

**Event:** Kern Leaders Academy Graduation  
**Photos:**  
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**To find out more:** [www.kernleadersacademy.org](http://www.kernleadersacademy.org)

## **2017 Kern Leaders Academy Commencement, Eight Aspiring Leaders Graduate from Intensive Program**

Kern Leaders Academy is proud to announce the graduation of its 2017 class. The eight graduates, who come from a variety of business and service backgrounds, spent 72 intensive training hours over the course of nine weeks to learn from seasoned Kern County business and industry leaders. KLA is designed to assist in the development of visionary community leaders who recognize that a healthy business climate leads to a strong economy, which is necessary for a vibrant community. The program is conducted by the Kern County Taxpayers Education Fund.

“This class benefited greatly from the wisdom of the dynamic faculty made up of senior leaders from major companies and industries in Kern County. The program provides real-life experiences and years of combined knowledge to the academy participants. In turn, Kern County’s future business and civic progress will be greatly enhanced by these up-and-coming visionary leaders. Kern Leaders Academy is proud of this class’s efforts and achievements and looks forward to many successful years under their leadership,” commented Mike Turnipseed, Academy Director and Executive director of Kern County Taxpayers Association.

The KLA Class of 2017 honored its graduates at a dinner at Bakersfield Country Club on Wednesday, November 15, 2017.

### Graduates are:

- May Abdalla, Director of Organizational Performance at Adventist Health Bakersfield
- Nicole Benenati, In-Home Supportive Services
- Tanner Dyrness, Field Representative for Office of Assemblyman Fong
- Jonathan Harshman, Issues and Reputation Advisor at Chevron North America
- Tiara King, Program Manager at The Counseling and Psychotherapy Center
- Doug McIssac, Retired; City of Bakersfield
- Arleanna Waller, Founder, CEO of ShePOWER Global
- Dixie Walters, Detention Sergeant at the Kern County Sheriff’s Office

The KLA program requires commitment and study on behalf of both the participants and faculty. Kern Leaders Academy has exceeded expectations as an innovative educational program. Graduates studied topics in ethics, critical thinking, the economy, education, healthcare, public relations, social issues, communication, leadership, the electoral process and became well versed on important topics in federal, state, regional and local governance.

Sponsors of the 2017 Kern Leaders Academy included Wonderful Orchards, San Joaquin Community Hospital, Verizon Wireless, WZI, Inc., Heise Media Group, and Pacific Gas and Electric Company.

**If you are interested in applying for the 2017 Kern Leaders Academy or wish to become a sponsor, please contact: Michael Turnipseed: 661-322-2973 / email: [Kerntax@kerntaxpayers.org](mailto:Kerntax@kerntaxpayers.org)**