

# Program Quality Director



**Jody Koonce, DTM, CGD**

Greetings District 37 Leaders! I am excited to announce my candidacy for Program Quality Director for the 2021-2022 Toastmaster year. My Toastmasters experience over the last nine years is earmarked with many adventures, levels of growth and an amazing community of support. Whenever we need it the most, there are Toastmasters members

across District 37 and the globe that we can turn to for help, support, and connection.

Can you believe my Toastmaster experience started by accident? My journey began back in 2010 when I walked into the Toastmasters meeting by mistake. I thought it was my department meeting at work since I saw a couple of my co-workers in the room. It was one of the most serendipitous moments of my career, a true happy accident. I originally attended whenever my schedule allowed, just to be transparent, I attended less than I should have to understand the benefit and the program mission. Not until I was asked to take on an officer role, in 2013, was I serious and consistent in my Toastmasters experience. Have you ever felt the same way?

When I was introduced to my first mentor, Lori Myers, she asked me those deep and profound words, “What does your future look like with Toastmasters?” I did not know how to answer, I did not understand the potential or the possibilities. Nine years later, I have earned my DTM and rely on my Toastmasters network in all aspects of my life. When I travel for business, I find clubs to attend so that I can get my Toastmaster fix. Each club has the same process, as a result it is easy to fit into any meeting wherever I travel: Chicago, Seattle, New York, Denver, or Dallas. These meetings are a home away from home.

One of my peers, Roger Moore, our own 007 (currently with Lowes), coined the term “The Oasis in the Middle of the Week” since our club met at Noon on Wednesday afternoons. It was the middle of our work week and if you made time to attend, you would leave our meeting smiling, laughing and with the grit needed to plow through the rest of the week. I felt like I had finally found my tribe amongst the members of my first Toastmasters Club. Now that tribe is spread across North Carolina, the United States, and across the Globe, a true family sharing the same purpose.

The first officer year, I was introduced to an expansive network of Toastmasters when my family and I attended the camping trip in Boone. That first trip provided me a deeper understanding how we all come together to strengthen our communication and leadership skills. We stay for the community and family that we create over time. It has been amazing to see the connections that are made when you visit clubs, attend conferences or when you volunteer to help other clubs. The benefits that we receive are greater than the \$90 membership fee each year. The value of working alongside you is immeasurable!

Jay Nodine came to our club meeting when I was new to my first club: Toastmasters of the Carolinas and his phrase, "If you are not having fun, you're not doing it right" stuck with me. Within that hour long interaction, I was taught how selfless, humble, gracious, and attentive a servant leader is when they show up, engage, and execute on the Toastmasters Promise. Daily, I think to myself how lucky I was to not miss that meeting, where I saw how one person can make an impact or investment in another person's life. It was a true transformational experience.

For the past nine years, I have enjoyed learning from you, working alongside District 37 and 117 members and serving you in many different capacities. Over the years, my passions have evolved into connecting members with other members, resources, opportunities, and to help them empower themselves. Regardless of your dreams and aspirations, Toastmasters is a pivotal tool in achieving those goals. Your fellow members are your community to help you along in your lifelong journey.

Club Level Positions Held:

- Vice President of Membership
- Vice President of Public Relations
- President
- Club Sponsor, SoChar Toastmasters

District 37 Positions Held:

- Area Director for Areas 11 and 33
- Administration Manager (2018-2019)
- Division Director (2019)
- Club Growth Director (January – June 2019, 2020-2021)

A long time ago, I heard Lou Holtz, the famous Notre Dame Football Coach, speak. He shared that he followed three rules, "Do the right thing, do the best you can and always show people you care". As a candidate for the 2021-2022 Program Quality Director, my goal is to always do the right thing for our District members, create the best programming that we can to help build our members access to content and care for our members by meeting their development needs. If given the chance to serve the next program year, my goal is to work alongside our members to create a dynamic environment where each member can grow and challenge themselves.

It is a true honor to be accepted as a candidate for the District 37 Program Quality Director role.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and District 37.

**Jody Koonce, DTM**