



## KORI SMITH

University of Tennessee  
B.S. Biochemistry and Cellular and Molecular Biology

**Hometown:** Greeneville, Tennessee

**Tradition:** Christian / Non-denominational

**Church:** Fellowship Church, Knoxville, TN

**Ministry Aspirations:** Medical Missions, Kids/Youth, College, Outreach

### Why Ministry?

"I know the Lord is calling me into ministry.... That has been a clear direction on my life since I was thirteen.... I am hoping to attend physician assistant school and then work in a hospital for a few years. I potentially see this being in the third world.... I know that ministry/non-profit is the direction that I am called and going, but I am also trying to be mindful of how to prepare for this well, which includes an opportunity such as this program."

### Why Thrive Residency?

"...[ministry] is the area the Lord is leading me. He has equipped me and set me up in ways that I am not even sure I fully see yet. I want to be a good steward of all that He has given me and grow... so as to become a better servant and leader as well as hopefully directing His call for me on my life. I can see how this program would stretch and grow me in all the ways I am needing.... I am desiring the skills and direction that I hope to gain out of this program."

### Favorite Scripture

Psalm 23

### Personality

ENFJ, Type 3

### Travel Pick

Haiti

### Karaoke Song

"Fancy" by Reba

### Favorite Sport

Soccer

### What others say about Kori...

"servant, funny, creative, artistic, passionate, heart"  
"resilient, caring, determined, brilliant, selfless, God-focused"  
"dedicated, encouraging, uplifting, inquisitive, independent"

"Kori is a leader through and through... [a] bubbly attitude and outlook that brings energy to everyone around her. She is sharp intellectually.... always willing to take on any job as needed. She wants to follow God's will for her life."

"Kori has served sacrificially overseas in many capacities.... Kori is a very caring, personable young lady. She is actively pursuing her relationship with Christ in community, the word of God, and service."

"Her depth of Christian faith is mature beyond her year. Her integrity and character are above reproach.... [Kori] is brilliant and focused.... a heart for serving others - particularly those in need or from underserved backgrounds."



## WILL HODGE

Carson-Newman University  
B.A. Religion, B.A. Communication

**Hometown:** Lenoir City, Tennessee

**Tradition:** Baptist (CBF) / Non-denominational

**Church:** Arrowhead Church, Morristown, TN

**Ministry Aspirations:** Youth, Discipleship, Small Groups, Nonprofit

### Why Ministry?

"[I've] talked with those close to me... about what I desire in my life post-graduation.... I used to answer confidently, 'yes' to this question [of ministry]. However, after a couple of years spent working in the church, I began to doubt my calling.... [still] I can't quite picture myself doing anything besides ministry.... I love the idea of being mentored and then passing what I learn and discover down to a new generation of believers."

### Why Thrive Residency?

"I love to study all things, especially theology and leadership.... I want to continue my studies... as well as explore a different kind of ministry, such as Young Life, for a career. Thrive allows me the space to potentially do both of these things... [and] build a close-knit community, gain one-on-one mentorship, and give back to the city of Knoxville, a city in which I feel very connected to."

### Favorite Scripture

Philippians 2

### Personality

ENFJ, Type 3/4

### Musical Talent

Singing, Guitar

### Travel Pick

Zion, Yosemite

### Favorite Sport

Basketball

### What others say about Will...

"passionate, servant, positive, energetic, caring, loving"  
"mature, responsible, thoughtful, fun, vulnerable, friendly, kind"  
"anointed leader, gifted communicator, tender-hearted, loves the Lord"

"[Will] thinks deeply about his faith in Jesus, his own growth and maturity, and his actions/words. He seeks to apply in his own life what he sees modeled out in Scripture.... He is a great leader as well as a great teammate... and a social/relational magnet!"

"Will has a faith and passion for the Lord way beyond his years. He is a winsome young man of integrity and giftedness.... Will is a natural leader.... He is gracious and compassionate.... He loves people and God has embedded in his being a shepherd's heart."

