

Accolades

■ Superintendent **Dr. Diana Greene** of Manatee County Public Schools is this year's **"Outstanding Superintendent Communicator,"** an honor given by the Sunshine State School



Manatee County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Diana Greene (center) accepts SUNSPRA's 2017 Outstanding Superintendent Communicator Award. Standing with Greene are SUNSPRA President Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC, and Blackboard's Tina McMechen.

Public Relations Association (SUNSPRA). Dr. Greene accepted the award in Tampa at the 72nd Annual Joint Conference of the Florida School Boards Association.

Greene launched and supports two major communication initiatives – the "ManaTeach" video series and #WeManatee social media campaign — to build trust and overcome false impressions. She led the information campaign resulting in voters renewing a half penny sales tax school district capital needs in 2016 that passed with 59 percent in favor. And now, she's on a quest to convince voters to approve a one-mill increase in property taxes in March for district operational needs including improving teacher salaries and lengthening the school day by half-an-hour.

Dr. Greene's success so far has even convinced her school board to extend her contract three years into the future. Dr. Diana Greene has led the School District of Manatee County since 2015.

A committee of judges Accredited in Public Relations (APR) and Certified Public Relations Counselors (CPRC) scored this year's entries. Judges included Allison Campbell (A&A Campbell Group), Toni James (Toni James & Associates), and Ginger Broslat (Ginger Broslat Communications).

■ **Ava Ehde, Manatee County's Library Services Manager** since 2011, has been named interim director of **Manatee County Neighborhood Services Department**. The department includes Probation,



Ava Ehde and Cheri Coryea Human, Veterans, Healthcare and Neighborhood services divisions and the Public Library System. Former Neighborhood Services Director Cheri Coryea was recent-

ly confirmed as a Deputy County Administrator by Manatee County Commissioners.

Under Ehde's leadership, Manatee Libraries has expanded its educational and technological resources and programs at its six locations, with over 1.9 million customers annually using resources. Library usage has soared 85 percent in 10 years. Ongoing technological training and computer assistance continue to reach residents, and more than 62,000 patrons attended informational and educational programs this year. Also during Ehde's tenure as manager of the library system, Manatee County won the Florida Library Association's 2013 Library Innovation Award and the 2016 Library of the Year. Ehde received the association's Librarian of the Year for 2017.

For more information on Manatee County Government, visit [www.mymanatee.org](http://www.mymanatee.org).

■ **Manatee County's Chamber of Commerce** has received an **award for its commitment** to public education and support from behind the scenes over the last two decades.

The Manatee Chamber and Executive Director Jacki Dezelski received the honor from SUNSPRA, the Sunshine State School Public Relations Association, during the 72nd Annual Joint Conference of the Florida School Boards Association.

Over the last five years, the Chamber has created an environment of positive change in four key areas: student achievement, connecting the community to schools, education advocacy, and career and technical education such as:

- Project Teach, now in its 26th year, takes Chamber members into the fourth grade to share their career stories;
- The Big Bank Theory places volunteers into high schools to engage seniors in hands-on, real-life financial situations to teach students how to become financially responsible adults;
- Legislative interaction has increased funding for the district — from 50 percent to 95 percent for Manatee Technical College; and
- The Chamber is supporting restoration of millions in performance-based dollars and other funding to the Department of Education — all earmarked for post-secondary workforce education.



The Margie Davidson Leading Light Award recognizes individuals and organizations for providing outstanding support to public education.

**The Margie Davidson Leading Light Award** recognizes individuals and organizations for providing outstanding support to public education. It honors the late St. John's County communications director who championed the award process started in 2002.

■ **Two Sarasota Memorial** nursing leaders took top prizes in this year's **Florida Organization of Nurse Executives (FONE) 2017 Excellence Awards**.



This year's Florida Organization of Nurse Executives (FONE) 2017 Excellence Awards winners: Pam Beitlich (L) and Jackie Garabito (R).

Women's and Children's Services Director **Pam Beitlich**, DNP, ARNP, RN, NEABC, won the Excellence in Nursing Leadership Award. Beitlich has served as a nurse and clinical leader at Sarasota Memorial for more than 35 years, starting as a cardiac staff nurse and working her way up to leadership of the Women's and Children's Division. In her current role, she is responsible for SMH's Labor and Delivery Unit, Mother-Baby Unit, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and Pediatrics. She also oversees Childbirth Education, the OB Emergency Care Center and SMH's affiliation with Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital.

