



# 2022 Year in Review

## JANUARY . . . . .

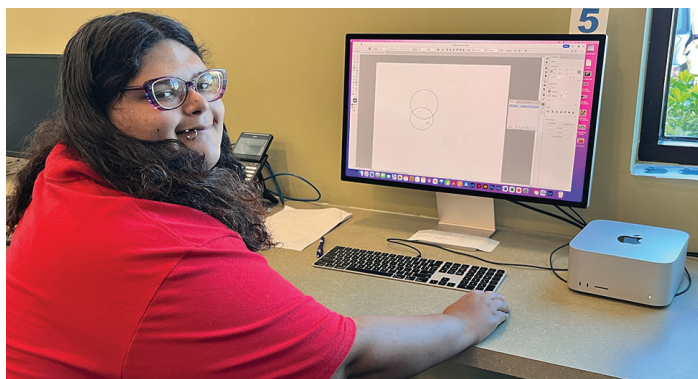
### MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT

We began the new year with a renewed focus on wellness. Tai Chi, meditation and yoga were reintroduced to members and staff on Wellness Wednesdays as a path to strengthening our mind, body and spirit. Our wellness initiative is a perfect complement to our workday in Graphic Arts, Business Technology and Culinary.



### SMARTER TECHNOLOGY

Thanks to grant funding from the generous William G. & Marie Selby Foundation, we upgraded our technology across the Academy, from Arts and Business to Culinary. This included PC's, Macs, telephones, and new interactive smartboards for each of our vocational teams. Not only is this state-of-the-art technology fun to use - it's central to skill development and career preparation for our members.



## FEBRUARY . . . . .

### MR. PARDO GOES TO TALLAHASSEE

"I was invited to travel to our state Capitol in Tallahassee to advocate for mental health funding! Having grown up with a strong interest in politics, I was extremely excited. What an honor! It was a whirlwind experience to say the least. Academy Director William McKeever and I met with many of our representatives. Each time we met with an elected official I told my recovery story. It made me feel like a true part of the legislative process and I felt changed by the experience."

– Rick Pardo



### THE RESULTS ARE IN

The Academy was selected as one of fifteen local non-profit organizations to participate in a two-month Results 1st training, thanks to a grant from the Manatee Community Foundation. Results 1st helps organizations shift their focus from providing services to producing measurable outcomes.

## MARCH . . . . .

### TRAINING LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Academy is a valued partner in our local Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), which helps equip law enforcement



with strategies designed to redirect individuals experiencing a mental health crisis from legal involvement into treatment.



## A LITTLE LUNCH

They say that good things come in small packages. Our scaled-down Ambassador Luncheon was a case in point. A smaller, Covid-safe event allowed us to flex our hosting muscles after a two-year hiatus on live events. Big thanks to the Steinwachs Family Foundation for the generous match, and to our amazing members for creating this small but impactful event.



## APRIL

### SLAVA UKRAINI

The Academy collected many boxes of food, first aid, and hygiene items to send to the residents of Ukraine. Coordinating our efforts with the Ukrainian Baptist Church of North Port, Florida, we assisted with getting critical supplies to those in need.



## ALWAYS A SOFT PLACE TO LAND

"I returned to the Academy after spending extended time with family in Michigan. The Academy provides everything from a social outlet to skills training to a place where I can get support. I know there is always a place for me here, and that I fit in, despite how long I've been away. This is the second winter that I have been employed by Walmart near my Sarasota home. Knowing I'm part of the Academy community gives me a feeling of security and helps quell my anxiety on the job." – Jason Fried



## MAY

### ACADEMY AT BRADENTON EST. 2022

After months of dreaming and planning, we announced the expansion of services into Manatee County with the creation of Academy at Bradenton. We found an ideal property in downtown Bradenton with easy access to businesses, county offices, and public transit. We invited nearly 100 community

leaders, clinical partners, and supporters to our Sneak Peak, aptly named "Raising the Roof on Mental Health." (Our new facility will have a higher roof – because the sky's the limit for our members!)