"Will loves Jesus and loves people.... [He's] one of the greatest relational leaders I have ever been around... leads with love, conviction, determination.... God clearly has his hand on Will. I am excited to see where He leads him."



## MEAGAN NEUBAUER

East Texas Baptist University  
Bachelor of Music, Worship Ministry

**Hometown:** Longview, Texas

**Tradition:** Baptist

**Church:** Oakland Heights Baptist Church, Longview, TX

**Ministry Aspirations:** Music & Worship, Kids Ministry

### Why Ministry?

"In Dec. of 2015 I felt God's call to pursue vocational worship ministry. After weeks of prayer and counsel, I surrendered my life to ministry.... I have found worship and leading others musically has become a huge passion.... Knowing that God can use me, as broken as I am, in my imperfection to lead others is truly humbling.... I have had continual confirmation from the Lord that I am walking in obedience to His will by pursuing vocational ministry."

### Why Thrive Residency?

"The opportunity to grow theologically is something I seriously desire. This Residency would be an opportunity to experience seminary level courses and discern if that would be a step I should take in the future.... I had a lot of training in worship leadership, but still feel the need for coaching from experienced worship leaders.... Mentorship and community is a huge draw.... The community will build lifelong friendships as we work through our callings together."

### Favorite Scripture

Psalm 27:13-14

### Personality

INFJ, Type 4/5

### Musical Talent

Voice, Guitar, Piano

### Hobbies

Painting, Calligraphy

### Favorite Beverage

Kombucha

### What others say about Meagan...

"Godly, musical, creative, positive, faithful, supportive"  
"great singer, big heart, intelligent, cheerful"  
"sincere, dependable, integrity, thoughtful, amicable"

"...Meagan is a very bright light... a Godly woman, well on her way to being a Proverbs 31 woman!... Meagan shows a rare social and emotional maturity for her age. She is confident and always open to sharing her faith... a great listener... [and] a good friend."

"[Meagan's] passion for Christ is visibly displayed, and her lifestyle affirms this commitment... Meagan is of excellent character... mature and wise... well liked and respected.... Meagan's gifts and talents as well as passions are an excellent match for ministry."

"Meagan is a great singer... a talented worship leader... but an even better person with a big heart.... [She's] willing to learn anything... always willing to do what is right and to go the extra mile to help.... She is loved by our people and staff."



## IKE HILL

University of Mississippi  
Bachelor of Accountancy

**Hometown:** New Orleans, Louisiana

**Tradition:** Presbyterian Church of America

**Church:** Church of the Resurrection, New Orleans, LA

**Ministry Aspirations:** College Ministry, At-Risk Ministry, Discipleship

### Why Ministry?

"When I was younger people would call me 'preacher man'.... Fast forward to Ole Miss... being involved with RUF was my favorite part of college.... I went to every conference, ministry team meetings, Bible studies, and even co-lead a fellowship group.... Through those experiences I realized that I was always so happy when I got to know people and share the gospel with them.... I love the Lord, I love people... I love sharing my story... I love sharing Jesus...."

### Why Thrive Residency?

"The Residency would allow me to take ten months to purposefully and intently explore [my calling] with other people.... to explore the call up close and personal... praying, talking to people, studying, and exploring... so many different types of ministry.... I know the Lord will show me many different things and grow me in so many ways so that my next steps towards ministry are clear."

### ***Favorite Scripture***

2 Corinthians 12

### ***Personality***

Extrovert

### ***Favorite Food***

New Orleans cuisine

### ***Personal Hero***

Mom

### ***Next on Bucket List***

Visiting England

### ***What others say about Ike...***

"passionate, generous, thoughtful, resilient, growing disciple, evangelist"

"bold, fun, sincere, honest, loyal, patient, understanding, kind, friendly"

"leader, pure, outgoing, wise, teachable, faithful, caring, one-of-a-kind"

"Ike has an uncanny ability to dwell in different worlds... an amazing capacity for patience and love.... He brings his faith to bear in his home community.... He cares deeply for justice, thinking about it theologically & speaking about it winsomely, even when it may be unpopular to do so."

