

HOSPITALITY EDUCATION

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EDUCATION

Industry Partnerships

Reportedly, St. Petersburg/ Clearwater Airport is the fastest growing airport in America a large portion of that due to Allegiant Airlines now with 40+ direct flights a day. Most of the passengers are leisure travelers and their flight attendants are based here. However, a good portion of their crew are newly relocated and have little time to explore the destination they enthusiastically promote. VSPC has made a commitment to partner with this airline on a variety of levels from call centers, to tour operators to flight attendants. The Education Department has been doing a series of Familiarization Tours and this month we immersed the crew into Tarpon Springs. Our tour was guided by a multi-generational historian, Michael John, who spoke on every aspect of the Cultural significance of Tarpon. In between his story telling we met with the friends of Brooker Creek; an elder from the Stafford House; Artists from the Antique District; rubbed noses with slithering locals, ate lunch with a Greek family, then pondered over which Hellas dessert to choose; and experienced a Tarpon Sponge dive along with a grounding; Allegiant flight crew and special guests from Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber couldn't have been more delighted to learn you could experience Greek culture without a passport or long plane ride.

A continued commitment to air service is vital to the entire destination. As well as with those who service the incoming passengers. Tampa Airport has about 145 volunteers who willingly give their time to provide a wonderful visitor experience. They develop their base of knowledge and keep current by getting out in the entire Tampa Bay Area as often as possible. I try to provide unique opportunities every couple of months to support them. Rarely short on developments to share, it was timely to have them visit the newly opened Sundial. We made this a walking tour so kept the footprint in the Waterfront Arts District, and followed the 'Birds on Beach' trail from the Dali to the Vinoy. These three inch cast iron birds were cleverly hidden but were eventually found with a few historical clues. Along the way we were greeted at each museum and even had time to visit. As exciting as downtown St. Petersburg is, I believe the biggest thrill was meeting the owner of Low Cal, then being let loose to choose their own lunch and relax in the courtyard.

On February 14th I had the opportunity to share a little 'Art Love' by being a docent on the Looper for one of the 2nd Saturday Art Walks. Two Trolleys run about a 45 minute loop from 5 pm to 9 pm (or 10 for stragglers). Riders are given a map and can jump on and off as they wish. Anywhere from 30 to 40 art galleries, studios and workshops participate and usually offer some food and beverage, possibly a band. The best part is the opportunities to meet the artist in their environment and talking with them about 'Where Art is Made' ; which is the Warehouse Arts Districts slogan.

HOSPITALITY

VSPC Representation

- Localtopia volunteer for Creative Pinellas
- Ruth's Chris opening
- Pinellas In-Service Day, Tropicana Field and Great Explorations
- Beach Art Center – public forums for Creative Pinellas
- St. Petersburg College – Informational interview on State of the Arts & Tourism
- Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American Museum, St. Petersburg Preservation Society
- Heritage Village Boat House project
- Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber of Commerce (TBBCoC) Board Meeting
- Bula on the Beach ribbon cutting
- TBBCoC Town Hall
- Pinellas Education Foundation
- Pinellas County Continuity of Operations Project

Upcoming Event Planning

Firestone Grand Prix

Hospitality Connects

Good Burger Awards

Leadership St. Pete /Focus wrap meeting

Value of Tourism Presentations

Pinellas Park Kiwanis at Quaker Steak and Lube