



SILVER LINING ON THE BIG SCREEN

by Jacob Brown



Jacob Brown working at AMC theaters

Finding employment was definitely a journey. At times it felt like a dead end but then one day I saw a help wanted ad for the AMC theaters. I'm a big movie buff and the thought of working in a theater seemed almost too good to be true.

My Academy job coach Vanessa Alcantara-Mangrum helped me with the online application and soon after, I was called in for an interview. I practiced

interview skills with Vanessa, running through many possible questions that I might be asked. Vanessa went with me to the interview. Having her there kept me calm, and she bragged about me, encouraging them to give me a chance. There were two interviews for the position and I was offered a job on the spot at the second one.

I've been working there since March 12. I cashier, usher and greet guests 20 hours a week. I just love it! The job can sometimes get a little complicated and stressful but it's teaching me new skills and strategies, and I love a challenge. Plus, it doesn't hurt that I get to see movies for free!

I had many interviews before getting this job. They say that when one door closes, another door opens. I thank the Academy for holding the door open for me.

WARM WELCOME TO VICKY VEDL

by Vicky Vedl



I grew up in Belgrade, Serbia in a farming community so, from an early age, I have always been an early riser and a hard worker. I left Serbia for the United States with my young children 30 years ago after receiving a master's degree in economics. I started a cleaning business here, which was successful until I retired five years ago. But it wasn't easy. I was a single mom working full time and carrying a lot of responsibility in a new country. Speaking a new language made it difficult to fully express myself, which was isolating.

A few months ago, I had a mental health crisis, and I went to the Cornell Behavioral Pavilion at Sarasota Memorial Hospital. While it was a very challenging time, the silver lining is that I learned about the Academy at Bradenton. My first impression when I came for my Academy tour was that the Academy is a strong community that is service-driven. I immediately felt drawn to it and hoped that it would provide opportunities for friendship and a way for me to contribute to something vital while learning new things.



Vicky Vedl cooking in Culinary

I'm making the most of my time here. With the help of other members and staff, I'm learning new skills in the design team. And in the culinary team, I bring my talents, recipes and ideas, and I get positive feedback that makes me feel appreciated. This is a safe community to step out

of my comfort zone, make mistakes, and learn from them. It's a relief to have a place to go every day, where my contributions are valued and everyone is welcoming and ready to help.

"THROUGH THE LENS"

by Ryan Krajewski

When it comes to multimedia, I was clueless. But with the help of the Academy and James Derzypolski, our multimedia instructor, I am learning new things behind the camera. James asked me to direct an exercise video for the Academy's morning meetings.

First, we set up the room with props and workout gear, being mindful of making best use of the natural light. Then I learned to direct people on a video shoot. You really have to pay attention to everything that happens in each shot, so it takes a lot of focus. It also takes patience. A three minute video can take over an hour to shoot! I had to give direction to people and tell them what to do. I'm not normally a bossy guy so it felt unnatural at first, but I eventually got the hang of it. It was cool to see "through the lens" of the director's point of view. I think it's a useful skill to becoming a leader.

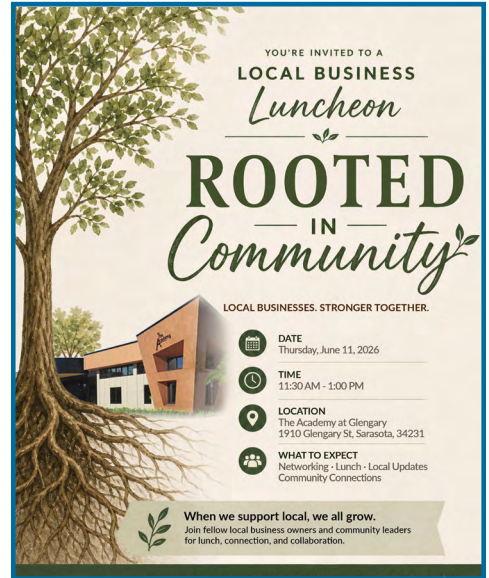
My goal in directing is to one day create a music video podcast for the Academy. I am grateful for James for asking me to step out of my comfort zone, and to the Academy for continually helping guide me to new experiences. It was a lot of fun!



(L to R) Tara Kersch, Ryan Krajewski and James Derzypolski "behind the scenes" filming exercise videos

ROOTED IN COMMUNITY

Our upcoming *Rooted in Community* business luncheon on Thursday, June 11, 2026, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Academy at Glengary will bring together local business owners, entrepreneurs, and community leaders to connect, exchange ideas, and build lasting relationships.



Invitation designed by our Graphics & Multimedia team

Participating businesses will have the opportunity to introduce their services, share their mission, and engage directly with Academy members and staff. We look forward to learning more about their work and exploring opportunities to collaborate.

Featuring businesses located within a few miles of the Academy, the luncheon helps members discover local resources while creating opportunities for collaboration and mutual support. It serves as a platform to strengthen local partnerships and foster a network that benefits our members, families, and neighbors.

If you know of a local Sarasota business located within a few miles of Academy at Glengary that may not yet be familiar with the Academy, share the website link below to RSVP by Tuesday, June 9, 2026:

<https://glengaryrootedincommunity.rsvpify.com>

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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