ACADEMY TIMES

ACADEMY AT GLENGARY | ACADEMY AT BRADENTON

NEWS OF THE ACADEMY AT GLENGARY AND ACADEMY AT BRADENTON

November 6, 2026







BRINGING IDEAS HOME

Ryan Krajewski and Vanessa Alcantara-Mangrum recently had the opportunity to attend a two-week colleague training at Fountain House in NYC. While there, they learned more about the history of the Clubhouse model, participated in deep and engaging roundtable discussions about the 37 standards and the secret ingredients to success: work and relationships. Founded in 1955, Fountain House has an average daily attendance of over 300 members a day and operates in eight teams. They worked side by side in the teams with Fountain House colleagues as well as those from other Clubhouses who were also attending the training. Both Ryan and Vanessa were especially inspired by the Supported Education team and in-house scholarship opportunities provided to members for certificate programs, driver's education and GED exams. At the end of the training, they completed an Action Plan to bring many fresh and exciting ideas back to Bradenton.

Outside of the training, there was no lack of social and cultural opportunities! Ryan's "carpe diem" energy and enthusiasm kept Vanessa on her toes as they took in as much as they could of the city. Ryan stated, "New York was a true experience I will cherish for a long time, from the bustling street sounds to the warm welcoming from members at Fountain House. It felt great to walk the streets of the Big Apple! I found community in the wellness and home and garden teams. A part of my heart remains with Fountian House and Manhattan." Ryan is a true experientialist and took away long-lasting New York friendships and memories to last a lifetime!



(L to R) Ryan Krajewski and Vanessa Alcantara-Mangrum attending colleague training at Fountain House

WARM WELCOME TO CHRIS PARRISH

by Chris Parrish

I attended the Academy at Glengary for about a year when Covid hit. I have germophobia so I was struggling with anxiety at that time because of the pandemic fears. After the anxiety faded, I worked for a few places and eventually decided to research how I could build my own business. I formulated a plan to sell my stylized digital art on Etsy. It's a great endeavor for an introvert like me, but I hit some roadblocks. So it was necessity that led me back to the Academy, this time at the Academy at Bradenton campus. In order to be successful, I would need to improve my skills, and I knew that the Academy would be just the place to do it!

I have made great strides in this respect. But what I hadn't considered was how much I would benefit from being around people and contributing to something outside my personal goals. I can isolate for long periods though I know that this is not always a healthy choice. I've met a lot of friendly and welcoming people, and I've had fun on video shoots where I've been behind the camera (and below the drone!) on location, learning to edit videos and use AI for visual effects, and contributing to the Business & Technology team by inputting statistics into reports needed for our sustainability. As my Etsy business takes off, so does my sense of purpose. There's an expression, "to go fast, go alone. To go far, go together." I'm grateful for the Academy for keeping me on the ride.



Chris Parrish flying the drone during the filming of our Luncheon video

ADVOCACY, SUPPORT, SUCCESS

We had the pleasure of hosting Laurel White for a Lunch & Learn in Bradenton this week. Laurel is a disability advocate and the owner of My Disability Advocate. As a social security disability claims representative, Laurel provides personalized support at every step of the social security disability process.

Laurel previously worked for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation so she could really appreciate the work that we do to help members become job ready. She remarked that she wished the Academy was around when she was supporting people in finding and maintaining employment. We are always delighted to find resources to help our members in ways that fall outside of our scope of services.



(L to R) Carolyn Daniele, Vanessa Alcantara-Mangrum and Laurel White



Members and staff round table discussion at the Employment Dinner

MILESTONES & MOMENTUM

Employment Dinners play an important role in fostering a culture of employment within the Academy at Glengary. They provide members with an opportunity to come together, share experiences, celebrate accomplishments, and explore their individual employment goals. Whether a member is currently working, considering employment, participating in a Transitional Employment (TE) opportunity, or simply building confidence and vocational skills, these gatherings create a welcoming environment where everyone feels included and encouraged to take the next step in their personal journey.

Last night's dinner was especially meaningful as we celebrated exciting milestones: member Preston Zorn obtained employment as a Walmart Digital Personal Shopper, member Eddie Rudin's successful placement in a Transitional Employment position at Sarasota Memorial Hospital and last but certainly not least, all members in Transitional Employment celebrated 100% perfect attendance so far this year.

We also explored Sarasota's top five employment industries, discussing how the Academy already prepares members with skills relevant to these fields and identifying additional ways we can strengthen our support and training opportunities. As always, the evening included delicious food, engaging conversation, and a wonderful sense of community.

Employment Dinners remind us that employment is about more than finding a job; it is about building independence, discovering strengths, developing purpose, and creating opportunities.

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