



## Welcome to the Transition Times



In this edition of The Transition Times we are recognizing our wonderful business partners. It is our business partners who supply the “real world classrooms” that give our students the valuable hands on career experience they will need to find future employment. We decided to turn the tables in this edition of the Transition Times and gave the students the opportunity of interviewing their supervisors. Check out pages two through six to see how the students fared as the interviewers.

This year we are honoring members from the Manatee Transition Interagency Committee who have worked extra hard by “Kicking It Up A Notch,” for our students. Read about the monthly winners thus far on page 10.

***Hope you all enjoy this fall/winter edition of The Transition Times as much as the 14 students and 10 teachers who contributed articles. Happy Holidays!***

Diane Roberts  
FDLRS/ESE Transition Specialist

---

---

### The New “OJT Cafeteria Program” is a Win-Win

In September 2004, Manatee County received money from a small grant known as the Hiring Practice Initiative grant (HPI). The purpose of the grant was to focus on improving the hiring practices of persons with disabilities within school districts as well as city and county governments. Sadly, the grant has come to an end this year. However, Manatee County can be very proud of the fact, that through the support that was received from the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council working with The Transition Center at the University of Florida, progress was made. The school system has enthusiastically supported this initiative by giving students the opportunity to work at the School Support Center and various Elementary Schools in the district. Most recently, Sandra Ford, Director of Food and Nutrition Services and Rusty Moore, Staff Coordinator for Food Services collaborated with Diane Roberts, ESE Transition Specialist, to create “The Cafeteria Program” for ESE/OJT students.



Tamika White, PHS Senior, demonstrates her culinary skills as the first student to be hired through the “OJT Cafeteria Program.”

# Student Interviews



## Bayshore High Gets “The Scoop”

The OJT students at Bayshore High School took on a different role at the Manatee Players Riverfront Theatre. They took off their regular work hats and donned their press hats. They spent time getting to know the staff at the Theatre. Read on for the real scoop!

William Jackson Interviews  
Janene Witham, Director of Development



**William:** What do you do at the Theatre?

**Ms. Janene:** Raise money for everything, funds for day-to-day operations. The majority of my time is spent raising funds for the new Manatee Players Performing Arts Center.

**William:** How long have you worked at the Theatre?

**Ms. Janene:** A little over a year.

**William:** Do you like having us (OJT Students) here?

**Ms. Janene:** Yes, I love your different personalities. I feel it is important for the community to understand the advantage of having Community Theater. You students are awesome ambassadors for the Theatre.

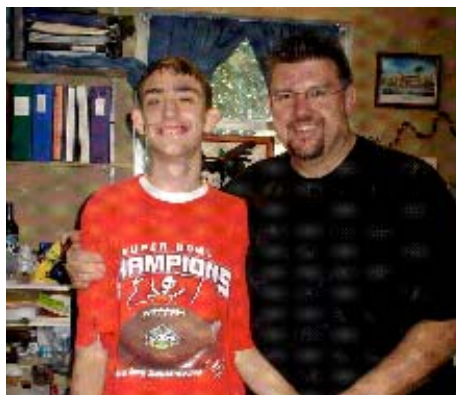
**William:** Have you been in any plays?

**Ms. Janene:** Yes, I was the Musical Historian in “Review Revue,” a time line on the last 58 years of the Theatre.

**William:** When will the new Theatre be open?

**Ms. Janene:** Hopefully, in the fall of 2007.

Joel Parks Interviews  
Tony Becich, Financial Director



**Joel:** What is your job at the Theatre?

**Mr. Tony:** I am the Financial Director. I keep track of all the money. I pay the bills, take care of payroll and insurance, take care of office supplies and equipment and I over see maintenance.

