

ACADEMY TIMES



NEWS OF THE ACADEMY AT GLENGARY AND ACADEMY AT BRADENTON

January 30, 2026



MAKING AN IMPACT

We are thrilled to announce that Impact100 SRQ selected the Academy for a major grant award! Impact100 SRQ is one of more than sixty chapters worldwide and joins its sister chapters in embracing a local, collective giving model. Founded in 2018, Impact100 SRQ brings together a diverse group of women who fund transformational grants to local nonprofits in both Sarasota and Manatee Counties. After a rigorous selection process, the Academy was selected as one of eight grant recipients.

Our Academy families have often shared their concern for when they are no longer able to provide support to their loved ones (in this case, our Academy members). Funding from Impact100 SRQ will enable us to hire a family care coordinator who will assist our members and families in creating a B.O.S.S. plan, or *Blueprint of Self-Support*, as a tool to navigate long-term financial planning, legal support, trusts, housing and much more.

We are deeply grateful to Impact100 SRQ for their generosity. A big thanks, as well, to our Academy presenting team, Marie Berthou, mother of one of our members, and Vanessa Alcantara, Program Coordinator, both of whom spoke eloquently about the urgent need for this initiative.



(L to R) Vanessa Alcantara, Rosemary Stack (Academy Board Chair), and Marie Berthou accepting the Impact100 SRQ grant

A WARM WELCOME TO STEFANI TORRES

by Stefani Torres

I was born in Las Vegas, Nevada, but my family wanted a better future, so we moved to Florida. I went to high school here and then attended Manatee Technical College where I learned many new skills. I enjoyed being a learner. Soon after, I started working with my mom to help her sell vegetables at the Red Barn Flea Market. I enjoyed helping people pick ingredients for their meals, and giving them ideas of how to prepare the food. After some time, I decided I wanted to continue growing professionally in the culinary field. That is when I found out about the Academy at Bradenton. Shortly after, I applied with the hopes of learning new culinary skills, so I can eventually get a job.



When I was accepted to join the Academy, I was so happy! Soon after becoming a member, I started to cook again! I am thrilled that I am learning new culinary skills with great instructors and other members.



(L to R) Stefani Torres and Alicia Velez in culinary

BANKING ON BRIGHT FINANCIAL FUTURES

The Academy at Glengary and the Academy at Bradenton are now community partners with Bank On Suncoast, a program convened by United Way Suncoast to reduce the number of individuals who are "unbanked" and build stronger financial futures for residents of Manatee, Sarasota, and surrounding counties. As this directly benefits our members, including those returning to paid employment, it is vital that they have secure financial resources. Our members may be driven to use expensive and often suspect services such as check cashers, payday lenders, and pawn shops; not only paying too much for basic financial transactions but also failing to build savings and assets.

Bank On Suncoast connects potential customers to Bank On Certified Accounts, provides financial education, and partners with community organizations such as ours to integrate banking access with existing services. As our newest community partner, Bank On Suncoast will connect both Academies with local financial institutions to provide easy access to safe, affordable, and functional banking services for our members.

This partnership fits well within the financial dimension of wellness to support the financial stability and success of our members. Many thanks to Mark Smith, Manager of Financial Security at United Way Suncoast, for organizing this partnership. There will also be opportunities for these banks to provide financial education through wellness workshops at the Academy.

Stay tuned!



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MIXING IT UP IN MULTIMEDIA

by Aaron Williams

I hosted a multimedia workshop for the first time, and it was a success. I had the opportunity to teach fellow Academy at Bradenton members how to use our Adobe Premiere Pro Software program by teaching them the basics.

I engaged members by teaching them how to drag images and background music into their video library, and I showed them a few editing techniques. After showing them some of the basics with that program, I demonstrated how to activate some of our podcast equipment, like how to turn on the Roadcaster mixing board and the computer that we use for our recording studio.

The workshop only lasted about 35 minutes because transportation arrived for members to go home. I would like to continue to teach a multimedia series, and even host workshops in the other teams now that I have been here long enough to know my way around. It would be wonderful to have members be able to work in each team so they can continue to develop their skills, just as I have.



(L to R) Ray Reilly, Ashley Muscat, and Aaron Williams in the multimedia workshop

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AcademySRQ.org
and click on the button
Thank you for transforming lives!

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