

HOSPITALITY EDUCATION
December 2009
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Hospitality Education

EDUCATION

Industry Partnerships

There are a number of 'essential tasks' documented for the education department. One of which is to work with the school board and institutions of higher learning, to help with job training and educational programs. Jr. Achievement is a partnership between the business community, educators and volunteers – all working together to inspire young people to dream big and reach their potential. JA is a hands-on, experiential program that teaches the key concepts of work readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy. For the month of December, I co-taught a JA program for 9th and 10th graders at Northeast High School, twice a week at 7:05 am. Our curriculum covered exercises to help the students make informed, intelligent decisions about their future and give them tools to refer to, helping them foster skills to use in the real world. A key learning component was the use of Steven Covey's, "Seven Habits of Highly Successful People" which was intertwined throughout the program and overarching objective, 'What do I need to know to find, get and keep a job?'

Our Leisure Department had their hands full with FAM's (familiarization tours) requested in the month of December. I was asked to help host a couple of dates with a UK tour and travel company called Bon-Voyage. These are strong partners for the St. Pete/Clearwater destination. However, they recently had some turnover in staff that weren't as familiar with the diversity of our product or area in general. Although we only had two half days we covered all the way from Clearwater Beach to Pass-a-Grill and even squeezed in a special tour to the Clearwater Marine Aquarium; which they thoroughly enjoyed and helped them realize what a unique experience we offered for visitors to our destination. Throughout the tour they also learned about other areas readily assessable from the beach and activities they could promote that would only enhance a beach vacation.

In addition to hosting several FAM's I also participated in one showing us most of the Superior Small Lodgings (SSL). We hit 26 different, diverse and dispersed properties throughout the county. There were approximately 20 participants and about half a dozen from VSPC who were not familiar with these unique properties other than through our website or brochures. This was a great opportunity to see the properties and experiencing the ambiance of each one. What was very clear after this FAM was what a wonderful mix of product we have to offer our visitors no matter what their taste, style or budget.

Another 'essential task' for my department is to conduct training seminars for member of the hospitality industry. The Hyatt Clearwater Beach is our newest property and many of their staff who will be opening the resort were from out of the area. I approached the Director of Sales, Nancy Longstreth and asked if we could do a brief orientation for some of her staff. She enthusiastically agreed that would be of great value for them. I asked my co-workers from the Leisure and Meetings/ Conventions Departments to help as well, so that we could help them understand how our CVB works, the services we offer and how we partner with the hospitality industry. Rosemarie Payne and Suzanne Scully were extremely helpful in sharing their expertise which I feel eased any apprehension the staff may have had about their new location and business climate. My role was to give an overview of the tourism impact to this destination as well as share some of the highlights and favorites of the area; both for their own pleasure and to share with guests.

Participation in the Tampa Bay Beaches Board Retreat: I try to be as involved as possible with all of our communities in Pinellas County. Not only at a volunteer level for the various events but also as a stakeholder committed to business affairs. I serve on a number of boards and committees as well as on

the Tampa Bay Beaches Board of Directors. I have a non-voting position, yet serve as a guide and influence from a county perspective. We have monthly meetings and ongoing responsibilities to participate with local businesses to support them, help them network and share relevant information. This Chamber represents 13 coastal communities and a good portion of our hospitality partners. Myself and 25 other Board of Directors had a dynamic learning and brainstorming session. It was very interesting for me to have a more granular view of local issues and challenges that make up a significant component of our county and how Chamber's operate. It is rewarding to be part of these organizations that work so hard to improve their communities, the quality of life and ultimately our destination as a whole.

Professional Development

Toastmaster's weekly meeting
Working with Eckerd College Intern, Alex Fernandez
Simpleview Training for re-design

Value of Tourism Presentations

Democratic Club of St. Petersburg
County Volunteers Heritage Village
Hyatt Clearwater Beach
Rising Stars Youth Leadership

HOSPITALITY

VSPC Representation

Holiday Lights at the Botanical Gardens – Volunteer
BACA (Bay Area Concierge Association)
Women in Tourism

VSPC Planning

Telephone Customer Service Skills class for Pinellas County HR Dept.
National Tourism Week Luncheon
County Volunteer Appreciation Meeting
Project outline for 13 week internship, Katie Marvin – UF Tourism, Sports & Recreation Major