**Joel:** Do you like having OJT here?

**Mr. Tony:** Yes, It’s fun. The students bring joy here every morning.

**Joel:** Should other businesses try it? (OJT)

**Mr. Tony:** Yes they should, you (OJT students) are helpful; we couldn’t do it without you.

**Joel:** How long have you worked here?

**Mr. Tony:** I have been Financial Director for a year and a half. Before that I was stage manager for 6 years.

**Joel:** Are you excited about the new Theatre?

**Mr. Tony:** Very, it will have a lot more room and we won’t have to worry about the building falling apart.

## The Scoop Continues...

### David Jones Interviews Denny Miller, Marketing Director



**David:** What is your job at the Theatre?

**Mr. Denny:** I am the Marketing Director. I am in charge of advertising and creating the Play Bills and all flyers.

**David:** How long have you worked here?

**Mr. Denny:** Seven years but I have been a volunteer since 1982.

**David:** How do you like acting in the plays?

**Mr. Denny:** I love acting. I like making the audience smile.

**David:** How many plays have you been in?

**Mr. Denny:** 60 shows!!! I have been on stage more than anybody in the history of the Theatre.

**David:** Do you plan on continuing to act?

**Mr. Denny:** I do, right now I am in rehearsal for The Nutcracker, with the Diane Partington School of Classical Ballet.

### Karla Hayes Interviews Travis Rogers, Box Office Manager

**Karla:** What do you do at the Box Office?

**Mr. Travis:** My job is customer service. We service 35,000 people a year with season tickets or tickets purchased at the box office.

**Karla:** How do you like working in the Box Office?

**Mr. Travis:** I always wanted to work in the Theatre. I come from a theatrical family. I love interacting with the customers, when I'm here at the Theatre it is like being home.

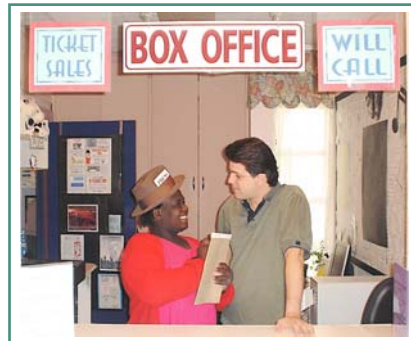
**Karla:** When do you work?

**Mr. Travis:** I work when the box office is open, Monday – Thursday, 10:00am until 5:00pm, Friday from 10:00am until 6:00pm and Saturday from 10:00am until 2:00 pm.

**Karla:** Do you act in any plays?

**Mr. Travis:** Yes, when I have a chance. Taking care of patrons is a full time job, but the last play I was in was Cinderella, where I played the Prince.

**Karla:** How are the people you work with?



**Mr. Travis:** The staff is really nice. We help each other when needed. We are always busy doing something, but we jump in to help when we can.

### Travis Gissendanner Interviews Bill Booth, Technical Director



**Travis:** What do you do at the Theatre?

**Mr. Bill:** I build the sets, set up lights and sound for each play.

**Travis:** Do you like working at the Theatre?

**Mr. Bill:** Yes, there are constant changes, put a show up take it down. It is never the same. There are incredible people here with so much talent. It is new everyday!

**Travis:** Is it hard work?

**Mr. Bill:** Yes, sometimes 17 hours a day!

**Travis:** How long have you worked at the Theatre?

**Mr. Bill:** Since 1994, twelve years off and on.



## Braden River High Students learn from the “Fruits of Their Labor”

This year Mixon Fruit Farms has become a new OJT business partner with Manatee County Schools. The students from Braden River High perform a variety of jobs from working in the deli, to helping on tours, and getting the train ready for tours. The success of this partnership has produced a great interviews with Mr. Alfredo Nudi and Ms. Shirley Miller.



Amanda Mahar Interviews  
Alfredo Nudi, Deli Manager



**Amanda :** What do you look for in an employee?

**Mr. Nudi :** Being prompt for starting time and returning from breaks.

**Amanda:** What do you look for in an employer?

**Mr. Nudi :** Fairness and good treatment

**Amanda:** How long have you been employed by Mixon's?

**Mr. Nudi :** 2 month's

**Amanda:** What do you think is the 2 most important jobs at Mixon's?

**Mr. Nudi :** Plant supervisors, deli managers

**Amanda :**What do you like best about your job?

**Mr. Nudi :** All the nice people

**Amanda:** What do you like least about your job?

**Mr. Nudi :** Nothing, everything is good

**Amanda :** What is your level of education?

**Mr.Nudi :** Some college

**Amanda :** How important do you think is a high school education? Why?

**Mr. Nudi :** Very important, you need training and education to get a good job and to do a good job for your employer.

Cliff Jones interviews  
Shirley Miller, Plant Supervisor



**Cliff:** What do you look for in an employee?

**Ms. Miller:** Promptness and the willingness to do any job.

**Cliff:** How long have you been employed by Mixon's

**Ms. Miller:** I have been an employee of Mixon's for 36 years.

**Cliff:** What do you think are the 2 most important jobs at Mixon's?

**Ms. Miller:** There is no important job, everyone is equal. I wouldn't ask you to do anything that she wouldn't do herself.