## JUNE

### JOB LONGEVITY: FOUR YEARS AND COUNTING

With every year that passes, more and more members find their career path.

It's transformational. Here's Aaron's story: "I've been coming to the Academy since it opened.

The Academy helped me get hired as a cashier at the Sarasota/Bradenton Airport, and I have

been employed there for almost four years. I was recently named Employee of the Month, for my promptness, accuracy, and the cleanliness of my work area. My supervisors gave me a certificate and a gift card. It does a lot for employee morale when a company gives their employees a chance to be their best and then rewards them." – Aaron Collmer



## TURNING FIVE WHERE SERVICE THRIVES

The Academy turned five years old! With Covid beginning to wane, we saw growth in membership, acquired new technologies, and took on new initiatives. We took the day to celebrate these milestones and to reflect on all that our members have achieved over the past year. In an act of service to our community, we collected towels, wash cloths, travel size hygiene products, socks and undergarments, and donated them to Turning Points in Manatee County, an awesome non-profit that prevents and reduces homelessness.





## JULY . . . . .

### HERE COMES THE JUDGE

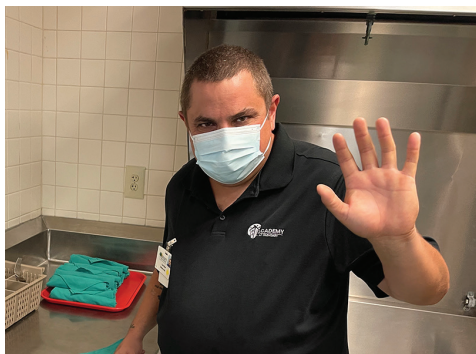
“The Honorable Heather Doyle (pictured left), a Manatee County Court Judge, visited us to learn about what we do. She works at the 12th Judicial Circuit Courthouse, right across the street from the future Academy at Bradenton. She was very friendly and engaging, and she was a good listener. While on the tour, she spoke to all the members she met and asked them what they were working on. It feels good when important guests are so genuinely interested in the Academy and its members.” – Chantel Gingerich (pictured right)



### SERVICE BRINGS PURPOSE

Work transforms lives. Here is Lee’s story: “I recently started working at the Pines of Sarasota as a dietary aide, as part of the Academy’s Transitional Employment program. Since returning to work, I now have a sense of purpose. It is nice to work with my hands and enrich people’s lives through food, and it is good to see the money coming in. It is good to talk to people and to be around others. I am improving my culinary skills. I plan to get a permanent cooking job after this.”

– Lee Baker



## AUGUST . . . . .

### 4TH ANNUAL LIVESTREAM TELETHON MAKES A SPLASH

Our “Live from the Academy” Telethons are as much for “friend-raising” as they are fundraising, so we were thrilled to see that the telethon was watched by well over 500 viewers! Thanks to the extraordinary skills of our members and generous matches by the Steinwachs’ Family Foundation, the Giving Generously Fund, and the Gulf Coast Community Foundation, we shattered our viewership and fundraising goals. And we had a lot of fun doing so!



## PREPPING FOR SUCCESS

The Academy is about small steps to success. Here is Chanaka’s story: “I started a Transitional Employment position at Tripletail Seafood & Spirits. At first, it was challenging but, between Academy and Tripletail staff, I had plenty of people to ask. I’m responsible for preparing ingredients, making marinades, plating salads, and portioning rice. I want to continue working in restaurants, and this gives me great experience. When this job is over, I plan on using what I’ve learned to further my career.”

