

Accolades

■ **Kim Livengood** of the **Central West Coast Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association**



Kim Livengood

(CWC-FPRA) earned professional certification in public relations, and received the designation of Certified

Public Relations Counselor (CPRC). Livengood now joins an elite group of fewer than 80 practitioners throughout the state who demonstrate the highest level of professionalism and advanced consultation skills in the practice of public relations.

Livengood is the chief communications officer of The Eclipse Agency. Her award-winning agency specializes in consumer products and lifestyle brands, using traditional and innovative public relations strategy and tactics. For more information about Livengood, visit www.theEclipse.agency.

■ **Jodi Ruberg**, a civil litigation attorney with **Kirk-Pinkerton, P.A.**, has been selected for the 2019 Florida Super Lawyers list and named a Rising Star.

Super Lawyers, part of Thomson Reuters, is a research-driven, peer-influenced rating service



Jodi Ruberg

of lawyers from more than 70 practice areas who have attained a high degree of peer recognition and profes-

sional achievement. Only 2.5 percent of attorneys are selected for the Rising Star category, and the list recognizes no more than 5 percent of attorneys in all 50 states and Washington, D.C.

Ruberg joins the list with her Kirk-Pinkerton colleagues Bill Robertson, CEO and personal injury attorney, and Norman Vaughan-Birch, a board certified civil mediator and arbitrator. The annual selections are made using a patented multiphase process that includes a statewide survey of lawyers, an independent research evaluation of candidates and peer reviews by practice area.

Ruberg works with corporations, nonprofits, governments and individuals with litigation ranging from commercial law, probate disputes and issues

arising from the Florida Sunshine laws. She is admitted to practice in all state and Federal courts in Florida and is admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court.

■ **Akera Sanders** came home with a silver medal from the 2019 **HOSA Future Health Professionals International Leadership Conference**. Sanders is an optometric assisting student at **Manatee Technical College**. She placed second in the Medical Reading competition.

Brenda Baxcajay placed in the top 10 in Pharmacology Knowledge. Baxcajay is a pharmacy technician student at **MTC**. Sanders, Baxcajay and two other pharmacy technician students, Samantha Cowie and Marisol Sanchez-Silos from MTC, qualified to compete at the international level.



Manatee Technical College optometric instructor **Loren Hutchison** and her student **Akera Sanders**. Sanders placed 2nd in Medical Reading at the 2019 HOSA International Leadership Conference.

Over 10,000 competitors competed at HOSA's 2019 International Leadership Conference. The competitors won at their local, regional, state, and country competitions to earn their spot in one of HOSA's 71 health-related competitive events.

HOSA-Future Health Professionals is the largest international organization operating in schools for students enrolled in health science and biomedical sciences programs and serving those interested in pursuit of careers in health and biomedical professions.

■ The Chief Operating Officer at the **Florida Center for Early Childhood** recently became one of the first people in the state to be endorsed as an 'Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Expert.' **Dr. Kristie Skoglund**, who has been at the Florida Center for over 20 years, was one of eight experts across the state invited to apply for the endorsement, which was issued through the Florida Association for Infant Mental Health (FAIMH).

Skoglund and seven others will now serve as the 'leadership cohort,' reviewing applications and advising a select group of early childhood experts who have applied for the same type of endorsement credential. Skoglund said bringing this endorsement process to Florida was "years in the making" and

is necessary to shine a light on the important work of infant and early childhood professionals.

For more information, visit www.thefloridacenter.org or call 941-371-8820.

Appointments

■ **The Van Wezel Foundation** has announced that **Sasha Hausman** has joined them as Director of Development. She



Sasha Hausman

brings over 13 years of experience in fundraising, donor cultivation, stewardship, marketing, and public speaking.

Most recently Sasha served as

Executive Director of AdventHealth Zephyrhills and Dade City Foundation where she had responsibilities for the strategic direction and development of two hospital foundations. As the Chief Development Officer, Sasha had oversight for all philanthropic initiatives including, annual giving,

grants, sponsorships, fundraising events, and two capital campaigns.

Previously, Sasha spent 10 years working in development and special events at Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida.

