LIVE2LEAD

COLUMBUS CONFERENCE 2026

Grow. Connect. Lead.

Friday, January 23, 2026

Hilton Polaris
8700 Lyra Drive
Columbus, OH 43240

Presented By:

Forrest Street
CONSULTING

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Letter from **Dawn Tyler Lee**

Welcome to Live2Lead 2026! I am truly grateful you have chosen to join us for a day of investing in yourself—your growth, your relationships, and your leadership. This conference exists because leaders like you believe that growth is intentional and leadership is developed, not assumed.

This year's theme—**Grow. Connect. Lead.**—captures the heart of what today is all about. Today is an opportunity to grow personally and professionally, to connect with ideas and people who will stretch and encourage you, and to lead with greater clarity and confidence when you return to your everyday roles.

Whether you lead formally or informally, a powerful experience has been designed with you in mind. I invite you to be fully present, open to new perspectives, and focused on what matters most to you right now. You have permission to make today about your development.

As you engage throughout the day, I encourage you to use **John Maxwell's ACT method** as a simple note taking framework for capturing what action steps you would like to take beyond conference day:

- ***Apply:*** *What do I need to apply to my life?*
- ***Change:*** *What do I need to change, pivot or do differently?*
- ***Teach:*** *What do I need to teach or pass on to others?*

Today, you are surrounded by a diverse community of growth-minded leaders—emerging, mid-career, and seasoned—each bringing unique experiences and perspectives. Your table facilitator and cohort are your community, encouragement, sounding board, and accountability partners for the day. Lean into the conversations, learn from one another, and begin identifying your next best step forward. Speak up. Listen well. Learn from each other. And don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone.

Thank you to our sponsors, facilitators, speakers, and volunteers for making this experience possible—and thank you for choosing to be here. My hope is that you leave today encouraged, equipped, and ready to grow, connect, and lead with even greater purpose.

Let's make it a great day.

Dawn Tyler Lee

Dawn Tyler Lee
Founder & CEO, Forrest Street Consulting

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About **Dawn Tyler Lee**



Dawn Tyler Lee is a transformational leader, accomplished strategist, and relationship builder with a proven track record in public service, higher education, and the nonprofit sector. As the Founder and CEO of Forrest Street Consulting (FSC), she specializes in growing leaders and driving organizational success through tailored coaching, training, and strategic solutions.

Dawn is a certified John Maxwell coach, trainer, and speaker who thrives on supporting individuals and organizations in reaching their full potential. FSC provides leadership development services, interim executive leadership, special project management, and integration support for African American professionals and their families new to the Central Ohio community.

Immediately after founding FSC, Dawn made history as the first African American woman appointed as Acting Franklin County Commissioner, overseeing 14 county agencies and managing a nearly $2 billion budget. Her leadership excellence continued as Interim Executive Director for both Dress for Success Columbus in 2021, supporting women's economic independence, and the Charitable Healthcare Network in 2022, championing resources and advocacy for free clinics statewide. Currently, she is serving as the Interim Executive Director of The Reeb Center, a hub of hope on the southside of Columbus.

Prior to launching FSC, Dawn served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Columbus Mayor Andrew J. Ginther. In this role, she was the highest-ranking African American appointed official, leading the city's Equity Agenda, community engagement, diversity initiatives, education, and health strategies. Notably, she directed the city's first-ever national police chief search and served as Interim Director of CelebrateOne, a city initiative to reduce infant mortality.

Dawn's career is marked by transformative contributions, including her roles as Senior Vice President for Community Impact at United Way of Central Ohio, Founding Executive Director of Partners Achieving Community Transformation (PACT), and Assistant Vice President for Government Relations and Outreach and Engagement at The Ohio State University. Her early career includes impactful work with Columbus City Schools, Columbus City Council, and the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio.

