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I Lead by Choosing Love

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'I Lead by Choosing Love'

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Monday March 14, 2022

By Eric F. Spina

(In the spring issue of the University of Dayton Magazine, President Eric F. Spina writes about his admiration for the work of young alumni, including the 10 Under 10 honorees. You can find the piece below or [here](#).)

We have long said that UD students and young alumni have the power to change the world — and it is extraordinarily gratifying to know that our alumni are making their mark in a remarkably short time.

I was pleased to review the inaugural class of the 10 Under 10 program ([see story, Page 53](#)), a new initiative started by the day10 young alumni executive committee to recognize their peers, all of whom graduated within the past decade, for demonstrating exemplary servant-leadership.

These Flyers fill my heart with hope, and this is just their first chapter. Can you imagine what the future holds? Consider:

- Two are CEOs. Only two years out of college, Destiny Watson '20 is CEO of You Matter 2, a nonprofit she founded that provides opportunities for youth to serve and make a difference in their communities. Dani Ruffolo '19, business growth team manager for Kao Brands, continues to serve as CEO of Handy Hats, a company she founded as a student.
- By day, Gerald Kierce '13 serves as vice president and general manager of FiscalNote, the largest technology employer in Washington, D.C. In his free time, he's the only male on the board of Proyecto 85, which is successfully working to increase the number of women elected to public office in his native Puerto Rico.
- John Buerschen '15, part of UD's EMS and ROTC programs as a student, answered the call to serve and now protects others as a pilot in the U.S. Army.
- Social worker Jill Bucaro '11 implemented a new model in the Montgomery County (Ohio) Public Defender's Office for helping economically disadvantaged people seek legal assistance when facing criminal charges.

Others are tackling the most pressing issues of our time, from food insecurity to environmental justice. Some are serving children experiencing emotional abuse and trauma.

All see their lives as a calling.

Take TJ Cartwright '14, a multimedia engagement manager who created "What's the Biz," a digital platform for showcasing Black business owners. Her philosophy is simple, yet profound. "I lead by choosing love," she says.

It's love for their alma mater that has inspired a growing number of young alumni to stay connected in meaningful ways — from chairing their class reunions to hosting virtual events, such as Dinner with 5 Flyers and sessions of Go, Give, Lead: Maintaining a Lifelong Relationship with UD with current students eager to network with young, successful professionals. I'm thrilled that the day10 young alumni executive committee, now with two representatives from each class from the past decade, has doubled in size over the past year and reflects UD's growing multidimensional diversity.

Besides helping the University create services and events for young alumni learning to navigate life after graduation, day10 leaders inspire their classmates to spread their love for UD on social media during One Day, One Dayton, our annual day of giving. Last spring, the board tallied a 100% participation rate, showing their support for scholarships and campus programs.

From 10 Under 10 to day10, these young alumni model servant-leadership. They're helping us build a better University as they build a better world.