



WINTER 2023

941-921-9930

[www.AcademySRQ.org](http://www.AcademySRQ.org)

1910 Glengary St., Sarasota, FL 34231

# THE ACADEMY IS THAT KIND OF PLACE

The word *kindness* might not be the cool kid of values, but here at the Academy, we think it deserves a parade. Think about it. Outside of physiological and safety needs, can you think of anything more crucial to the well-being of our society? Cue the floats and aim the spotlight, let us celebrate this superstar of superpowers: KINDNESS.

We're not alone in this, it's proven science. Numerous studies show that extending kindness can increase self-esteem and improve one's mood. Can kale do that?! We think not. Kind acts can even take some credit for decreasing one's blood pressure and cortisol, a stress hormone. Offering kindness to others may even increase vitality and longevity. Take that, wheatgrass! (Disclaimer: we do also love kale and wheatgrass though we are not throwing them a parade any time soon.)

Walk around the Academy and it won't take long to witness this in play. Seasoned Academy members are paying attention to those members who are just getting started with us, sitting with them at lunch, asking them to join a project or workshop. We see members with vehicles offering transportation to those who need it, often going well out of their way to do so. Members who work in the culinary team routinely jump up, often mid-bite, to serve someone who shows up hungry and past lunch service. It's woven into our culture. We take care of one another.



(left to right) Stephen Anderson and Michael Silverman box lunches at Meals on Wheels during our MLK Day of Service.

And then there are the many service projects that we do throughout the year to take care of the greater "we," from community clean-ups and food drives to disaster relief, letters to soldiers, and more. The energy in our building around these projects is palpable. Extending kindness excites us, and it

strengthens our community, locally and globally, even fostering our own well-being. Another scientific nugget: it matters little if



Members and staff participating in a weekend social event at the Academy.

you are the bestower of that act of kindness or the recipient, both parties reap the benefits. By fostering this kind of mindfulness at the Academy, we hope that it will ripple through our community and just keep on going. The power to do big things is in these small gestures.

So, strike up the band for kindness (and then compliment that band on how well they play)! Stop reading this article and go make someone's day. Yield to that car (even the one that didn't use a turn signal) and wish them well, tell a colleague that they're awesome, make eye contact with a stranger who might be struggling. Kindness doesn't cost a dime, but the paybacks are immeasurable. In the words of author and poet Jack Kerouac, "practice kindness all day to everybody and you will realize you are already in heaven now."



(left to right) member Irene Lunt is served her healthy lunch by Culinary Arts team member Andrew Cavazzi



The Academy at Glengary

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# VALUES-BASED

*Values inspire our journey and guide the pathway to recovery.*

## PART OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Someone once told me, "If I have a job, I have a chance." Where would most of us be in life without our jobs, our careers, and our vocations? At enrollment, the large majority of Academy members are not employed. Yet, following participation in our vocational teams, most members eventually identify work as one of their top goals. Employment provides stability, financial security, and opportunity, but perhaps more importantly, work can provide us with purpose, meaning, and a sense of fulfillment.

For those Academy members interested in employment, it can take several months or several years to prepare. It's an individualized, self-directed process for each of our members. You might ask: When members are ready, how do they acquire that first part-time, entry-level job? That's where our Transitional Employment program comes in.

From our inception in 2017, we set out to engage some of the best employers in our area. We wanted our members to have quality job opportunities in positive workplace cultures. Over these first five years, we have been blessed to partner for jobs with the Public Defender's Office, the Pines of Sarasota, Gettel's Automotive, Doctors Hospital, Publix, Geckos Hospitality Group, and Sunset Automotive Group, to name a few. These employers have been providing our members with entry-level positions and a streamlined hiring process—a key component for members who don't have a recent employment history to put on their application.

This past month we reinitiated our employment partnership with Sarasota Memorial Hospital, following a lengthy hiatus due to Covid-19. We were welcomed back with open arms by David Verinder, CEO, and Laurie Bennett, Executive Director of Human Services. Oh, and I forgot to mention a fascinating detail. The first step in creating an employment partnership is for Academy staff to work the actual jobs prior to placing members and training them ourselves. In other words, staff teammates, including myself, are now filling shifts at the hospital. In case you are interested, I will be working with the Supply Chain Department. "Supply chain"—now there's a phrase we've heard a lot about since Covid.

