

# HOSPITALITY EDUCATION

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Hospitality Education

## EDUCATION

### Industry Partnership

We engaged in a new partnership with the Osceola High School, Pinellas County Schools Executive Internship Program through the help of Laura Berkowitz and the County Volunteer Program. Laura and her department have been seeking a range of opportunities to work with the community and volunteerism for the County. This countywide dual credit experiential education program has been in place since 1974 and combines the best elements of classroom theory with actual experience in the professional work world; it is academically-oriented education based on experience. Qualifying high school seniors explore professional career fields of choice and earn high school and college credit while participating in unpaid internships in the career fields they think they would like to pursue in college. Jakob Fritz was the student who expressed interest in learning more about Marketing, Sports and had an interest in researching. The timing worked out quite nicely as the new Meetings and Conventions website was going live and required additional review and research for website listings for accuracy. This is a 13 week internship for about ten hours per week.

The Leisure Department not only travels an extensive amount of time but also has a number of on-going requests to host familiarization tours or FAM's as referred to in the tourism industry. It is not uncommon for a request to go out to staff to see if anyone can help out. I enjoy hosting our partners and helping them learn more about our destination, so often cheerfully volunteer. One of the groups I helped host was from the Willy Scharnow Foundation. Started in 1953, the foundation's core task is to qualify and motivate German travel agents and tour operators by offering study trips and seminars to train on the destination and increase their knowledge of the product. Our day's itinerary included several historic hotel site visits, the St. Petersburg art and culture tours and an evening in Gulfport. Although exhausted, they asked for more time to enjoy the beautiful ambiance of a warm night and moonlight on Boca Ciega Bay before ending their day.

Another opportunity to work with one of our communities was helping volunteer for the Takamatsu delegation potluck dinner with the City of St. Petersburg. In addition to bringing a covered dish and setting up the Shuffle board courts for a welcome party; we hosted 68 citizen delegates, community leaders, a number of elected officials including their Mayor Onishi and the President of Takamatsu University. This was the conclusion of their visit to our area so there was lots of chatter and exchanging stories of their adventures.

Florida Association of Convention and Visitor's Bureaus (FACVB) held their bi-annual meeting in Lakeland this October. These are held throughout the state and provide a terrific opportunity to share information. Typically we have around 100 CVB department heads attend, hear from a number of quality presenters and we learn a little bit more about the host county. Attendees were

delighted by a bus tour to Legoland, particularly that it exceeded most of our expectations. I was most surprised by the degree of creativity and detail in the exhibits and over 60 million 'bricks' as they refer to the Lego pieces. After our tour we were treated to a fabulous dinner and surprise appearance by the owner's daughter who happened to be an Opera singer. Presentation topics were: Mobile Marketing, The benefits and process of being an Accredited DMO (Destination Marketing Organization), How DMO's are using Tourism Improvement Districts and Competition to increase group business. We close the session in a round-robin style to hear from each destination. It was pleasant to hear that almost everyone reported much higher tourism numbers and positive projections for the coming year.

### **Value of Tourism Presentations**

Safety Harbor Musicians Co-op

## **HOSPITALITY**

### **VSPC Representation**

- Superior Small Lodging Board Meeting (SSL)
- Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber (TBBCoC) volunteer for fundraiser golf tournament
- St. Petersburg Chamber mixer, Jannus Live site visit
- Film Festival in Tampa
- SSL mixer on Calypso Queen
- Outback Bowl luncheon with guest speaker Urban Meyers
- Community Action Group for Republican National Convention (RNC)
- TBBCoC Ambassador Meeting
- Women in Tourism monthly luncheon, DT Minich and Steve Hayes from Tampa CVB were guest speakers
- Big C monthly meeting, Holiday Inn Harbourside
- The Business Education Committee
- Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber (TBBCoC), Board of Directors meeting
- St. Pete Marriott 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- Clearwater Beach Chamber mingle at Lobster Pot
- Volunteer for "100 Days of Summer" beach party winner at Sheraton Sand Key
- Secrets revealed, St. Petersburg Pier Aquarium at John's Pass for the location of the new aquarium and opening announcement, 12-12-12.
- Viva Florida 500 team

### **VSPC Professional Development**

First Monday staff meeting special guest: Carolyn Bass, Florida Holocaust Museum

### **VSPC Planning**

Festival of Trees and Wreaths fundraiser with TBBCoC