Mary's background includes mergers and acquisitions, systems conversions, cash management, investments, pricing, financial planning and analysis, reporting, accounting, accounts payable, and accounts receivable. She earned a BBA in Finance from Emory University and a MBA from Duke University. She's a Certified Treasury Professional and some of her other interests include golf, biking and travel.

■ **The Sarasota Ballet** has announced that **Sara Curtis Robinson** has joined The Sarasota Ballet as Director of Development.



Sara Curtis Robinson

Robinson joins the Company from Celebrity Series of Boston where she led annual and capital fundraising programs as the organization's

Chief Advancement Officer. Robinson has had over two decades in arts administration

and fundraising in the non-profit sector. As Chief Advancement Officer of Celebrity Series of Boston, she headed the planning and implementation of annual and capital fundraising programs, including the LIVE PERFORMANCE! Arts for All capital campaign for endowment and innovative programming.

■ **Rebecca Blitz** has been hired by **The Haven** to serve as its executive vice president. In that role, she will be responsible for all fundraising and outreach activities, including donor relations, special events, capital campaigns, and volunteer engagement. Previously, Blitz served as the regional director for the local Make-A-Wish affiliate for five years, planning, implementing, managing and overseeing all fundraising and donor relations activities.

The Haven offers programs and services for adults and children with disabilities. For more information, go to www.thehavensrq.org.

■ **The Southwest Chapter of the American Red Cross**, based in Sarasota, has welcomed two new board members, installed at the Chapter's June 7 Annual Meeting. Board members serve three-year terms, up to nine years, and must reside in one of the counties the chapter serves.

Ramin Hashemi is a retired business executive who relocated to Sarasota in 2018. He retired as Managing Program Director at Verizon, a senior position he held for eight years.

Walburga "Burgi" Wehner is a retired U.S. diplomat who



Walburga "Burgi" Wehner

served for 25 years in numerous American embassies and consultates abroad. She also worked as a part-time, independent foreign affairs consultant

to the federal government for several years, and was a City Planner for the City of Cincinnati. She resides in Englewood.

The Southwest Florida Chapter of the American Red Cross serves five counties with offices in Sarasota (main) and Port Charlotte. The Southwest Florida Chapter is one of five that comprise the Central Florida region of the American Red Cross. For more information, please visit redcross.org/centralflorida. Also find us on Facebook and Twitter.

■ **Neuro Challenge Foundation for Parkinson's** Board of Directors recently elected **Judith Bell** as Board Member Emeritus and **Cyndi Miller** as new board

member. Bell served as Neuro Challenge's first Executive Director from 2012 to 2016 and guided the organization in its formative years. Bell is a non-profit executive and consultant. Miller is the Vice-President of First Source Bank; she will serve a three-year term.

Neuro Challenge Foundation for Parkinson's is dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with Parkinson's and their caregivers.

■ **The Sarasota County Public Hospital Board** appointed Sarasota business and civic leader **Brittany "Britt" Riner** to fill a vacant position on the unpaid, 9-member Hospital Board.

At its June 17 public board



Brittany "Britt" Riner

meeting, the Hospital Board unanimously selected Riner from a pool of 12 local candidates to fill the at-large Seat 3. The open seat on the govern-

ing board was vacated in April by Susan Tucker, who stepped down to complete medical school. As an appointee to the Hospital Board, Riner will serve until the general election in November 2020. Her term is slated to begin in July pending approval by the governor's office.

Riner is president of Liber Consulting where she provides strategic planning, marketing and organization design consulting services for non-profit and for-profit entities. Her previous work experiences include process improvement consulting for K12, Inc., the nation's largest provider of online public school; consulting for the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force while working at Booz Allen Hamilton; and healthcare best practices research for the Advisory Board Company.

After living and working across the U.S, she said she returned to Sarasota with her husband Noah in 2014 excited to give back to her hometown. She is a graduate of the Gulf Coast Community Foundation's Board Institute and currently serves as board chair of the Education Foundation of Sarasota County. She also served as president of the 700-member Junior League of Sarasota and completed the local Leadership Sarasota and Sarasota County Government Civics 101 business and community development programs. 📧

Send Your News to:
westcoastwoman@comcast.net
You can now find this column on our website. Visit us there at:
www.westcoastwoman.com