

## **HOSPITALITY EDUCATION**

**March 2010**

**Rhonda Sanborn**

**Hospitality Education**

### **EDUCATION**

#### **Industry Partnership**

Co-hosted with the City of St. Petersburg, the Education Department chaperoned 34 front line hospitality staff in a whirlwind trip throughout the downtown art districts. With the thorough help of our CVB intern Katie Marvin, our tour was mapped out strategically so we were able to visit over 30 venues and public art works. Consisting of a diverse mix of galleries, theaters, museums, art houses and outdoor art, our group experienced a good sense of the eclectic offerings. This was a full day tour and included concierge from Pinellas and Orange County, volunteers from both Tampa International and St. Petersburg/Clearwater Airport, destination management partners, tour operators, hosts from several local Chamber Welcome Centers, a representative from Superior Small Lodging Assoc. and Travelocity. Between destination stops our guests were nourished with information about ongoing shows, art walks, local festivals and the constant music scene that would satiate any request for someone asking, “what’s to do around here?”

Youth Leadership Pinellas is a sub group of Leadership Pinellas and consists of 30 students. They are 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> graders from seven different high schools throughout the county. There is actually a waiting list and students have to be actively involved in their schools and show an interest in developing their leadership skills to be nominated for this program. The youth program is in its 15<sup>th</sup> year and has ongoing learning events from November to May. I helped organize a combined effort of presenters for their Government Day of learning. This included a visit to the 911 and Emergency Response location, Solid Waste, the County Court House and the Clearwater Chamber. Speaking to the students about the value of tourism and contributions their tax dollars make in the community, they also heard from special guests Mayor Frank Hibbard, Mayor Kathleen Peterson, Chamber President Bob Clifford and Alex Chamberlain from the Young Professionals Group. The students learned how all branches of the government need to work together to shape a healthy business community and place where people want to reside.

After months of planning, myself and Bridgett Minnerly from the 911 Call Center, held our first of four Telephone Customer Service Skills classes. We had 18 participants representing a cross-section of County Employees as well as the City of Dunedin. Several members of the audience were asked to take the class and several were there to learn information so they could in turn share it with their support staff. This was a half day class and included a media mix of audio, workbook exercises, hands on activities, discussion groups and lecture. Evaluations were very positive and one of our participants even requested the materials to re-use to train her group.

For the third year in a row, the Education Department and City of St. Petersburg combined efforts with a number of department heads to offer a Taxi Information Session around the Honda

Grand Prix race weekend. Special maps were provided showing: traffic pattern updates, designated taxi pick up and drop off locations; driver safety tips; patron etiquette; handicap access; an overview of the current museum exhibits, along with ideas for additional entertainment spots. About 30 drivers participated representing a number of the area cab companies, as well as some management with the purpose of taking the information back to drivers who were unable to attend. Kim Tyer from St. Petersburg Marketing Dept., did a commendable job of organizing additional workbooks chalked full of maps, guides and information for all drivers to have on hand as reference material and to share with their passengers.

### **Value of Tourism Presentations**

County Volunteer Orientation (2)

### **HOSPITALITY**

In preparation for National Tourism Week, myself, Katie Marvin, Guy Balsam and a videographer, set out to capture on film how people felt about tourism to our destination. We shot both local hospitality partners as well as visitors in locations from Tarpon to Fort De Soto. We covered about 20 locations each of the three days as we tried to have a fair representation of opinions and perspectives. Special kudo's to Katie Marvin for mapping out a smooth route that maximized our hit list as well as Guy Balsam for his keen and artistic eye for detail.

### **VSPC Representation**

BACA (Bay Area Concierge Association)

Women in Tourism

TBARTA Transit Summit

Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber Board of Directors Monthly Meeting

BIG C Meeting

Clearwater Regional Tourism Partners Meeting, Shepards Beach Resort

### **VSPC Planning**

National Tourism Week Luncheon

County Volunteer Appreciation, meeting with team leads

Jr. Achievement training for Mayors Day, with Mayor RB Johnson