In 2024, Dawn was named a Woman of Influence in the entrepreneur category by Business First and was nominated for a Kingdom Image Award for Kingdom Business of the Year. Her numerous accolades include being featured in Mahogany Magazine, Columbus Monthly Magazine, and Who's Who in Black Columbus, as well as being honored as a YWCA Woman of Achievement. Dawn is a graduate of the Harvard Business School Young Americans Leadership Program and the African American Leadership Academy, where she also serves on the Advisory Board. Her board service extends to the City of Columbus Civil Service Commission and the OneOhio Recovery Foundation, an organization charged with allocating over $55 million, across Ohio, to help combat substance misuse by supporting prevention, treatment and recovery efforts.

Dawn holds a master's degree in urban affairs and public policy with a specialization in housing and community development from the University of Delaware and is a proud graduate of Hampton University. She is an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

Dawn resides on the eastside of Columbus, Ohio, with her entrepreneur husband, Robert E. Lee III, and their two beloved, yet sometimes ornery, rescue dogs, Chiqui and Charli.

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Agenda

9:00 - 10:15 AM

Opening Session | Influence *Page 11*

Dawn Tyler Lee

10:15 - 10:35 AM

Break

10:35 AM - 12:00 PM

Session 2 | Resilience *Page 12*

Part I | The Rules of Resilience (pre-recorded)
Valorie Burton

Part II | Panel Discussion
Moderator: Jason Tharpe
Panelists:
The Honorable Lourdes Barrosa de Padilla
Phill Branch
Judge Karen Held Phipps
Rayshawn Wilson, PhD

12:00 - 1:15 PM

Lunch and Special Presentations

1:15 - 1:30 PM

Break and Transition to Workshops

1:30 - 2:30 PM

Workshops *Pages 13-18*

1. Fans First (pre-recorded) | Jesse Cole
   Gemini A
2. Leading with Influence | Gina Watts and Kevin Gilmore
   Gemini B
3. Breaking Barriers (pre-recorded) | Craig Goeschel & Kenston Henderson
   Gemini C
4. Leading with Confidence in the Age of AI | Dr. Geneva Williams
   Polaris AD
5. H.O.P.E. is a Strategy | Jason Tharp
   Polaris BE
6. 6 C's of Winning Teams (pre-recorded) | John Maxwell
   Polaris CF

2:30 - 2:45 PM

Break and Transition Back to Main Ballroom

2:45 - 3:30 PM

Session 3 | Authenticity Unscripted *Page 20*

Fireside Chat with Charles D. Hillman

3:30 - 4:00 PM

Final Table Discussion & Closing Presentation

Spoken Word with Cynthia Amoah

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Notes

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Session 1

Influence

9:00 - 10:15 AM
Ballroom

Speaker:

Dawn Tyler Lee | Founder & CEO, Forrest Street Consulting

Based on John Maxwell's books, *Becoming a Person of Influence* and *The Leader Within You 2.0*, Dawn will share the methods of influence, the levels of influence, the insights about influence and explore ways to increase your influence with others.



Session 2

Resilience

10:35 AM - 12:00 PM
Ballroom

Part I | The 10 Rules of Resilience (pre-recorded)

Speaker:

Valorie Burton | Certified Personal & Executive Coach, Bestselling Author

In seasons of constant change, pressure, and uncertainty, resilience isn't just a personality trait—it's a learnable system. In this session, Valorie Burton, equips participants with practical tools to strengthen resilience and move forward with clarity, confidence, and hope.

Drawing from research-based principles and insights from her book Rules of Resilience, Burton addresses the real challenges leaders and individuals face today: burnout, anxiety, catastrophizing, thin support networks, and dreams deferred by overwhelm. Rather than simply helping people "get through" hard seasons, this session focuses on how to grow through them.

Following Burtons talk, a local panel of resilience experts will share how they've been resilient, both personally and professionally with the goal of adding more tools to your own resilience toolkit.