**Cliff:** What do you like best about your job?

**Ms. Miller:** The people I work with.

**Cliff:** What do you like least about your job?

**Ms. Miller:** I like everything about my job.

**Cliff:** What is your level of education?

**Ms. Miller:** I have a high school education.

**Cliff:** How important is a high school education?

**Ms. Miller:** Very important, and you need to further your education so you can advance in life and have a better career.



## Hot off the Press from Palmetto High



Mr. Tetrault with students, Frenchie & Justin

The Palmetto High School Career Experience classes have been volunteering at Riviera Palms Nursing and Rehab Center for the past four years. Over the years the students have served in Dietary, Maintenance, Housekeeping and Activities. Many of the students have been hired for after school, part-time jobs in the Dietary Department.

During the past month two of our students, Frenchie Jamison and Justin Garrett had the opportunity to interview Administrator, Chris Tetrault and ask him a few questions about the Healthcare industry.

**Frenchie & Justin:** Mr. Tetrault, how long have you been the Administrator for Riviera Palms?

**Mr. Tetrault:** I have been at Riviera Palms since May of 2005.

**Frenchie & Justin:** How did you get involved in the healthcare industry?

**Mr. Tetrault:** I went in to healthcare shortly after receiving my BA degree in psychology. I later went on to receive my master's degree in health services. I really enjoy working with the elderly and trying to make a positive difference in their lives.

**Frenchie & Justin:** Tell us a little about Riviera Palms Nursing and Rehab Center.

**Mr. Tetrault:** Riviera Palms is a 120 bed nursing facility. We specialize in short-term, in-patient rehabilitation. The facility has been serving the community for approximately 20 years.

**Frenchie & Justin:** Mr. Tetrault, what is the best part of your job?

**Mr. Tetrault:** The best part of my job is leading a team of caregivers that make a difference in the residents and patients we care for. I also enjoy the challenges and problem solving that occurs in the center on a daily basis. There is never a dull moment!

**Frenchie & Justin:** Mr. Tetrault, what is the most difficult part of your job?

**Mr. Tetrault:** Keeping all stakeholders satisfied. I interact daily with residents, family, employees, corporate consultants, vendors and state agencies. The nursing home industry is the second most regulated industry next to nuclear power.

**Frenchie & Justin:** Mr. Tetrault, would you encourage young people to go into the healthcare industry?

**Mr. Tetrault:** I would highly recommend the healthcare industry. Those who choose healthcare are rewarded on a daily basis. It is a career field where there is something for everybody. You can work in Nursing, Social Services, Marketing, Maintenance, Dietary or many other related areas. Stay in school and learn as much as you can!

### Justin Gets the Job

Starting off in Career Experience and then employed, that is what happened to Justin Garrett. Justin is a 10<sup>th</sup> grader at Palmetto High School and a member of the JROTC Drill team and Raiders. He spends his spare time at Rivirera Palms Nursing and Rehab. Center. Justin started out volunteering in the kitchen where he would wash dishes and assist the dietary staff. Carolyn Shrimplin told Justin the nursing home was in need of help on the weekends and evenings. Justin applied and was hired. Then his Career Experience work site was changed from dietary to resident's activity services. Justin does a great job transporting residents to and from different scheduled events and listening to stories concerning their life activity. Justin also visits with residents each day while he delivers the daily bulletin. Great job Justin!

## Southeast High Brothers Get the Scoop at the Holiday Inn

This year the Holiday Inn Riverfront has two Southeast High brothers on its staff. Guadalupe Martinez started his OJT career a year and a half ago, while working weekends and holidays as a prep cook. Following in big brothers footsteps, Mateo Martinez, began his OJT training in the dining room and kitchen last August and was hired in November. Together Mateo and Guadalupe interviewed 20 year veteran head chef, Robbie Cycotte. Here's what Chef Robbie had to say:



Guadalupe Martinez, Chef Robbie Cycotte, Mateo Martinez and Steve Jensen

**Mateo:** Describe the best job you ever had?

**Chef Robbie:** This one. I'm doing something different every day and there are constant challenges.

**Guadalupe:** What motivates you to go the extra mile on a project or job?

**Chef Robbie:** Starting a new job and watching it be completed.

**Mateo:** Have you ever been fired?

**Chef Robbie:** No.

**Guadalupe:** How do you see yourself as a leader.

**Chef Robbie:** Lead by example.

**Mateo:** Do you have any hobbies? What do you do in your spare time?

**Chef Robbie:** I have a car I like to drag race. I also play in a musical group. As often as I can, I go fishing.

Holiday Inn was the first ESE-OJT worksite for career experience 20 years ago and continues to be a major supporter of the ESE career continuum.



