

LOOKING LIKE A MILLION BUCKS!

If you follow our weekly newsletters, you might recall reading that we hit a significant milestone last year. The official 2025 tally is in: 91 employed Academy members across our two campuses collectively earned \$1,385,211 during the calendar year, surpassing the one-million-dollar mark for the first time in our history. This figure is much more than a number; it reflects the hard work of members who have now become taxpayers and are discovering a path to self-sufficiency.



Ashley Muscat working at the Manatee County Public Defender's Office.

We have long believed that work is a key factor in transforming lives, as it provides a sense of self-worth, gives meaning to our lives and creates financial stability, fostering independence. For so many who define themselves by their career, gainful employment gives them an answer to that age-old loaded (and oft loathed) question: "what do you do?"



Preston Zorn with his first paycheck from the State Attorney's Office.

From teachers, research administrators and IT specialists to counselors, cooks and cashiers, Academy members are doing some pretty impressive things in a diverse range of careers while overcoming significant health-related barriers to success.

Some are working for the first time while others are returning to the workforce after a lengthy absence. In both cases, members must draw on their courage and tenacity to realize their occupational goals in addition to their significant work skills.



Hunter Lanoue with his first paycheck from Sunset Cadillac.

Most of our working members still find the time to join us at evening or weekend socials or on scheduled days off from their jobs. They seem to have a little spring in their step, and they bring a fresh vitality into the building, inspiring those members who may have begun to doubt themselves and their capacity to achieve their career goals. Their peers are living proof of possibility.



Paul Mathisen keeps the YMCA in order.

Academy members look like a million bucks, and they're worth every penny.



Gloria Madrid baking delicious treats at Fresh Market.

MAJOR MILESTONE!

2025 EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS



\$1,385,211.00

Cumulative Member Earnings in 2025

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OUR AMBASSADORS

The Academy Ambassadors fill a vital role by sharing our mission and helping us build strong roots in the community.

Peter Abbott	Josie & Alan Churchill	Hal Hedley	Mike & Mary Quillen
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COMMUNITY • WORK • QUALITY • FRIENDSHIP • RESPECT • WELLNESS





MEET JUSTIN

Before finding the Academy, I was stuck in a cycle I couldn't seem to get out of on my own. And honestly, what I needed wasn't just help finding a job. I needed a way back into life; back into a routine, into the community, and into feeling like myself.

I didn't expect how much the small things would matter: having somewhere to be and people who actually care how I'm doing, friendships that feel real, and a sense of normalcy and routine. The socialization and community side of the program mean as much to me as anything else, maybe more. That's what made everything else possible.

Justin Gee

All that the Academy has done for me: the resume help, career development, job placement support; none of it would have stuck if I hadn't gotten to a better place first. The Academy helped me get there, at my own pace and without pressure.

Today I work full time in IT at MarineMax. The job is meaningful and the stability that comes with it matters more than I can say. It's given me the freedom to do things I couldn't before: take trips, meet new people, actually look forward to what's next. What's changed most is harder to put into words. I have a career, a life I'm proud of, and things to look forward to.

I'm really grateful for the people at the Academy who were in my corner when I needed it.

"The Academy helped me get there, at my own pace and without pressure."



MEET CHANTEL

With help from the Academy, I have been working at Publix for over five years. I looked for work for a very long time before joining the Academy. It wasn't good for me to have so much time on my hands. I grew frustrated and discouraged, but joining the Academy changed all that!

When I first started the job, my anxiety was through the roof. My Academy job coach helped me through it. She helped me apply online, and she practiced interviewing skills with me. She was right by my side at the interview and for all of my initial trainings. I used to call her for everything from help with computer trainings to requesting days off, but now I've learned to do everything by myself, and I no longer get nervous talking to my managers. My coworkers are so nice and friendly, and it makes me feel safe, like I belong. It's helped

me grow a lot and become more confident around people. I sometimes used to get feedback from my managers that I wasn't talking to customers enough but now I'm friendly with everyone. Customers often compliment me on a job well done.

The income has allowed me to do more fun things but, even more exciting, I have been able to save money for my future. I hope to stay with Publix for many more years because the experience has changed my life for the better. At Publix, working is a pleasure.

Chantel Gingerich



"...the experience has changed my life for the better."

SS • SERVICE • KINDNESS • PURPOSE • ACCEPTANCE • STRUCTURE



HAPPY SECOND ANNIVERSARY

We celebrated the Academy at Bradenton's second anniversary, opening our doors to friends old and new, community partners, families, Academy Ambassadors, volunteers and elected officials, including speakers Commissioner Amanda Ballard of District 2, the Honorable Judge Gilbert A. Smith Jr., President and CEO of Central Florida Behavioral Network Alan Davidson, and Academy colleagues, William McKeever and Vanessa Alcantara-Mangrum. We were truly amazed at the turnout - an estimated 250 guests visited us. Maybe they came for the excellent food that our members and staff prepared, or for the dulcet tones of The Jazzberries, a jazzy duo that never disappoints. But whatever motivated our guests to join us, everyone left with a smile on their face and a belief in the power of gratitude, kindness, acceptance and service.



Rosemary Stack,
Chair, Academy Board of Directors



Judge Gilbert E. Smith Jr.
12th Judicial Circuit



Amanda Ballard,
Manatee County Commissioner



Alan Davidson, President and CEO
Central Florida Behavioral Health Network



DONATE today and become part of the solution in mental health. Please visit:

AcademySRQ.org

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Designed and printed on-site by members and staff of the Academy.



Public-Private Partnership.

FIELD OF DREAMS

Our Field of Dreams fundraiser series was a hit! Guests were treated to a world-class meal along with moving personal testimonials from members Long Pham and Ray Reilly. The Masters of Ceremonies, members David Meyersburg and Ian Churchill, kept things running smoothly, and member Preston Zorn made a compelling case to support our mission. Our Multimedia team, not to be outdone, created a short video that highlights the fact that mental health is a team sport. Check it out on our website!



Ray Reilly sharing his testimonial at a recent fundraiser.

THANK YOU TO PARTNERS

Transitional Employment (TE) offers Academy members the opportunity to work at some of the most prestigious local organizations. TEs can be life-changing for our members, and we could not do it without the trust and support of our employment partners. To the Office of the Public Defender 12th Judicial Circuit of Florida, Office of the State Attorney 12th Judicial Circuit of Florida, Sarasota Memorial Healthcare System and Sunset Cadillac: we salute you!



Want to learn more?

The first step is to take a tour!

Families, applicants and community providers are welcome.

To schedule a tour or for more information, please call:

Academy at Bradenton, 601 12th St., W., Bradenton - 941-929-2800

Academy at Glengary, 1910 Glengary St., Sarasota - 941-921-9930

or email Info@AcademySRQ.org

Hours: Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.