Part II | Panel Discussion

Moderator:

Jason Tharpe

Panelists:

The Honorable Lourdes Barroso de Padilla

Phill Branch

Judge Karen Held Phipps

Rayshawn Wilson, PhD

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Workshop 1

Fans First:

How to Turn Customers (clients, patients, or whoever you serve) Into Raving Fans

(pre-recorded)

1:30 - 2:30 PM
Gemini A

Facilitator:
Abiona Harper | Programming & Membership Specialist , Columbus Chamber

This high-energy, session is packed with real-world examples, bold ideas, and contagious enthusiasm from Jesse Cole, founder of Fans First Entertainment and owner of the world-famous Savannah Bananas, reveals how putting Fans (clients, customers) First can transform any organization into an unforgettable brand.

Known for creating Banana Ball and redefining the live sports experience, Cole challenges conventional thinking around customer experience, and tackles the biggest barriers holding organizations back today—stagnant customer experiences, nickel-and-diming practices, fear of failure, and the challenge of scaling intimacy as you grow.

At the heart of the session is The 5 Es of Fans First. Learn the principles that provide a practical roadmap for designing remarkable experiences that create emotional connection and lasting loyalty with those you serve.

Ideal for: organizations and teams that want to stand out, service teams obsessed with experience, and leaders ready to create brand moments people never forget.

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Workshop 2

Leading with Influence

**high school student workshop*

1:30 - 2:30 PM
Gemini B

Speaker:
Gina Watts | VP of U.S. Student Transformation for Growing Leadership, Maxwell Leadership Foundation
Kevin Gilmore | Student Certification Faculty, Maxwell Leadership Certified Team

Leadership isn't about titles—it's about influence. In this high-energy, interactive session, students will discover how their everyday choices shape culture, relationships, and impact. Through engaging activities and discussion, students will explore leadership through the lens of candles and brushfires, learning how influence can bring light and growth—or spread in ways they never intended. Each student will leave with practical tools, a corresponding iLead lesson, and clear next steps to lead with confidence right where they are.

Students will leave with:

- Language to describe what kind of leader they want to be
- A framework for using their influence responsibly in school, teams, and relationships
- A concrete next step for practicing leadership within their own context
- A resource they can revisit and share with peers or advisors
- Swag - sunglasses, copy of Habitudes book - For Personal Influence: The art of connecting with others by Dr. Tim Elmore (and possibly an MLF drawstring bag)

Students will walk away energized, confident, and equipped—with tools they can apply immediately.

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Workshop 3

Breaking Barriers:
Think Different Before You Do Different
(pre-recorded)

1:30 - 2:30 PM
Gemini C

Speaker:
Pastor Craig Goeschel

Facilitator:
Kenston Henderson Sr. | Founder & CEO, Live with Lyfe, LLC

Many organizations don't fail because of a lack of effort—they stall because of limiting mindsets, outdated systems, and leadership approaches that no longer scale. In this practical and challenging session, Craig Groeschel, founding and senior pastor of Life.Church helps leaders identify and break through the invisible barriers holding themselves and their organizations back.

Groeschel unapologetically draws from as a faith leader to address the real causes of growth ceilings: repeating yesterday's playbook, delegating tasks instead of authority, weak systems, and underdeveloped self-belief.

With clear frameworks, candid insight, and memorable leadership truths, this session equips leaders to think differently so they can lead differently.

Ideal for: multi-site and multi-unit leaders, senior teams, and organizations that have hit a plateau and are ready to break through to their next level of impact.

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Workshop 4

Leading with Confidence in the Age of AI

1:30 - 2:30 PM
Polaris AD

Speaker:
Dr. Geneva Williams | Founder & President, Dr. Geneva Speaks

Most leaders feel overwhelmed by the speed of AI and secretly worry they are falling behind. In this session, Dr. Geneva provides a jargon-free, practical roadmap for using AI as a leadership tool, not a tech toy. Join us to get simple strategies you can use immediately so you can stop worrying about the technology and start leading with more clarity and confidence than ever before.

Ideal for: people who want to maximize the use of AI in their leadership journey.

