

**HOSPITALITY EDUCATION**  
**November 2009**  
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**Hospitality Education**

## **EDUCATION**

### **Industry Partnerships**

November was full of wonderful community partnerships within my own CVB team, other county employees, business owners, schools and even International dignitaries. And, Education was the operative word for the month.

The Foster Grant Ironman World Championship 70.3 is one of our signature events in November. It is hugely successful with over 1600 athletes participating from almost every US state and 54 countries. However, with the growing attendance and a race that covers 13.1 miles for the running portion and has a 56 mile bike ride, the logistics are bound to inconvenience some residence. Our Sports Commission and the event planners at World Triathlon Corporation, were very aware of the issues and worked diligently to communicate with the public about race day information. There was radio public service announcements, electronic traffic notification signage on all the roads impacted, flyers, news releases and a network of emails that were circulated to neighborhood associations and businesses. As part of this concerted effort, we also produced

25, 000 "Impact Notices" which were inserted in the N. County papers, as well as hand delivered to several large communities who would be most impacted. I also did a couple presentations for the E. Lake Community and to a large audience for the Palm Harbor Chamber of Commerce. My understanding is that post complaints were at a minimum this year and we hope that was a result of setting expectations in advance. I think people are more tolerant of the minor aggravations when they understand the economic value of sporting events of this nature.

Another significant event for the destination was Florida Encounter which was held at Innisbrook Resort. Post tradeshow FAMs were organized that gave these national and international meeting planners a broad overview of our area. With our Meetings and Conventions Department I helped organize a cultural tour including our very own volunteer docent, Marlys Meckler. We visited and learned some very interesting details about Dali's works as well as the 45000 years of art work in the Museum of Fine Arts. Marlys also toured us by several of St. Petersburg's public art which our foreign planners particularly appreciated.

There were several other partnerships that joined forces in the name of education this month. One of which was to teach a Jr. Achievement class at North East High School to 9<sup>th</sup> graders in the Academy of Information Technology. Fellow county employee from the Solid Waste Department, Malinda Fusco and I started mapping out our curriculum for the seven week program. Sessions are only 45 minutes yet cover a good amount of material including participative activities. We met several times together and with the teacher to make sure we had a smooth presentation before getting in front of 25 teenagers at 7:05 am.

Jumping to another level of education I worked with several administrators at Schiller International University to organize an orientation familiarization tour of the mid and southern part of the county. We had 35 students, from around the world and only a couple had ever been to Florida much less Pinellas County. We toured the beaches with a number of stops at venues easily reached by public transportation, appealing to a wide variety of interests. Highlights included: the shopping village at John's Pass, the Seabird Sanctuary, historic tour of the Don Cesar, tranquil Pass-a-Grille verses the wide sandy beach at Treasure Island, as well as ideas for any number of water adventures off of Merry Pier. From the coast we headed east into downtown St. Pete for a more cultural perspective of the county. We had the pleasure of joining an ongoing docent tour by someone obviously very educated on Dali's work. This delighted the students and interested them enough to organize a field trip back to the museum for a much longer visit the following weekend.

Reaching across the bay I participated in a Tampa Attractions and Ambassador Training FAM. This is a program the Attractions Assoc, Tampa Bay and Co. and the City of Tampa co-sponsor to educate front line hospitality employees on their local tourist spots. This was a very beneficial trip for me as I really had not spent much time in Tampa and this trip gave me a great overview of the variety of interesting activities for visitors. Our trip included stops to: Busch Gardens, Lowry Park Zoo, Tampa Theatre, Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, Henry B. Plant Museum, Tampa Museum of Art, Hyde Park Village, Florida Aquarium, Yacht Starship, Tampa Bay History Center, Ybor City and the SS American Victory Ship.

One of my most interesting partnerships this month was co-hosting a group of six Chinese delegates around Tarpon Springs. I worked with Commissioner Robin Saenger to escort our guests for a whirlwind 24 hours. This group was on a ten city tour that included NY, LA, DC, Montreal and Tarpon Springs. We were privileged to have them interested in learning more about growing their tourism market and keeping the authenticity of their rich heritage. The post feedback from the tour leader was this part of the trip had made the biggest impression and they would love to have a cross-cultural relationship with us going forward.

### **VSPC Professional Development**

Toastmaster's weekly meetings

Alliance for Innovation Webinar

Simpleview Trainings for new Customer Relationship Management System

### **Value of Tourism Presentations**

Madeira Beach City Commission

Mid Pinellas Democratic Club

St. Petersburg Democratic Club

Pinecrest Place

Lake Seminole Square

Pinellas County Volunteers

Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber recruitment outreach to Tierra Verde businesses

Great American Teach-in, four classes at Madeira Elementary

## **HOSPITALITY**

### **VSPC Representation**

Jeff Atwater Fundraiser and support of campaign to stop off-shore oil drilling  
IronMan 7.0 Open Ceremonies and Reception  
Bay Area Concierge Association (BACA) behind the scenes Clearwater Aquarium  
Post Card Inn Grand Opening

### **VSPC Planning**

Telephone Customer Service Skills class for Pinellas County HR Dept.  
Jr. Achievement Lesson Plans