

HOSPITALITY EDUCATION

April 2010

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Hospitality Education

EDUCATION

Industry Partnership

There is a Greek Proverb, "A civilization flourishes when people plant trees under which they will never sit." Pinellas County is fortunate to have a dedicated community of more than 2,000 registered volunteers who invested over 90,000 hours in 2009. Many of these hours invested to projects that directly support tourism. This equates to about \$2 million worth of services for our county and the 32 agencies they give time to. Significant, yet county administrators believe we have the opportunity to double those figures this coming year. Plans are underway to organize a number of outreach opportunities, the first of which was to recognize those who have already committed to long term volunteering. We held a Volunteer Appreciation program that included an awards ceremony for Lifetime Achievement and PIPs Awards (Partner's in Public Service). Bob LaSala and a number of Commissioners were on hand to honor the volunteers and made special efforts to speak to individuals before the program and congratulate them. One of the life-timers was celebrating her 100th birthday and another individual had logged over 5600 hours. The event welcomed over 300 honorees with everyone thoroughly enjoying the refreshments, entertainment, praise and much deserved recognition. It has been a pleasure to become more involved with this program and initiative to engage our citizens in community service.

Junior Achievement is a work readiness program designed to help our youth be exposed to entrepreneurship and financial literacy. Modules are age appropriate and are typically five to seven week in duration. However, a special one day curriculum was prepared for a "Mayor's Day". This was geared towards 3rd graders and the curriculum was designed to see how a city works and what responsibilities and opportunities are available to those within a community. Having a couple years experience in the JA program, I partnered with Mayor RB Johnson from Indian Rocks Beach to help the Mildred Helms elementary student's gain a deeper appreciation for the value education plays in obtaining their future goals. From a City/County perspective we studied careers, the skills people need to work in specific careers, and how businesses contribute to a city. It was a lively and tiresome half day keeping the attention of these inquisitive 3rd graders but absolutely worth seeing their engagement and creativity in our activities.

Another engaged and appreciative audience who were eager to learn more about our destination and specifically the culture of Tarpon Springs were the Hospitality Tourism students from Schiller International University. We dubbed this the HIP (Hospitality Industry Partners) Tour to Tarpon. With homelands from over a dozen different countries, these students fully embraced their tour to the Greek culture, in a short bus ride from their school. Our visit took in the Train Depot Museum, Historic Downtown and learning that this is the oldest city in Pinellas County, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral, The Safford House (which they were very intrigued to see a glimpse of our Victorian era); lunch and walk about on the waterfront, the Sponge Exchange, a boat ride and traditional sponge diving demonstration; not to leave out the sweetest

part by visiting Hellas for traditional Greek desserts and to walk it off, a visit to Brooker Creek Preserve to show off one of the largest of a dozen Pinellas urban islands of biodiversity.

The Education Department is continuing to reach out to our hotel partners and raise the awareness about a soap recycling program started by an Orlando based non-profit called, “Clean the World. After hearing some startling statistics, VSPC has been scheduling several information sessions to help spread the word so we can grow the commitment from our partners to help save lives. As an industry we can make a huge difference to the 3.5 million children who die every year due to diarrheal disease and acute respiratory illness, and the simple hygiene practice of washing one’s hands with plain soap which can reduce these deaths by up to 60%. There are 4.6 million hotel rooms across America, discarding over 1.5 million bars of soap to land fill every day; a statistic that we can change by participating in a few simple conservation efforts. Once hoteliers hear the facts and how easy it is to participate in this program, most are eager to join in the efforts to Clean the World. To date we have a dozen participating hotels in Pinellas and hope to see that number continue to grow.

Value of Tourism Presentations

County Volunteer Orientation (2)

HOSPITALITY

VSPC Representation

BACA (Bay Area Concierge Association) at Basa DeLa Sole - Dunedin

Jr. Achievement Fundraiser

Sustainable County Education Committee

TBBCoC (Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber) Board of Directors Monthly Meeting

TBBCoC Board meeting with beach mayors

TBBCoC Networking Mixer at Clearwater Hilton

TBBCoC Lunch and Learn – Double Tree Inn, Action Coaching presentation

Relay for Life Treasure Island

Motivational Seminar Tampa

BIG C Meeting – Madeira Beach

Leisure Department FTI FAM – help organizing an off-site event (production of Hair)

Business and Motivational Seminar at the St. Pete Times Forum complimentary through my

Toastmasters membership. Speakers at this event include Zig Ziglar, Tony Dungy, Rudy

Giuliani, Dr. Robert Schuller, Tamara Lowe, John Walsh, Colin Powell, and Olympian Apolo

Ohno.

VSPC Planning

National Tourism Week Luncheon, site visits and print reviews