learning professionals challenged by new demands daily and introduces new insights on how better to communicate information related to organizational needs. To that end, the conference included breakout sessions discussing Training Effectiveness, Professional Development, Training Design and Delivery and Methodologies/Technologies.

According to Johnson, it’s a chance for professionals to come together and trade notes. “It’s an opportunity for like-minded people in the same profession to come together and learn from each other, not just those of us from the same city but from all across the region.”

The conference also addressed future challenges and included a lunchtime leadership panel titled “Leadership is Everyone’s Business,” which included panelists Tiffany Cardwell (HR Consulting Professional, MCM), Cynthia Knapek (President, Leadership Louisville), Jennifer Mackin (President/CEO, Oliver Group), and Jimmy Nelson (Director, Organizational Development, Norton Healthcare), and was moderated by Insider Louisville’s Jim McKiernan. The panelists discussed a wide range of topics, including effecting change from the top leadership down and developing leaders for the future.

“It’s really something special to hear these kinds of conversations from people who have been there and have actually practiced what they are speaking about,” Johnson said. “It goes from just being an abstract conversation to a real-world insight, with examples of what works the best and what doesn’t work at all.”

Courtney Clark of Austin, Texas closed the conference with the final keynote of the day titled, "The Art of Accelerated Resilience." A charismatic speaker, Clark discussed her struggle with melanoma at 26 and subsequent brain surgery for an aneurysm five years later. Through her own experience, Clark spoke at length about the numerous struggles every person faces, and said that, "How we deal with the day-to-day is what will help us adapt to change and crisis when the stakes are high."

Flexibility is key, she said, a sentiment pertinent in a field that must adapt to the constantly-changing needs of both learners and the organizations that host them.

"At the end of the day, I think we all left with ideas and plans we can implement in not just our work but in some cases in the way we live," Johnson said. "The conferences seem to get better each year, and I think this one really stood out in the way it addressed the issues talent development professionals are facing."