



Mayor's Generational Leadership Award Leah Bielfeldt Brink

Leah Bielfeldt Brink will be awarded the 2016 Mayor's Generational Leadership Award. Mayor Tim Reed created the award to recognize the importance of young leaders who make a community vibrant and dynamic. The physical award shows the creativity of the community and was created by local artist Heath "Tad" Bradley.

An Iowa native who attended high school in Kansas, Brink decided to become a Jackrabbit, following in the footsteps of both of her parents. She earned Bachelor of Arts degrees in both History and German, and graduated from the newly created Honors College at SDSU. Brink then moved to Eden Prairie, MN, and worked in property management.

She returned to Brookings in 2004 and purchased the Mad Jacks restaurant located at the time on 6th Street. With two young children, Brink decided she needed a more consistent schedule and went to work for Daktronics in 2006. She has held several positions at the company, starting in a customer service role, then moving to account management and eventually selling service agreements to international customers. She appreciated the global travel opportunities her work provided, but chose to change directions and in 2012 she joined the company's personnel department as the corporate recruiter.

In her current role, Brink is responsible for the company's talent acquisition strategy and all related activities. Daktronics employs many SDSU students part-time and as interns, so she spends considerable time on campus. She earned her SHRM – CP, a human resources credential, in 2015 and began working toward her Master's in Mass Communications at SDSU in January 2016. She plans to complete the degree in 2018.

Leah is active with efforts to encourage kids to better their math and communication skills and is on the Project Lead the Way advisory committee. She is also a member of the Youth Business Adventure Board, which puts together business camps for high school students across South Dakota each year.

Brink, a 2016 graduate of Leadership Brookings, enjoys helping the community of Brookings thrive. She currently serves as Chairperson of the Brookings Historic Preservation Commission and as a member of the new Brookings Public Arts Commission.

Mayor Reed commented, "Leah engages young professionals by getting them involved and anchored in Brookings. She truly has a passion for the Brookings Community."

Amanda Lauer commented in her nomination of Leah, "I believe Leah deserves the Mayor's Generational Leadership Award because of her strong leadership in community and workforce development."

Brink lives in Brookings with her fiancé, Justin, their combined four children, two cats and two dogs. She plays the piano and serves as organist of her church. When she has any spare time, Brink enjoys reading, gardening, and spending time at Lake Poinsett with her family.

The award will be presented to Leah on Thursday, November 10, 2016 at the Swiftel Center from 5:00 – 7:00 pm in conjunction with the ABLE Awards for Accessibility, the Butler Human Rights Award and the Mayor's Awards for Historic Preservation. In 2016 there are two recipients of the Mayor's Generational Leadership Award. Amanda Quam also received an award. The event is open to the public.

The Mayor's Generational Leadership Award is given to a community member who has affected the community in the following ways:

- Positively changes how we think about our community and city
- Helps Brookings attract and retain young professionals and families
- Motivates new generations to be active in their communities
- Contributes to the advancement and well-being of the community through service in areas such as: education, sports, fund-raising, charitable and voluntary service, economic development, arts, and the environment.

Nominations open July of each year. Individuals must be nominated before their 36th birthday and all nominations will be kept on file and active for the award for two years.