Workshop 5

H.O.P.E. is a Strategy

1:30 - 2:30 PM
Polaris BE

Speaker:
Jason Tharp | Speaker & Author

The world around us only reflects what we feel within. In this session, Jason Tharp guides his audience through stories and self-reflection, using H.O.P.E. as the strategy to help them uncover their authentic selves and tap into their true strengths.

When individuals align with their inner potential, personal growth ripples outward—fueling stronger teams, deeper connections, and meaningful transformation. Because when you lead yourself, the impossible begins to fall away.

Ideal for: people seeking to feel more H.O.P.E. (spoiler alert: hyperawareness, open heartedness, persistence, and empowerment).

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Resilience (Or, How I Thought I Had It All Figured Out)

Jason Tharp

Resilience, the teacher once said,
Is bouncing right back when you fall out of bed.
It is patching your knees when you trip on a pebble,
It is dusting off crumbs when you have made a big mess,
It is smiling politely and cleaning your desk.
So I set out to master this thing called resilience,
I wrote it in ink on my shoes and my sleeve.
I told all my friends, “It is easy, you will see
a Just pop right back up, just be strong like me!”
At first, it was simple, each stumble, each slip,
I would spring to my feet with a hop and a skip.
I would say, “No big deal!” and I would laugh at the test,
Certain that bouncing was always the best.
But then came a day when the ground felt much harder,
The bounce did not come, though I tried twice as long.
My shoes got all muddy, my sleeve had a tear,
And suddenly, “easy” was nowhere in there.
I sat in the dirt, just a little bit sore,
Unsure if I wanted to spring up once more.
I wondered if maybe resilience means
Letting yourself sit and just feel what it means.
Maybe it is not always jumping up quick,
Or hiding the bruises, or learning a trick.
Maybe resilience is softer than that,
A whisper, a pause, a hand on your back.
So here is what I learned, once I had run out of skips:
Resilience is real, but it is not always flips.
Sometimes it is resting, sometimes it is tears,
Sometimes it is waiting and facing your fears.
And when you cannot bounce, you are still brave, still true,
Resilience is simply just being you.

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Workshop 6

6 C's of Winning Teams

(pre-recorded)

1:30 - 2:30 PM
Polaris CF

Speaker:
John Maxwell | Best-Selling Author, Coach & Leader

Moderator:
Elizabeth Martinez | President & CEO, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio

What separates average teams from winning ones isn't talent—it's leadership, clarity, and execution. In this session, drawing on more than 50 years of experience equipping leaders around the world, John C. Maxwell addresses the most common barriers to team success and shares a practical framework for building teams that perform with purpose and consistency.

Participants will be introduced to The Six C's of Winning Teams—Communicate, Create, Collaborate, Concentrate, Consecrate, and Celebrate—a proven model for strengthening team culture and performance.

Ideal for: Managers, team leaders, coaches, and cross-functional teams ready to move from intention to execution and build teams that truly win.



Session 3

Authenticity Unscripted

2:45 - 3:30 PM
Ballroom

Speaker:

Charles D. Hillman | President & CEO, Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority

In this candid conversation, Charles Hillman, President and CEO of the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority, will explore what it truly takes to grow, connect, and lead as your authentic self. While his journey includes significant success, it has also been shaped by setbacks, risk-taking, and courageous truth-telling.

From rebounding when life throws a curveball, to making bold and sometimes unconventional career moves, to building a workplace culture that values employees and customers as whole humans, Charles offers a refreshingly unapologetic perspective on leadership, one that is rooted in the belief that excellence and dignity go hand in hand, even when serving communities most often overlooked.

This conversation will remind you that the right environment can unlock your greatest potential—and that leading as yourself is not a liability, but your greatest strength.



Thank You

to all of our incredible speakers!

Scan the QR code on your mobile device to read the speaker biographies.

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Vendors

Forrest Street Consulting is proud to support these small women and minority-owned businesses and hope you will too!

