

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Learning about mental health conditions can help you respond with empathy, understanding and confidence.

Learn more: <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/what-is-mental-health/facts>

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FRESH BEGINNINGS

by Gloria Madrid

I've worked in the bakery department at Fresh Market for two years now! It took a year of working with my job coach, Vanessa Alcantara-Mangrum, at the Academy before landing this job.

There were a few jobs along the way that weren't a great fit for me, but it was worth the wait to find the right job. It hasn't always been smooth sailing. One of my big challenges was communicating with my coworkers and supervisors. In the past, I would have quit the job when it got challenging, but Vanessa worked with me and my employer to help me overcome my lack of communication skills. Now, when there's a problem at work, I use strategies that I worked on at the Academy to solve my issues.



Gloria Madrid working at Fresh Market's bakery

This is the longest job I've ever held and the first time I've worked full time with a successful outcome! I'm very excited for my next step: I will be starting college in August 2026 in a Baking and Pastry Chef program. I've gained so much independence since starting this job, and I know the future will continue to be bright. The Academy has really helped me accomplish my goals.

WARM WELCOME TO DIANA MARTE

by Diana Marte

Hola everyone! My name is Diana Marte, and I'm from the Dominican Republic. I recently joined the Academy at Bradenton as a care coordinator for the Business & Technology team. From day one, the experience has been amazing and I'm truly enjoying every minute of it.



My favorite part of the day is greeting everyone and helping with cash-out. I love being able to connect with members and staff and start the day with a smile; it really sets the tone for everything that follows.

Working here has been eye-opening for me. Seeing the positive impact the Academy is having in the community is incredibly inspiring, and it motivates me to keep learning, growing, and doing my best every day.

I have a background in graphic design and illustration, and I love anything related to art and creating. Whether it's drawing, designing, or exploring new creative ideas, I'm happiest when I'm making something. A fun fact about me is that I was a ballet dancer for 15 years, which taught me discipline, creativity, and how powerful dedication can be.



(L to R) Diana Marte and Ryan Krajewski in Business & Technology

I'm very grateful for the warm welcome I've received from everyone at the Academy. I'm excited to be part of this community and look forward to growing together.



"MORE GOOD DAYS, TOGETHER"

In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month in May, we wore green and the Multimedia teams at both campuses made a video asking "What is a good day to you?" Here are some of our answers:

"Any day I can make someone laugh."
—David Myersburg
 "Starting the day with a great cup of coffee and great motivation to come to

Click the link to view our video: <https://youtu.be/jJ5i-VmFoMQ>

Members and staff wearing green in honor of Mental Health Awareness Month in May

the Academy." **—Danica Willis** "Coming to the Academy and going to the YMCA together." **—Jason Sulimay** "Working at the Academy with my friends and working on my culinary skills." **—Brent Jephson** "Working with the culinary team because there is no "I" in team." **—Yvonne Miller** "Every day I wake up, run through my wellness program, and get going." **—Bernie Walsh** "Waking up in the morning to my new puppy, eating a good breakfast and getting out of the house before 8am." **—Andrew Matei** "Getting one hour of sun and at least one hour of exercise." **—Alex DeSanctis** "Drinking some coffee and seeing you guys." **—Joseph Lewis** "Spending time with people or going for walks out in nature or going to the library. Just being active and enjoying, "the simple pleasures." **—Sandra Overmyer** "Going into the kitchen, preparing the temperature logs, getting the cutting boards ready to prep, and continuing through the day." **—Ryan Krajewski** "Having coffee at the morning meeting and discussing tasks in the multimedia room, and I especially like doing the daily menu." **—Andrew Vasalaki** "Walking my dog around the neighborhood or a park and just enjoying the beautiful weather." **—Brooke DePuy** "Hanging out with my friends at the Academy. We have a great time. They threw me a birthday party along with another member and we had a beautiful time together." **—Sharra Everett** "When I catch big trout." **—Zacharia Bell** "Coming to the Academy is a good day." **—Debra Odom** "When I wake up in the morning, have my morning coffee, take a shower, and get ready for the day." **—Ray Reilly** "Getting out of bed and looking at the sunshine outside and coming to the Academy. Looking at friendly member and staff faces and looking forward to doing a fun project." **—Rima Ghalieh**

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