



Members "spotting" fellow members as they lift weights at the YMCA

## YMCA PARTNERSHIP IN MOTION

by Malcolm Barry

We sincerely value our community partners who generously provide services which the Academy may not be able to offer.

The branch of the YMCA at Palmer Ranch has kindly established a special plan which enables our members to use their beautiful facilities for two afternoons per week. This allows our members the use of the gymnasium and the swimming pool, plus various other activities which includes the opportunity to play basketball.

Physical wellness is within our pursuit of our Eight Dimensions of Wellness initiative, which includes Emotional, Financial, Social, Spiritual, Occupational, Environmental, Intellectual and Physical wellness.

Academy member Rima Ghalieh said, "I love the gym and the pool. They keep me in good shape." Member Andrew Cavazzi mentioned, "I like the great atmosphere at the facility and really enjoy my workouts there."

We are very grateful that the YMCA at Palmer Ranch has made it possible for our members to use their location and consequently enhance our physical wellness.

## WARM WELCOME TO AARON SCHUTTE

by Aaron Schutte

I am the new Director of Career Services at the Academy of Bradenton.

While I have lived in Florida for over 18 years, I was born and raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan. After a 25 year career in the Navy, I continued to pursue a life of service. After a rewarding stint at the United Way of South Sarasota County, I became a career coach and case manager for the State of Florida and CareerSource Suncoast, serving veterans in Manatee County with employment barriers, to include mental and physical disabilities.



I am truly honored and humbled to be accepted into the Academy community. The spirit of support, acceptance, teamwork, and encouragement is like no other environment I have ever been a part of. I am convinced that all my previous life experiences and lessons learned have purposely led me to this new opportunity.

On a personal note, I live in Bradenton with my wife of over 15 years, and my "Bonus Son." I married into a Latin Family and am more or less fluent in Spanish. I enjoy writing children's books, running, traveling, and going on long drives with my wife to explore our surrounding area. I am also a member of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Manatee County, serving as a mentor to a 12-year-old boy.



(L to R) "The Aarons": Aaron Williams, Aaron Collmer and Aaron Schutte at the Academy at Bradenton

## PASSING THE TORCH

by Preston Zorn

When I was chosen for the dietary aide position at Sarasota Memorial Hospital (SMH) through the Academy's Transitional Employment Program, I was shocked and nervous. Will I be good enough? What if I can't do this? I have never worked before this opportunity and it is thanks to the people at SMH and the Academy who made this job possible for me. I am forever grateful to have had the opportunity to hold my first job.

In these past nine months my confidence in my abilities has grown. I have learned so much from my coworkers and of course my job coach AJ Ramirez at the Academy.

Now that I have completed my Transitional Employment, I look forward for what the future holds. I am determined to get a job in the food service industry. I fully believe that I would be a great addition to any company that will hire me.

I'm happy to pass the Transitional Employment "torch" to fellow Academy member Sherdil Abid who is taking over the position after me. Good luck Shirdel!



*Sherdil Abid and Preston Zorn at our dietary aide Transitional Employment position at Sarasota Memorial Hospital (SMH)*

## THE ACADEMY IN BLOOM

by Lisa Hillje



*Lisa Hillje with a beautiful Academy floral arrangement*

My name is Lisa Hillje, and I've been an Academy member since 2019. I graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in Ornamental Horticultural including a class in floral arranging. You have probably noticed the sixteen floral centerpieces that adorn the tables in the dining room as well as the welcome desk in the lobby at the Academy at Glengary. I arrange these floral creations with the help of other Academy members. I have experience working for a number of years in a flower shop. These days I'm a professional pet sitter and dabble in modern abstract painting.

When I'm not pet-sitting I'm designing floral centerpieces for every occasion such as holidays, Ambassador Luncheons, and other special events. We purchase flowers locally and seek to have the tables pop with color to achieve a "wow effect."

It brings me a great deal of pride and joy to be able to give back to the Academy in this way. Thank you to the Academy at Glengary for encouraging and supporting my talent. I look forward to making floral arrangements on a regular basis in the future.

### SARASOTA CAMPUS

1910 Glengary Street  
Sarasota, FL 34231  
(941) 921-9930



### BRADENTON CAMPUS

601 12th Street West  
Bradenton, FL 34205  
(941) 929-2800



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