– Chanaka Weerasinghe



## SEPTEMBER . . . . .

### CAYMAN TAKES ON THE WORLD (SEMINAR)

Academy member, Cayman, was chosen as a keynote speaker for the Clubhouse International World Seminar in Baltimore, MD. Here’s his story: “When I arrived in Baltimore for the World Seminar, I was extremely nervous, as I had committed to giving my personal testimonial for the gathering of 600+ attendees. But once I got settled in, I felt right at home. I received incredible feedback following my speech. People said they felt like they knew me because I spoke from the heart and with such confidence. It was an honor to represent the Academy!” – Cayman Seiffert



### FEELING LIKE A VIP

Academy members often step up to the podium to raise mental health awareness. Here’s Michael’s story: “When I was asked to speak at the VIP Reception prior to the Life;Story Suicide Prevention Walk, I was initially reluctant to put myself out there. But the more I thought about all the ways in which Centerstone and the Academy have impacted my life, the more I wanted to lend a hand. I received so much encouragement from everyone at the Academy, I was at ease when the event rolled around. While I spoke, it seemed like the audience was really listening.” – Michael Silverman

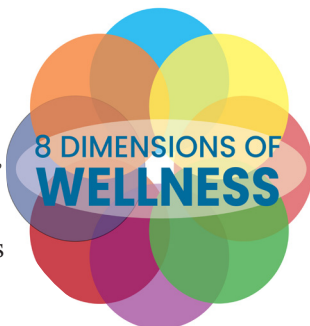




## OCTOBER . . . . .

### WELLNESS WITHIN REACH

Thanks to a generous grant from the Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, amazing wellness opportunities are on the horizon for Academy members. Under the guidance of Dr. Roxann Taormina, of the University of South Florida, the Academy will implement a 12-month “Wellness Within Reach” initiative focusing on the 8-Dimensions of Wellness (social, vocational, financial, emotional, spiritual, environmental, intellectual, and physical). Thanks to the Barancik Foundation for helping us take wellness to the next level!



### NAMI WALKS THE WALK

The Academy joined in support of NAMI’s signature event: “The NAMI Walk was just what I needed to rouse me out of my comfortable stupor at home (aka isolation) and embrace the world outside. It was great to see us all comfortable in our emotions, owning our stories as we listened to a moving survivor’s tale before heading out for a 5K walk/run. Under the oak trees slight shade, I felt happy in my own skin, forgetting about my own anxiety as I embraced this lap on my own wellness journey.” – Stephen Anderson



## NOVEMBER . . . . .

### A DREAM COME TRUE

Academy members find hope: “Many years ago, I had a thriving career in public relations that I left (temporarily, I thought) to raise a family. But then, I developed an illness and I thought I’d never work again. I moved to Florida where I continued to struggle with isolation, low self-esteem, and depression – until recently, when I learned about the Academy. Coming here has led to many miracles: I am making friends, gaining confidence, and finding hope that a better future is possible for me. Best of all, I am not lonely anymore.” – Maureen Flaig



## HARVESTING HOPE

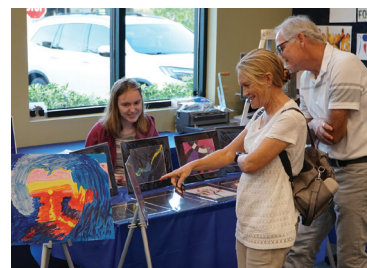
Academy members know a thing or two about overcoming obstacles. Despite high wind and rains, our Harvesting Hope Luncheon was an affair to remember. Members showed up, dressed to the nines and ready to serve, to host, and to share the ways in which our community has offered them hope. This event was our way of saying thank you to some of our closest friends and supporters. It also served to remind us of the formidable talents and skills of our members, and the power of service to restore purpose to our lives.



## DECEMBER . . . . .

### ART OF RECOVERY

The Academy’s Art of Recovery books were such a big hit that the members held a swanky art show! On an early December Friday night, throngs of guests came to meet the artists, view their work, and purchase original art pieces, as well as our Recovery of Art books, note cards, and calendars. This event was a huge success, and we expect it to become an annual highlight. Kudos to our talented member artists!



### ACCREDITATION ANTICIPATION

We hosted Clubhouse International faculty for our second 3-year accreditation visit. Clubhouse faculty spent time in our work-ordered day, visited employment sites and experienced every aspect of our program. Following their visit, they provided us with verbal findings on our effectiveness at adhering to the 37 Clubhouse International Standards. While we await the official accreditation report, we are confident that our guests were inspired by our dedication and passion.



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and click on the  button

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