"[Ike] loves the Lord... reveres God's word.... Ike is very smart... a reader and a deep thinker...."

Ike's unique experiences and personality are a huge gift to the church.... He is a bridge between two of the groups with the most tension in our country."

"Ike has had to overcome poverty, fractured family... neighborhood crime... yet in spite of this... [he's] been able to adapt & adjust.... Ike has a burden for the lost... be it a kid from the hood or a fraternity brother. He wants to be discipled & disciple others... to glorify God... I believe Ike is called to ministry."



# KENNEDY HARLESS

Cedarville University  
B.A. Christian Education and Youth Ministry

**Hometown:** Plymouth, Indiana

**Tradition:** Southern Baptist

**Church:** Plymouth Baptist Church, Plymouth, IN

**Ministry Aspirations:** Missions, Urban, At-Risk, Nonprofit, Apologetics

## Why Ministry?

"I believe that God brought me to Cedarville to save me, but to also push me into valuing His people and serve them.... I see Jesus reach out to the marginalized and to the outcasts. I see Him reach out to me with the same hand.... I like being involved with ministries that are raw; ones that deal with real people and tough situations.... missions, urban, at-risk oriented ministries.... I [also] really want to be involved with apologetics in the future...."

## Why Thrive Residency?

"I want to enroll in Thrive to develop more as a leader, to network, and dive into something urban ministry/NPO related.... This program would teach me a lot and help develop me into a better student, teacher, leader, and servant. Gaining more experience from others who are wiser and/or different from you is always a good idea.... I'm super excited to develop as a ministry leader and servant... serving others, learning and showing others Christ."

### ***Favorite Scripture***

Psalm 94:17

### ***Personality***

INFJ, Type 6

### ***Musical Talent***

Voice, Piano, Ukulele

### ***Favorite Games***

Catan, Spoons

### ***Coffee Order***

Nitro or Cuban Cortado

### ***What others say about Kennedy...***

"energetic, passionate, relational, biblical, driven, thinker"  
"caring, honorable, a leader, dynamic, mature, enthusiastic"  
"fun, outgoing, evangelist, committed, compassionate"

"Kennedy is driven and smart. She works hard to clearly understand and articulate God's Word.... She is engaging and likable.... She likes to dive into new things.... She is committed to her own long-term spiritual health and growth.... She has a heart for discipling others."

"[Kennedy] loves theology.... She is smart!... I love her heart for the Lord and her heart for unbelievers.... She is great with people [and] a hard worker.... She is an influencer and will do great things in the Kingdom..."

"Kennedy is a very caring person... Her servant's heart is evident in all that she does.... I've seen Kennedy grow in her Christian faith [and] passion for ministry.... [she] has a strong desire to serve in the church [and] to help other women learn and mature in their faith...."



# JEREMIAH SMITH

Arlington Baptist University  
Bachelor of Music and Worship

**Hometown:** Colleyville, Texas

**Tradition:** Baptist / Non-denominational

**Church:** The Paradox Church, Fort Worth, TX

**Ministry Aspirations:** Music & Worship Ministry, Kids & Youth

## Why Ministry?

"I grew up in a very legalistic Independent Fundamental Baptist Church. This led me to believe that I had be perfect in the eyes of God to be good enough. God has since then shattered that lie.... When I was fifteen I felt God's calling on my life to serve in ministry. I have been affirmed in this many times since and have a strong passion for serving others.... I would prefer to work in a music role. I also love to work with kids and youth...."

## Why Thrive Residency?

"I am in a very weird place in life. I am about to graduate college but still don't feel equipped to run a ministry alone.... God has been able to show me His grace in this by telling me He wants me for who I am not what I do.... At my current church I practice my spiritual gifts of exhortation, administration, and helps.... This residency would help bridge that gap to whatever is next.... I would love prayer for direction in this new season I'm entering in."

