

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD FINALISTS

Reuben Watson,

Director of Outreach and Advancement,
Sunrise Children's Services

Reuben currently serves as Director of Outreach and Advancement at Sunrise Children's Services where he serves families who have experienced abuse or neglect. He is a two-time Chair of the EMERGE Conference for Young Professionals, and current Leadership Lexington classmate. Reuben's past was riddled with abuse, neglect, and suffering, it challenged him to do more than the status quo. His life experiences have motivated him to serve the community, whether through mentoring programs or other community initiatives. Reuben has spent his career learning how to give back and trying to empower others within our community, both in his current role and his previous role, as the Volunteer and Guest Services Manager at Ronald McDonald House Charities. Reuben experienced multiple foster homes, crisis units, mental hospitals, and multiple battles with suicide and self-worth during his upbringing. Now as a young professional he has embraced his story, that was once one of pain, as a story of empowerment and grace. Reuben shares his story to inspire hope in others. Reuben is a husband and father of two, a mentor, a coach, and a vital part of the Lexington community.



Why Should This Nominee Be Recognized as Kentucky's Young Professional of the Year?

Reuben should be recognized as Kentucky's Young Professional of the Year due to his exceptional dedication to serving and empowering the community, his outstanding leadership qualities, and his ability to overcome personal adversity to make a positive impact. Reuben's journey from a background marked by abuse, neglect, and trauma to becoming a beacon of hope and support for others is truly inspiring. Despite facing significant challenges in his own life, Reuben has dedicated himself to serving others, leveraging his experiences to empathize with and support those in need. His commitment to giving back is evident through his roles at Sunrise Children's Services and the Ronald McDonald House Charities, where he has tirelessly worked to coordinate thousands of hours of service and support for families and children in crisis. As a leader, Reuben embodies the qualities of empathy, compassion, and effective communication. He prioritizes the well-being of those around him and actively listens to their needs, creating a safe, supportive environment for collaboration and growth. Reuben's leadership extends beyond the workplace, demonstrated by his involvement as Chair of the EMERGE Conference Planning Committee for young professionals, and his involvement in coaching and mentoring, where he has positively impacted the lives of countless individuals. Moreover, Reuben's advocacy for addressing critical community issues, such as child abuse and neglect, showcases his commitment to driving positive change on a systemic level. He recognizes the importance of collaboration and has become incredibly involved throughout the community with his mission at heart. In summary, Reuben Watson's unwavering dedication, exemplary leadership, and transformative impact on the community make him an outstanding candidate for Kentucky's Young Professional of the Year. He is not only deserving of recognition for his achievements but also serves as an inspiring role model for future generations of young professionals.