## Hammering out a Solution



**Problem:** Bayshore High School's P.A.E.S lab needs a workbench... who can help?

**Solution:** Manatee High's ESE construction class to the rescue.



With help from Manatee High School's ESE construction class, Bayshore High School's P.A.E.S. Lab students are enjoying their new workbench. Together Mr. Baird (Manatee High) and Mrs. Playdon (Bayshore High) purchased the wood that Mr. Baird's construction class used to build the workbench. This is an example of collaboration at its best.



Bayshore high students try out new workbench.

# \$\$\$ Show Me the Money \$\$\$

## A Taste of Success

The Lakewood Ranch High School Career Experience Program is pleased to announce receipt of a \$500.00 mini grant from the Lakewood Ranch Community Fund. The High School will team up with the program's business partner, Lakewood Ranch Medical Center to provide four culinary workshops in the life skills classroom throughout the 2006 -2007 school year. Students will learn a variety of culinary skills, equip the kitchen with a few new tools, and enjoy delicious fare in the company of friends. Life Skills learning can be tasty. Bon Appetit!



From left to right - Tommy Zellars, Tyler Cook, Dr. Tom Zellars, Assistant Principle LRHS, Candace Carlucci, Matt Ovitz, and Diane Roberts



## Mentoring Program in Full Force!

The Mentoring Students from BRHS have joined forces with USF Manatee/Sarasota and Bashaw Elementary School, and are now on their way to another great year!



Sara Gaines, Dr. Phyllis Jones, Carolyn Thompson, Shelby Thompson, Ashlee Banke, Craig Hochstadt

BRHS students were trained by USF students the first quarter, and did many classroom activities teaching them how to be good mentors and role models. Afterwards, BRHS students chose their preference of classes, at the elementary school, and got to work!

Our students have been doing an excellent job teaching, working, and learning with the Bashaw Elementary students.

Recently, the Mentoring Program received a grant from the Lakewood Ranch Community Fund of the Manatee Community Foundation. The mentors will use the grant money to purchase books for the Bashaw Elementary students in their classes.



Lakewood Ranch Community Fund grant reception was held on October 26. Grant Recipients are Sara Gaines, Braden River High, Candace Carlucci, Lakewood Ranch, and Diane Roberts, ESE Transition Specialist.



## Bayshore Buddies

### A Crowning Achievement

The Bayshore High School “Buddy Club” is a club where general education students have the opportunity to pair up with exceptional education students for some fun and friendship. This year there is a record number of 140 club members. The “Buddy Club” meets once a month on Activities Day. Every month there is a different activity for the students to enjoy.

At the September meeting the club members elected a Prince and Princess to represent the “Buddy Club” at homecoming. After the eleven-member court was introduced with a short bio, given flowers and a crown, the voting took place. Stephen Brownfield and Ellen Brown were elected Prince and Princess of the “Buddy Club”.

In keeping with the theme of Homecoming, the October meeting started with the official crowning of the Prince and Princess. The students then had a dance and made banners for the Homecoming Game Parade, where the Prince and Princess rode in their very own decorated red Mini Cooper.

With the huge success of the first two meetings, the “Buddy Club” is sure to be the best club at Bayshore High School.



Princess Ellen Brown  
& Prince Stephen Brownfield



## Holiday Happiness



### Stuffing the Turkey

The November 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Bayshore Buddy Club proved to be another great success. The collaborative efforts of the students produce some fantastic Turkeys. These terrific Turkeys were displayed around Bayshore High School and some went to Mr. Essig’s and Mrs. Playdon’s OJT sites, the Westminster Shores and Towers and Manatee Players Riverfront Theatre. Way to go Buddy Club!

