

Highlights: Women in Leadership – June 23, 2017

**“Creating a Climate and Culture for Success” featuring Kim Bearden, Co-Founder & Executive Director of the Ron Clark Academy and recipient of the 2016 Leadership Character Award in Education.**



Turknett Leadership Group was fortunate to have an extraordinary leader like Kim Bearden as part of our 15<sup>th</sup> year of the WIL seminar series. As a local, national, and internationally recognized educator / author and “teacher of teachers,” Kim is an amazing human being. Her

passion and commitment to children’s learning and success inspire everyone with whom she comes in contact. In her 30+ years of teaching - including 10 years at the highly acclaimed / Oprah endorsed Ron Clark Academy - Kim (known as “Momma Bear” to her students) has had a profound impact. She’s trained over 44,000 teachers which has created a ripple effect that is nothing short of astounding. Her goal: to revolutionize education and to change the world.

Here are some of the invaluable lessons Kim shared with the WIL audience.

- Every student should feel that he/she is “seen” – visible, respected, and believed in. (At RCA about 1/3 of students are gifted, 1/3 are in the middle, and 1/3 have not been successful before. There are 30 students in each grade 5<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup>. Expectations are high, and discipline and manners are part of the culture – along with a LOT of excitement and music.)
- A school should uplift the students, the teachers AND the community.
- Passion - Look for it in everyone. Takes different forms. Draws people to you.
- What sets great teachers apart from the others is their ability to not only connect with students but also with each other.
- Everybody has a story and learning about someone’s story – whether it’s a student or a teacher – helps you understand the person better. (Kim also shared her own story which clearly demonstrated that she has had plenty

of personal challenges to overcome. At one point she virtually disappeared and suffered in silence. Mona was a fellow teacher, a role model and friend who helped her regain her life and start a new journey both professionally and personally.

- In the depths of darkness is sometimes when you become the most enlightened.
- The best teachers are the ones who are flawed but acknowledge their flaws – ones that are real.
- Your problems do not define you. It's what happens through you that defines you, not what happens to you.
- Power is defined by empowering others and uplifting them, not by one's ability to control things.
- When someone shares his/her problems, be careful not to shift the focus from that person to yourself.
- Significance is more important than achievement, i.e., being something vs getting something.
- It's important to find your purpose in life. Be intentional about what / who you invest your time in. Think about how you are going to give back to the world.
- Seek out meaningful relationships with people who do not look like you, who have a different background, different perspective, etc. Have respectful conversations to learn and to share. You don't have to agree, or try to change the other person's position; e.g., about race. But it's important to learn about and to seek to understand other people's experience.