*William McKeever*

Director



*(left to right) William McKeever and David Verinder, President and CEO of Sarasota Memorial Health Care System*

## OUR AMBASSADORS

*The Academy Ambassadors fill a vital role by sharing our mission and helping us build strong roots in the community.*

Peter Abbott • Rob and Ruth Anderson • Steve and Barbara Armstrong • Jon and Kris Berg • Ed Bertha  
Stewie Bitterman • Kim Bleach • Gini Boyke • Veronica Brady • Kim Burns • Josie and Alan Churchill  
Warren and Cecile Collmer • Linda Cournoyer • Phil Delaney • Maryann and Joe Dewes • Rená and Neil Doniger  
Larry Eger • Scott Eller • Robert Geyer • Al and Polly Giuffrida • Ric Gregoria • Marlene Hauck • Hal Hedley  
Mary Kennedy • Michael Klauber • Sue Klauber • Tom Knight • Sharon Lerner • David Maglich • Pat Mahoney  
Brian Mariash • Beth and Steve May • Robert Meade • John Overton • Reverend Bruce Porter  
Mike and Mary Quillen • Rich Segall • Jeff Steinwachs • Paul Steinwachs • Sharon Steinwachs  
Debbie and Dave West • Joan and Brian Wides • Honorable Charles E. Williams

COMMUNITY • WORK • QUALITY • FRIENDSHIP • RESPECT • WELLNE





Chantel Gingerich

## MEET CHANTEL GINGERICH

When I joined the Academy back in 2017, I had been looking for employment for a long time, and hearing “no” over and over really took away my self-confidence. It wasn’t until I became an Academy member that I started to find my place in life. After some skill-building, I was given a Transitional Employment job at an ALF and nursing home called Pines of Sarasota, as a dietary aide. The support of Academy staff helped me to be successful, and I loved talking to the residents!

From there, an Academy job coach helped me get a permanent job as a product demonstrator, but then Covid hit, and that job ended after six months. I still attended the Academy and worked on building skills, confidence, and making friends. When it felt safe to work again, the Academy once again helped me get a job at Publix. I’ve been there for two years, and I love it! I get to make people happy for a living!

When I’m not working, I hang out with a great group of friends that I’ve made at the Academy. I also got to travel to Michigan to speak in front of hundreds of people to tell my story. The Academy has helped me become a new person!

**“I’ve been there for two years, and I love it! I get to make people happy for a living!”**



Brad Mitchell

## MEET BRAD MITCHELL

When I was in a partial hospitalization program at Sarasota Memorial Hospital, Patty Haltinner and Paul Hennekes came to speak. Before the hospitalization, I had been isolating at home and having some trouble managing symptoms, and when they described the Academy, the concept of volunteering as a means to get my own mental health on track really resonated with me. It had been a long time since my life felt like it had a purpose.

As a member of the Academy, I am part of the culinary team. It’s our responsibility to make sure that everyone gets fed on time, and that the food is delicious. That might sound stressful, but at the Academy, there’s no pressure to go fast, just to do my best. This has filled my life with purpose, and it has offered the opportunity to meet new people. It’s especially comforting to not have to explain myself insofar as having an illness. I look forward to continuing as a member as I build work skills and social skills, and manage my symptoms to live a happy and productive life.

**“This has filled my life with purpose and it has offered the opportunity to meet new people.”**







# JOINING FORCES TO EXPAND SERVICES INTO MANATEE COUNTY

Our expansion of services into Manatee County is aptly called Academy at Bradenton because we are located in the city's downtown district, directly across from the courthouse and a block from Manatee County offices. Thanks to a collective effort by community partners and funders the Academy at Bradenton is open.

## PARTNERS WITH MANATEE COUNTY

We are pleased to partner with Manatee County Government for the implementation of Academy at Bradenton. Thanks to a contract with the Public Safety Department, the Academy is assisting adults living with mental illnesses to achieve personalized wellness goals, acquire job skills, develop social supports, and re-enter the workforce or pursue higher education. Furthermore, this grant aims to reduce participants' hospitalization rates, crisis care, and legal involvement.



(left to right) Cayman Seiffert, Jeffrey Jean, Geoff Cordes, Latrice Washington, Thu Le and William McKeever

## LOCAL FOUNDATIONS RAISE THE BAR

Implementing our new program and facility requires considerable investment. We are honored by the support of many local and regional foundations: Bank of America Foundation, Bishop-Parker Foundation, Manatee Community Foundation (MCF), Giving Circle of MCF, Steinwachs Family Foundation, Truist Foundation, and Wilson-Wood Foundation.



DONATE today and become part of the solution in mental health. Please visit:

**AcademySRQ.org**

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## CFBHN SUPPORTS RECOVERY

Since the inception of the Academy at Glengary in 2017, we have received unwavering support from our colleagues at Central Florida Behavioral Health Network (CFBHN). We are extremely grateful to CEO Linda McKinnon, an avid advocate of recovery-oriented services, and her team for becoming a founding supporter of Academy at Bradenton.



(left to right) Jeffrey Jean, Paul Hennekes, Carrie Hartes (CFBHN), Sarah Andrade (CFBHN), Joan Geyer, Lara Yanossy (CFBHN), Julie Patel (CFBHN) and William McKeever

## COLLABORATION IS KEY

Remember that old saying, "It takes a village..."? Well, the Academy truly believes that the secret to success (and recovery) is found in collaboration and coordinated resources. We are stronger together thanks to shared connections and networking with employment partners, clinical and housing providers, homeless outreach, vocational facilities, and resource centers.



*Want to learn more?*

**The first step is to take a tour!**

Families, applicants and community providers are welcome.

To schedule a tour, or for more information, please contact 941-921-9930 or [Info@AcademySRQ.org](mailto:Info@AcademySRQ.org).

Hours: Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



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