### Feathers for Fluffing

Ms. Hamilton’s, Ms. McLellan’s and Ms. Wolfe’s classes have been busy getting ready for the Holidays. With modified individual instruction from Ms. Playdon in the P.A.E.S. (Practical Assessment Exploration System) Lab, they have been making festive holiday pillows.

With the material donated by the Manatee Players Riverfront Theatre, an OJT site for Bayshore, and the stuffing donated by Bayshore staff members, the students have really gotten into the holiday spirit!



## Transitioning with Technology



### Palmetto High begins new "Tiger" Print Shop Enterprise

Palmetto High's ESE OJT Career Experience Class in combination with the ESE Career Preparation and Technology Class has embarked on a unique concept of integrating their job experience with their classroom technology training. Here are some of the exciting projects the students have completed.

- Students made Holiday cards for the residents at the Riviera Palms Rehabilitation/Retirement Center.
- Each student wrote their own newsletter and took photos for their articles.
- Each student is learning Excel and they are compiling information from the newspaper on college football statistics.
- Students are learning digital photography by making candid photos of other students on campus, which is then made into slide show presentations for the students and faculty to view in the cafeteria.



- Students designed and created buttons that will be sold at the upcoming VISIONS Conference in February.
- Students made digital photos and then compiled them into a photojam to honor the Palmetto High School veterans on Veterans Day.

---

### Let Your Computer Do the Talking

ReadPlease is one of many text-to-speech software programs that can help struggling readers. Recently, I had the opportunity to meet Davis Graham, Executive Director/CFO of Manatee Diagnostic Center in Bradenton. Davis invited me to his office so I could get a first hand glimpse at how he uses readplease throughout his busy day. Davis was diagnosed with dyslexia in 1967. Needless to say, Davis has struggled with reading throughout high school and college. Then in 1991, he was faced with the daunting task of having to read a 30 page contract within a very short time frame. Out of sheer desperation, this led him to the internet where he googled "text reading software." Number two on the list was readplease.com, and to make matters even better, he noticed in quotes that it said "free download." He had the contract read in 1 hour and he has not hesitated to read since.

Since my meeting with Davis, I have tried to spread the word regarding readplease and other text reading software as well. Julie Tillet, a teacher at Palmetto High School has downloaded the software for her son who is in 8th grade and has learning disabilities. Julie reports that now her son uses readplease all the time, and it has made a difference.

For more information on text-to-speech software check out [www.freewarefiles.com](http://www.freewarefiles.com) or call Diane Roberts, FDLRS 708-8770 ext. 2186



## Kick-it-up-a-Notch

This year the Manatee Transition and Interagency Committee has implemented a new practice called the Kick-It-Up-A-Notch Award. The purpose of the award is to recognize the person(s) each month who have gone above and beyond to network with the business community and various agencies to improve and expand career opportunities for the students we serve.



**September:** Julie Tillett, ESE Teacher, Palmetto High



**October:** John Simpson, VR Job Coach & Bettie Stephenson, ESE Liason, MTI



**November:** Candace Carlucci, ESE Teacher, Lakewood Ranch

Congratulations to all, for going the extra mile for our students.



## Hands On Educational Services now at Sarasota Hyatt

Hands on Educational Services has expanded to Manatee and Sarasota Counties. Hands on Education Services provides training through a partnership with the Hyatt Hotels Corporation. Trainees are temporary employees of the Hyatt and receive a salary while enrolled in a two-week course. With support from program and Hyatt staff, trainees are better able to focus on their strengths rather than their limitations. Graduates receive certificates of completion; state required food-handler's certification, and placement assistance.

For more information on this exciting program contact John Ficca at 813-886-5600 or email [hndsoned@verizon.net](mailto:hndsoned@verizon.net)



John Ficca, Director; Michelle Tarrullo, HR Hyatt; Graduates: Chelsea Ross & Nicolas Francese

## Bayshore High School is on the Move!

Ten students from Bayshore High School are on the move. They are riding the MCAT (Manatee County Area Transit). These juniors and seniors are learning the ins and outs of the Public Transportation System. Once a month they travel on the MCAT with Ms. Playton to a different destination. Before the students travel they must first map out their route, decide which bus to take, find out if a transfer is needed and figure out what time to be at the bus stop. Once they have done this they are off and traveling. This bus training along with their On the Job Training will enable the students to secure employment and the independence to get to and from their job.

