

HOSPITALITY EDUCATION

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Hospitality Education

EDUCATION

Industry Partnerships

Sports Tourism is big business having a \$22 million economic impact last year and supplying roughly 82, 000 room nights to Pinellas County. However, many of our industry partners are unaware of the potential for their own properties to capitalize on this significant piece of the tourism market. Nor do they understand some of the requirements to enhance their opportunities to capture this business, the relationship with the local municipalities or process working with the CVB. This was our second offering this year to industry partners, to help educate them on the value of sports tourism and offer guidelines to create more meaningful working relationships throughout the county. We had 58 attendees and a panel discussion with audience participation for Q & A. This was a half day symposium called Sports Essentials and was greatly appreciated by our partners as a way to help them better understand how they might be able to stimulate new business.

One of the goals of the Education Department is to enhance the significance of tourism as a valued profession, particularly in Pinellas as it is the number one industry. Reaching out to youth and helping them understand the range of possibilities as career options is essential. Jr. Achievement offers such a curriculum that partners with local business professionals to help young consumers understand financial literacy, entrepreneurship and work readiness. Their programs encourage confidence and motivate young people to achieve their personal, educational and career goals. I'm partnering with a County Utilities employee to teach a 9th grade class at Northeast High School and the Academy of Information Technology. Our seven week curriculum is based on Steven Covey's "7 Habits of Highly Successful People", includes brief video clips, activities, role playing and interactive discussions.

Despite the budget cutbacks and streamlined staff of training professionals, the Pinellas County HR department figured out how to do 'more with less'. In order to maintain the number and selection of professional development courses employees had come to expect, the HR Department reached out to fellow employees and asked for help. They urged anyone interested in teaching and coaching, to please step up and volunteer to instruct at least one class of their choice in 2010. HR would offer several train the trainer courses on delivery and adult learning to support our efforts along with providing training templates on the curriculum. I am partnering with another fellow County employee who works in the 911 call center. We will deliver Telephone Customer Service Skills four times next year.

One of my industry partnerships that I am particularly grateful and pleased to be a part of is the Bay Area Concierge Association, (BACA). They are a community of active and engaged front line staff at some of the most prestigious and busy properties around the Tampa Bay Area. Most of the opportunities they have to educate themselves about new restaurants, attractions and areas of interest require after hour and weekend commitments of their time. In October the "Keep

Pinellas Beautiful” organization had a county wide beach clean-up. A number of concierges volunteered to learn more about the number one beach in America, Caladesi Island, as well as exercise their civic pride in maintaining the image a destination highlight.

I recently became more aware of the College of Health and Human Performance at the University of Florida, and a Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sports Management. Part of graduation requirements are field assignments or internships in the student’s career interest for 15 weeks. One of their seniors and also a local from Clearwater, Katie Marvin approached me about a possible internship having researched our CVB quite thoroughly. Although she had been working at a hotel in Gainesville for the past year, she was thoroughly interested in a broader look at tourism promotions. She read all of our department goals and was attracted to the role of education in tourism. She forwarded her resume and followed up to schedule an interview on her next visit to the area. We had a delightful discussion and agreed on a project plan that would expand her educational experience as well as support several of the Education initiatives. I look forward to her energy, ideas and support in the coming year.

VSPC Professional Development

Tour of beach Nourishment projects along St. Petersburg’s beaches, with Nicole Elko as part of ASBPA conference
Toastmaster’s weekly meetings
Alliance for Innovation Webinar
Simpleview Trainings for new Customer Relationship Management System

Value of Tourism Presentations

County Volunteers Heritage Village
County Volunteers at Pinellas Extension
Bon Secur Assisted Living Facility Largo
Clearwater Civitan Club

HOSPITALITY

VSPC Representation

American Shore and Beach Preservation Association National Conference - volunteer
Clearwater Jazz Holiday – volunteer
Women in Tourism fundraiser Habitat for Humanity
Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber networking mixer
Travelocity Appreciation Reception

VSPC Planning

Work projects with Eckerd College Intern, Alex Fernandez
Research on History of Pinellas County in preparation of Centennial upcoming celebrations and FAMS