### ***Favorite Scripture***

The Psalms

### ***Enneagram***

Type 2/1

### ***Musical Talent***

Voice, Piano

### ***Hobbies***

Hiking, Netflix

### ***Travel Pick***

Chicago or Peru

### ***What others say about Jeremiah...***

"awesome man of God, unquestionable Godly character"  
"mature, positive, composed, problem solver, leader, influencer"  
"dedicated, consistent, passionate, hardworking, servant-hearted, caring"

"Jeremiah is an incredible leader, friend, and spiritual example... always helpful to others on our team.... He is a servant like no one else.... He is also great at solving problems.... I wholeheartedly recommend him for this residency."

"Jeremiah's faith & character show strongly in everything he does.... [He's] willing to perform any task assigned to him.... He is very mature & relationally competent... passionate and committed to Christian ministry. He loves the Lord, he loves people...."

"[Jeremiah's] love of & dedication to God... has not wavered!... God has placed a calling on his heart... God given talents and character above reproach... leadership skills and tremendous initiative... [he] has an eye for talent, can recruit, [and] develop talent in others."



## ABBY ECHEVARRIA

Southeastern University  
B.S. Ministerial Leadership

**Hometown:** Palm Beach Gardens, Florida  
**Tradition:** Christian / Non-denominational  
**Church:** Christ Fellowship Church, Palm Beach Gardens, FL  
**Ministry Aspirations:** Young Adults, Kids/Youth Ministry

### Why Ministry?

"I have felt the call to ministry in a vocational sense for a while. I just am not sure in what area.... I love working with young adults, youth, and kids! However, I am still learning so much about myself and don't really care where I end up, because I know it will be an amazing learning experience no matter what!... I think this would help give me a more clear vision for where God is calling me."

### Why Thrive Residency?

"I recently just got back from a trip to Tennessee where I spent the week with some friends praying about my next step after my graduation.... [God] gave me was the instruction to remain faithful to Him in whatever I do.... when I got back from my trip my mom actually sent me a link to this residency and I felt compelled to apply. I think [Thrive Residency] will help me grow in my faith and potentially help me realize my specific area of passion in ministry."

### Favorite Scripture

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

### Personality

ENFP, Type 7

### Favorite Snack

Chips & Salsa

### Hobbies

Soccer, Hiking, Painting

### Favorite Artist

The Band CAMINO

### What others say about Abby...

"intelligent, faithful, perceptive, influencer, follower"

"joyful, faithful, mission-minded, honest, helpful, growth-minded"

"organized, fun, caring, loving, leader, driven, hard-working"

"Abby is a natural born leader.... She has a passion for Jesus and for people.... Abby is solid in her faith and character.... She is motivated and consistent.... She has a servant's heart and wants to be faithful to lead and follow the call."

"Abby loves Jesus with all of her heart.... [she] has all of the qualities that you can't teach; passion, personality, and a clear sense of purpose and calling.... She is one of the most focused young adults... strong and energetic!"

"Abby is a woman of integrity and conviction.... She has the heart & mind of a minister.... I have seen her witness to children & adults... care faithfully behind-the-scenes... and teach in her small group.... I can't wait to see how she advances the kingdom of God."



## JACOB OWEN

University of Tennessee at Martin  
B.A. Communication, M.A. Strategic Communication

**Hometown:** McKenzie, Tennessee

**Tradition:** Baptist

**Church:** Crosswind Church, Union City, TN

**Ministry Aspirations:** Communications, Discipleship, Service, Worship

### Why Ministry?

"I felt a call to some kind of ministry in high school, but am still working on how to interpret it. I have taken a very unconventional road, but I feel that it is the one that God has intentionally led me down for a specific purpose.... Throughout my undergraduate and into my masters, I always had the mindset of 'How can this be applied in a ministry setting?'... [I] am open to God's plan and am relying on His guidance to show me the next steps in my journey."