Allure Events Collective
Ashley Grayson
info@allureeventscollective.com

Better Content with Bae
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Table Facilitators

Shelly Beiting
Dr. Love Benton
Alyncia Bowen
Kim M. Campbell
Sidney Childs
Craig Conley
Jason Daniels
John Dawson
Juliet C. Dorris-Williams
Shayne Downton
Deonna Duerson
Lauren Edwards
Ryan Edwards
Chelsea Elliott
Erik Farley
Autumn Francesco
W. Shawna Gibbs-Ayers
Kevin Gilmore
Tamara Hartley
Ralonda Hampton
Rejeana Haynes
Kenston Henderson
Karen Hewitt
Chris Hill
Vincent Hill
Grace Hunter
Darrell Hunter
Isi Ikharebha Green
Jason Jenkins
Jami Jones Ervin
Zaymetrius Jones
Priyam Khan
Ray Mathew-Santhosham
Melanie Murphy
Jen Patterson
Suzanne Roberts
Tracy Ross
Erica Shaw
Stephanie Starks
Qiana Stewart
Christopher Thompson
Cynthia Tyson
Erin Upchurch
Gina Watts
Nichelle White
Mindy Wright

Volunteers

Nikki Brandon
De'Chelle Buckhalter
Kirstin Buckner
Tyrell Byrd
Beth Coccia
Kim Dillard
Currecia Gamble
Leta Gibbs
Jamille Jones
Dawn Lee-Britt
Nicole Persaud
Chanie Scott
Gina Shelton
Bailey Smith
Kennedy Taylor
Shannon Taylor
Shelbi Toone
Judy Wright

Thank You!

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About
Forrest Street Consulting

Anna Williams raised her four children – Carol, Donald, Joyce and Pat - on Forrest Street in Jersey City, New Jersey in the 1940's and 50's. Anna's father, affectionately called "grandfather" by the children, lived with them too.

Forrest Street was a mixed income neighborhood with apartments and single family homes. White collar and blue collar families lived side-by-side. Everyone knew and supported one another and genuinely cared about your wellbeing. There were five apartment buildings and the Williams family lived in the middle building. Donald roomed with grandfather. Carol and Joyce shared a room and the youngest, Pat, roomed with Anna. The apartment was modest, but full of love.



Anna Louise Williams
December 12, 1917 to June 14, 2005

The "village" included Dorothy Dixon who often looked after the kids while Anna was at work, Dr. Furlong and Mr. Ford worked for Borden's. Aunt Laura who was a domestic and a cook and a bus driver. For special outings, the city kids went to the farm to see the animals. **On Forrest Street, neighbors celebrated your accomplishments just as quickly as they disciplined you.**

It was a thriving community and everything you needed was close by including the butcher where you could make payments on your meat at the window, the grocery store, the cleaners and the barber. Worrless flower shop was black owned as were the funeral homes owned by Mr. White and Mr. Murray, and Dr. Waters and his brother both owned pharmacies. **On Forrest Street, anything was possible.**

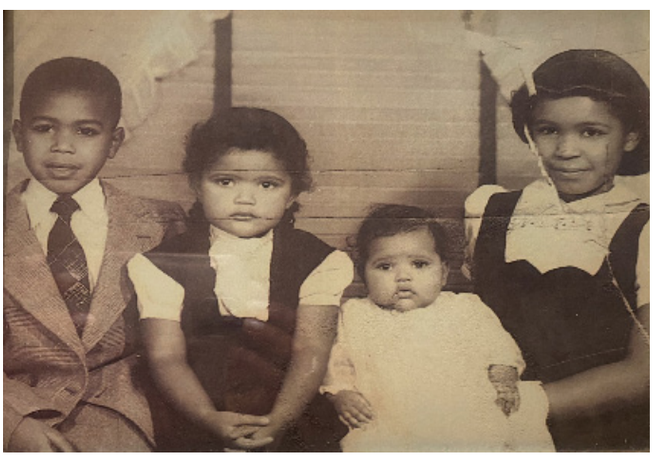
Mr. Black was a blind man who owned the candy store on the corner and despite his visual impairment, no one took advantage of him. **On Forrest Street, there was trust and support.**

The kids played outside and did normal kid stuff – jumped rope, played ball and created sidewalk masterpieces in chalk. They never got bored. They played in West Side Park and on special occasions, took the bus after Sunday dinner to go to Burge Point, the local amusement park.