Clinical Programs Manager **Jackie Garabito**, MSN, RN-BC, earned the Excellence in Preceptorship/Mentorship Nursing Award for "using innovative approaches to learning that contribute to successful professional development and practice," according to FONE. Garabito began her nursing career in 1998 as a staff nurse on Sarasota Memorial's Medical Respiratory, Nurse Residency and Admission Center units. After serving as a clinical nurse specialist and advance practice nurse, Garabito was named manager of Clinical Programs in 2016.

Appointments

■ **Morton's Gourmet Market** has added **Lauren Bland** as its new **Executive Pastry Chef**. A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, Bland will supervise the company's extensive bakery and pastry operations.

Originally from Memphis, Tennessee, Bland joined the Morton's team in November, 2017. She most recently served in an executive role at Carmel Country Club in Charlotte, North Carolina. In addition to earning a degree in baking and pastry from CIA, Bland completed an externship at The French Laundry, an award-winning fine



Lauren Bland coordinator at CIA's Apple Pie Bakery and Café.

Established in 1969, Morton's Gourmet Market has been a Sarasota fixture for decades.

■ In collaboration with the **MBJ Group**, **Karen Russell** is supporting the talent management company with various account management activities. With over 30 years of leadership experience, Russell brings experience in event and sales management, marketing, business development



Karen Russell

and communications. She will assist MJB Group and provide support with operations, administrative areas, marketing, data management and resume development for its clients.

Most recently, Russell served as the events manager for the Sarasota Herald-Tribune. In her role, she formed a new department handling events for the media group. Prior to that, she was hired by the private foundation behind Sarasota Springfest as its event director, managing the charity event benefiting local children's organizations, with two runs and a post-race block party.

Co-owners Mary Beth and Jim Bos founded MJB Group in 2000. The company focuses on facilitating searches for nonprofit and for-profit organizations, working with professionals in career transition, utilizing career assessments to assist organizations in the hiring process and coaching senior-level executives.

■ **MBJ Group**, a talent management company, led the search for the chief development officer for the **Jewish Family and Children's Service of the Suncoast, Inc.**, a fully accredited, community-based social service nonprofit.

With over 15 years' experience in leadership of nonprofits, **Laura McManus-Mesia** has led organizations into new eras of income generation through strategic funding partnerships. She has managed high-level major capital campaigns totaling over \$60 million.

In McManus-Mesia's new role, she will support the CEO and further the mission of Jewish Family and Children's Service (JFCS) by increasing its financial sustainability through the development of a viable philanthropy

dining restaurant in Napa Valley. Her professional experiences include serving as a pastry chef at UNC – Chapel Hill and as a pastry

program. She will oversee the planning, development and implementation of marketing strategies, communications and public relations and coordinate with



Laura McManus-Mesia

the organization's other departments to increase awareness and fundraising. Prior to joining JFCS, McManus-Mesia served as a philanthropic

advisor for her family's business management firm in Beverly Hills, Calif., where she managed a range of clients in the U.S. and the United Kingdom.

The Ireland native was also the chief of development for the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, two separate nonprofits with a focus on national and international maritime education and youth training. Before that, she was the head of regional fundraising for Mencap UK, the United Kingdom's leading learning disability nonprofit to provide provisions to the UK National Health Service and contribute to international research and developments for learning disability organizations.

JFCS delivers a broad range of professional counseling and social services to individuals, families, seniors, adults, children and veterans on a secular, non-denominational basis. Through comprehensive counseling and social service programs, the nonprofit empowers individuals by helping them make life-altering changes to improve the quality of their lives.

Real Estate News

■ Realtor **Kathryn Cooper** has joined **RE/MAX Alliance Group** as a member of the Cleary Group. She specializes in downtown Sarasota, the beaches and Lakewood Ranch, as well as



Kathryn Cooper

new construction representation for her buyers. Cooper has 20 years of local real estate experience, last serving with Dwell Real Estate. She brings extensive

market knowledge, an emphasis on customer service, collaboration and a commitment to the highest practices in real estate. She is based in the RE/MAX Alliance Group Sarasota office at 2000 Webber Street, Sarasota, and can be reached at (941) 320-8075 or [kathryn@theclearygroup.com](mailto:kathryn@theclearygroup.com).

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