### Why Thrive Residency?

"When I first read about the residency, I was really amazed at how many needs this opportunity would meet.... Thrive Residency would allow me to gain much needed experience in a ministry setting, and would give me dedicated time to pray about and seek God's will for the next chapter of my life. On top of that, I would also get 18 seminary credits. This would allow for a deeper understanding of Scripture and would also help my spiritual walk."

### Favorite Scripture

Matthew 6:33

### Enneagram

Type 6

### Musical Talent

Guitar, Bass

### Most Proud Of

finishing a Triathlon

### Hidden Talent

Disney trivia

### What others say about Jacob...

"respectful, generous, loyal, God-honoring, peaceful, fun, great attitude"  
"contemplative, compassionate, others-focused, leader, diligent"  
"exceptional character, natural collaborator, creative, dependable, kind"

"[Jacob's] desire to serve God drives his decisions.... He does not promote himself.... He cares for others with Christ's love through prayer and relationship.... I believe his strong devotion will lead him into some sort of pastoral or non profit ministry."

"Jacob has the spiritual depth of someone much older... his passion for Jesus, the Bible and others is evident.... [He's] a magnet for fellow students with personal/spiritual issues or questions. He is calm, reflective & a good listener... a constant, reassuring presence...."

"Jacob has a mature faith.... [He's] eager to seek the best for others... providing opportunities for other to encounter Christ, and proactive in leading in worship.... There are evidences of pastoral care, leadership, & arts callings.... I think he is an ideal candidate...."



## ASHTON OVERBAY

East Tennessee State University  
Bachelor of Business Admin (Marketing & Merchandising)

**Hometown:** Jacksboro, Tennessee

**Tradition:** Christian / Non-denominational

**Church:** New Horizon Baptist (LaFollette), Red Stone Church (Johnson City)

**Ministry Aspirations:** Student Ministry, Hispanic Outreach, Event Coord.

### Why Ministry?

"Throughout college, I have struggled to determine my vocation... I always feel like something is missing... [and] non-profit Christian ministry tends to be where I go back to. This is an area that I not only add value to, but thoroughly enjoy, more so than anything else I have done.... I feel most fulfilled when serving within the church.... I truly enjoy student ministry, Hispanic outreach and serving impoverished communities...."

### Why Thrive Residency?

"I have considered being a missionary, but have felt strongly from God to stay local for now. Thrive will be a great opportunity for me to explore these areas more in depth, in my local community. I have also wanted to further my education through a Biblical degree.... Finally, I want to live in community with other people.... It will be a great opportunity for growth and friendship."

### Favorite Scripture

Numbers 6:24-26

### Personality

INFP, Type 9

### Favorite Author

John Mark Comer

### Next on Bucket List

Kenya

### Favorite Movie

Good Will Hunting

### What others say about Ashton...

"empathetic, patient, dependable, self-motivated, selfless, intelligent"  
"creative, kind, honest, friendly, smart, introspective, caring, mature"  
"reliable, focused, driven, professional, curious, humble, teachable"

"Ashton is the type of person that brightens your day.... She is smart... her character is influential. Her spiritual maturity is very strong.... [she] wants to be used by God.... She is flexible and really seeking His purpose for her life.... I would want her on my team."

"Ashton is very smart.... She is interested in making a difference in people's lives.... Ashton is friendly to everyone.... [She's] emotionally, socially, and relationally mature.... I think Ashton will be an asset to the Thrive Residency program."

"Ashton has a call to ministry, she is just trying to follow God on where that is... non-profit or missions organization.... She is highly intelligent.... She is a learner... she desires to know God's will and follow it. She is always growing."