They went to the Surprise Club in the afternoon to watch Westerns. It was like an informal after school program that provided a safe place for kids and no one seemed to mind that it was actually a bar later in the evenings.

Frankie Dinks' mom had a beauty salon in the basement of her home, the same basement that was also where Frankie had his infamous Friday night parties. Big Junior was Frankie's uncle who was a longshoreman and Mr. Dinks was known for his barbeque. **On Forrest Street, people worked hard and had fun.**

Anna's kids went to day camp and sleepaway camp and took piano lessons and learned to swim -- activities that were not typical for black children in the 50's.



Anna's children; Donald, Joyce, Pat, & Carol in 1949

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But that was the type of mother Anna was. She had a vision for what she wanted for her children and she set the bar high. She worked to ensure that they were exposed to different types of people and experiences. Her children didn't go to neighborhood school, she sent them to the school with the white children where she believed they would receive a higher quality education. She wanted them to have greater opportunities than she did. She wanted them to be prepared for the world. **On Forrest Street, mediocrity was not an option.**



Pat, Donald, Joyce, & Carol in 2022

But she didn't only want this for her family, she wanted the same for the people in her community. Anna worked at the welfare office. When her clients came to pick up their checks, she told the men to get the picks out of their heads, take pride in their appearance, encouraged them to be responsible, get a job and take care of their families. She was barely 5 feet but people knew not to mess with her. Anna consistently demonstrated tough love because she wanted everyone around her to reach their full potential.

Ms. Parker introduced Donald to his first fish tank and as the only boy in the family, the men on the street were invested in helping him grow from a boy to a man. Mr. Harold Jefferson taught him how to tie and Bubbie Carter taught him how to ride a bike and drive a car. Dr. McQueen was a dentist who one day asked Anna what Donald was going to do when he finished high school. Donald wanted to go to air force but Dr. McQueen told him he was going to attend his alma mater, Lincoln University. And he did. **On Forrest Street, you were introduced to new possibilities.**

Carol, Anna's first born, went to Jersey City College and became a teacher. At age 22, she came home discouraged after one of her early days of teaching because her students weren't behaving the way she wanted. Mrs. Barnes, Carol's first grade teacher, still lived across the street. Anna sent Carol to Mrs. Barnes who would help Carol plan her lessons and gave her tips on how to manage her classroom. **On Forrest Street, you got connected to the resources you needed to be successful.**

Joyce and Pat also went to Jersey City College and became teachers. Anna, a single mom who worked at the welfare office, raised four college graduates.

My name is Dawn. I am Anna's granddaughter and the Founder and CEO of Forrest Street Consulting. "To whom much is given, much is required." -Luke 12:48.

At Forrest Street Consulting, we value what my grandmother valued - **connection, community and helping people reach their full potential.**



Anna's grandchildren, also known as "her peaches"

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CONNECT WITH LIVE2LEAD LEADERS WORLDWIDE

By attending this event, you're joining thousands of people around the world who are becoming the best versions of themselves. You are a part of a community that is learning relevant leadership life lessons and intentionally living them out. We want to hear and share your stories of growth and transformation!

Tag @MaxwellLeadership and @ForrestStreetConsulting and use the hashtags #Live2Lead2026, #Live2LeadColumbus and #ForrestStreetConsulting so we can connect with you and share your story.

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Thanks for joining us!

Let's connect!

Dawn Tyler Lee, Founder & CEO

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