



SKILLS TO PAY THE BILLS

by Austin Nichols



(L to R) Austin Nichols and Hunter Lanoue in the Graphics & Multimedia team

As someone who has worked in education at the elementary level for nearly twelve years, learning has become essential to who I am and what I value as an adult.

Nowhere is this value more evident than at the Academy. Day

after day, we are learning what we need to be successful within several different work environments, all housed under one roof! For me, my focus is three-fold: interpersonal skills, work-life balance and technical skills related to multimedia production.

Dreams of a career in filmmaking as a young adult were all but dashed due to a mental illness, and it was only through recovery from certain aspects of those health challenges that I was able to see a possibility of career advancement in education. I saw a need for children to be guided and bolstered emotionally from healthy adults who might have something worthwhile to teach. For nearly twelve years, my students have shown me all that I have to learn and opened my mind to a world of wonder of future possibilities.

As I enter yet another summer break, I am again blessed by that sense of wonder here at the Academy. Could I work happily alongside adults as well as children? It may seem a strange question to ask, but for me it's apt. Could there be a place of learning that might provide me with the skills I would need to expand my career, infused with multimedia art, my first real passion?

The Academy has shown itself as a beacon of hope for me and countless others. Thank you to the Academy and all the great mentors, members and staff alike, who welcome me and so many others with open arms so we can learn the skills to pay the bills.

WARM WELCOME TO EUGENE SMITH

by Eugene Smith

Before I joined the Academy, I kept to myself and wasn't doing anything productive. The FACT team at Centerstone referred me to the Academy to get me out of that pattern. When I first toured, I was hopeful that the Academy would accept me, and that it would benefit my life.

Since joining, I spend a lot of my time in the Graphics & Multimedia team, taking photos for publications, editing videos for fundraising events, and writing articles for the newsletter. I also volunteer in the Culinary team, prepping ingredients for lunch, making soups, salads and entrees. Before joining the Academy, I had only ever cooked eggs!

In addition to the hard skills I am learning here, I am also improving in soft skills such as collaborating with others, communicating clearly, accepting critical feedback, and active listening. These skills will help me pursue a career in customer service.

My hobby is playing the violin. I am self-taught, and I play every day. I even met another violinist here that I can collaborate with!

Even though violin isn't a focus at the Academy, it's just testimony that the benefits of the Academy go beyond the work.



Eugene Smith playing his violin for members at Academy at Bradenton

WHERE COMMUNITY GROWS

by John Peacock

This week we held our very first *Rooted in Community* business luncheon—bringing together local businesses, community leaders, members, staff and Board of Directors of Academy at Glengary.

It was a wonderful gathering for all who attended. Our Culinary team outdid themselves with an impressive surf ‘n’ turf buffet.

A special thanks goes to our guests. We’re hoping that this was the first of many gatherings to come.



Guests, members and staff at the *Rooted in Community* luncheon



Guests receiving a tour in our *Business & Technology* room



(L to R) Jason Sulimay goal planning with Program Coordinator Billy Elkins

GOALS DRIVE GROWTH

by Jason Sulimay

One of the most important parts of being a member at the Academy is goal planning. Meeting regularly with my staff advisor helps me stay focused on the goals I set for myself and gives me an opportunity to talk about my progress. It also helps keep me accountable because I know someone is checking in and supporting me along the way. My staff advisor gives me encouragement, feedback, and helps me stay on course when working toward my goals.

My recent goals have focused on social, physical, and intellectual wellness. Intellectually, I have challenged myself to lead workshops and I am even considering developing a Microsoft Excel workshop in the future. Additionally, I have been working in the Business & Tech team, learning proper accounting procedures. Spending time getting to know the members in my team has boosted my social wellness. Physically, I have been committed to maintaining a regular gym schedule, and I plan on taking the exercise class with Coach Hal in the future. Goal planning helps me continue growing in these areas and reminds me that progress happens one step at a time.

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