## MAX KIGHT

B.S. Aerospace Engineering, University of Tennessee  
M.A. Ethics and Public Leadership, Johnson University

**Hometown:** Memphis, Tennessee

**Tradition:** Christian / Southern Baptist

**Church:** City Church, Knoxville, TN

**Ministry Aspirations:** Youth, Discipleship, Teaching, Small Groups

### Why Ministry?

"The question of vocational ministry has been one I have been trying to answer since the later years of college.... [I've] pursued it through Young Life staff.... I am intrigued more and more by the exposure to theology and philosophy and less by practicing engineering.... I think I have a gift for leading and a heart for ministry.... [I] hope that God will guide me towards where I am designed."

### Why Thrive Residency?

"I want to enroll in Thrive Residency to better understand... is full-time vocational ministry something I am called to do?... Also to learn how to do mission work and leading others well. Regardless of my eventual profession I plan on staying involved in the work of bringing others the gospel.... If He does lead me to full-time ministry then what the Residency offers would be even more valuable."

#### ***Favorite Scripture***

John 15

#### ***Bucket List***

Skydiving

#### ***Favorite Music***

Zac Brown Band

#### ***Enneagram***

Type 5/6

#### ***Favorite Sport***

Tennis / Spikeball

#### ***What others say about Max...***

"consistent, humble, positive, deep, servant, team-player, disciplined"  
"loyal, thoughtful, logical, trustworthy, dedicated, leader, bold"  
"intelligent, responsible, hard-working, mature, motivated, respectful"

"Max has great leadership skills... maturity and good perspective.... Mentally he is strong.... He has strong character.... [Max] is certainly hearing a call.... I believe that this program would do wonders in helping him filter this calling."

"Max is a man of God, loves the Lord.... He has a strong, growing faith, and unquestioned character.... Max seeks others out.... He is extremely intelligent, socially mature, emotionally stable, and good at building relationships."

"Max has strong moral character... he's driven, and loves the Lord and people. He is mature in all areas... [a] leader within his community. I am proud of the way Max has gone about exploring and discerning God's call for his life."



## MEGHAN GASTON

Metropolitan State University  
B.S. Human Resource Management

**Hometown:** Chaska, Minnesota

**Tradition:** Pentecostal

**Church:** Eden Prairie Assembly of God, Eden Prairie, MN

**Ministry Aspirations:** Kids Ministry, Worship/Music, Church Admin.

### Why Ministry?

"I feel called to serve the church in any way I can. I want to be a vessel and help encourage others by serving them. I have always served in the church since a young age. I felt that God is pressing on my heart to have it become full time. I have served in the mission field, but I feel God is placing on my heart to serve in the church... in either administration, children's ministry, or worship ministry."

### Why Thrive Residency?

"I believe Thrive would be a great opportunity to grow, learn more about the call God has placed on my heart. I like that we have opportunity to serve in a church through ministry work and experience what that has to offer, while receiving theological training. I want to be open to God's direction, molding and shaping. To be in a place of preparation, in order to be able to do what God has called me to do."

### Favorite Scripture

Ruth

### Birthplace

Northern Ireland

### Musical Talent

Piano, Keyboard

### Myers-Briggs

INFJ

### Favorite Candy

Sour Patch Kids

### What others say about Meghan...

"servant, intercessor, compassionate, joyful, tenacity, diligent"  
"trustworthy, faithful, humble, hard-working, responsible, loving"  
"resolved, committed, organized, polite, caring, gentle, kind"

"Meghan has a strong foundation in Christ... strong character... hard working... always gives 100%... [Her] heart comes alive when she can help people meet Jesus.... Her life is guided by prayer, always asking Holy Spirit to move her to the person she can encourage."

"[Meghan] is a natural caregiver and leader.... people like to be around her; she is a kind and loving friend. She has good insight into situations and is a good judge of character.... her pastoral qualities are evident as she speaks with those in need...."

"Meghan is a strong believer, grounded in God's Word and a firm faith in Jesus. This is reflected in her words and behavior.... Meghan's faithfulness - over years and years - along with the quality of her ministry have displayed her passion and commitment well."