

# 2021 Business Plan

## 2020 Annual Report



# Message from the Chair and President & CEO

On behalf of the South Lake Chamber of Commerce, We want to thank you for your membership and continued support of our community, especially this past year.

2020 was a very different year for the Chamber and all our 700 members. We are proud to say that the Chamber was able to adjust quickly and keep our membership engaged through a variety of virtual events. As the county began to reopen, we readjusted and began limited in-person networking events. Our goal has continually been to keep our members engaged and that will not change as we enter 2021. Our events will be posted regularly in our Business Beat newsletter, our Chamber website and social media pages.

Our mission as we enter 2021 is to help existing and new members thrive. In partnership with the Chamber staff and Board of Directors, we are here to support your business needs and connect your business with the resources you need. In 2020 we were able to assist hundreds of members who needed information and connections to apply for the Paycheck Protection Program, Economic Injury Disaster Loans and Lake Cares Grants.

Our Chamber is the largest chamber in Lake County with members from the cities of Mascotte, Groveland, Minneola, Montverde, Four Corners and Clermont. These members represent a variety of businesses and industries vital to the health of South Lake County. Each member and organization is key to the continued health and wellness of our business community and we thank you for your continued support of the Chamber.

We look forward to working with you to keep South Lake the best community in which to live and operate a business. As our community grows, our businesses must grow with it. Through the Chamber, our businesses can do just that!



Pat Caracciolo  
Chair



David Colby  
President & CEO

**Christina & Dan Maradiaga**  
**gRound Clermont**

Being a Chamber member comes with so many perks and all of that has helped and assisted us throughout the process of opening our doors. We have met several other business owners who have all helped us with many needs required for our business, such as window signage, exterior building signage, and most importantly we have met our lead trainer Logan through the Chamber. We love the many different ways to advertise and participate in all the events held by the Chamber.

Additionally, must add that the entire staff at South Lake Chamber of Commerce is extraordinary. They go out of their way to many extremes to help make sure your business survives in the community. Thank you to all the staff for all that you do!



**Katty Parent**  
**Swiss Vacation Houses**

Being a member of the South Lake Chamber of Commerce is a blessing, especially this year with what my business had to face. COVID-19 hit the vacation rentals industry hard and I am deeply thankful and blessed for the special, unique, amazing people at the Chamber who supported my business, uplifted it, comforted it and brought joy to my soul as they shared a piece of their own in the precise magical moment it needed to happen.

Today my words are powerless to express my gratitude towards Chamber President & CEO, David Colby, who gave such great support to reopen my vacation rentals business located in Clermont, Florida. Thank you!

**Marko and Lindsay Dukic**  
**Mighty Clean Cans**

The Chamber has gone above and beyond to make us feel welcome since the day we joined. The events have provided so much necessary exposure for our business, exposure we wouldn't ever been able to get otherwise. The chamber really goes above and beyond to educate local businesses as well, and give them the tools to succeed. Not only that but chamber members have reached out to us on their own time just to see how they can help us better our businesses. That just does not happen in today's world!

Our own business would not have been able to grow like it has without this amazing chamber. Several of our customers are chamber members or were referred by chamber members. We have made such strong connections that have fueled our growth this year!

The members really help each other out and everyone genuinely wants to help our local business succeed. We are extremely grateful to be members.



## Officers



**Pat Caracciolo**  
Chair



**Aimee Stanley**  
Vice-Chair



**Thom Kieft**  
Treasurer



**Sheri Olson**  
Secretary



**Kalena Meyers**  
Immediate Past Chair

## Board of Directors



**Adam Babington**



**Mary Lou  
Burdette-Wieloszynski**



**Tony Burns**



**Nancy Cummings**



**Jenna Emerson**



**Chuck Gainsford**



**Jim Hamilton**



**Ben Homan**



**Rebekah Hurd**



**Joe Jamieson**



**Gene Kanikovsky**



**Donna Kirtland**



**Jamie Lowe**



**Shannon Moore**



**Jeff Powell**



**Joe Reyes**



**Rick Saborido**



**Kathy Smith**



**Tina Smith**



**Otis Taylor**

## Community Trustees



## Associate Trustees



## Ambassadors

Chair: Anessa Jones | Co-Chair: Linda Thompson | Staff Liasion: Shahanaz Rahaman

Our ambassador committee serves as the goodwill and public relations arm of the Chamber that is dedicated to helping our businesses and community prosper. Additionally, our ambassadors welcome and celebrate our members through ribbon cuttings and grand opening celebrations.

2020 highlights include:

- Conducted 34 ribbon cuttings
- Named Otis Taylor as Ambassador of the Year
- Welcomed five new ambassadors to the committee
- Welcomed 104 new members to the Chamber



## Education Committee

Chair: Thom Kieft | Staff Liasion: Amanda Nethero

Our education committee provides vision and leadership on issues important to the relationship between business and the South Lake educational systems. The committee also serves as a connection between educators, local businesses and community leaders.

2020 highlights include:

- Members visited local high schools as part of the Job Readiness Program
- Hosted an Education Showcase allowing families to learn more about local schools
- Hosted a virtual Teacher Appreciation Breakfast to welcome back more than 1600 teachers in South Lake
- Awarded the Ray Goodgame Outstanding Student Leader Award to seniors at our five local high schools



## Public Policy and Economic Development Committee

Chair: Sheri Olson | Staff Liasion: David Colby

Our public policy and economic development committee provides representation and information on government issues impacting the future of South Lake. Additionally, it provides guides and direction to Chamber leadership, county and local government officials on issues vital to the South Lake Community.

2020 highlights include:

- Hosted 2020 Hob Nob showcasing 17 candidates running for office and conducted a straw poll
- Hosted monthly forums to discuss ideas and issues that are critical to advancing business in our region.



## Sports & Tourism

Chair: Steven Clenney | Staff Liasion: Amanda Nethero

Our sports & tourism committee works in partnership with the office of Visit Lake. The committee provides coordination and direction to Chamber leadership, membership, and county and local governments on issues that will impact South Lake.

2020 highlights include:

- Merging with Visit Lake to expand our network
- Sharing resources to help businesses effected by COVID-19 closures



## Young Professionals Committee

Chair: Brittany Woolley | Staff Liasion: Amanda Nethero

Our young professionals committee provides a forum for South Lake professionals under 40 to encourage networking and professional development.

2020 highlights include:

- Adapting to a virtual networking platform to reconnect during COVID\_19
- Hosting speakers that discussed relevant matters such as PPP loans



## Chamber Alliance

Delegates: Sheri Olson and Daniel Whitehouse | Staff Liasion: David Colby

The Chamber Alliance supports the development of overarching countywide legislative and public policy agendas. Additionally, our delegates provide input to the Chamber Alliance of Lake County and help sponsor Lake Legislative Days.

The Chamber Alliance meets regularly to foster, encourage, promote and develop cooperation between individual chambers for the betterment of all chamber member businesses in Lake County.



## Teacher Appreciation Breakfast

August 2021

The Teacher Appreciation Breakfast honors the more than 1,200 teachers that serve in the South Lake area.

2020 highlights include:

- Going virtual with individual school recognition events
- A virtual spirit award won by East Ridge Middle School



## Sips & Salsa

September 18, 2021 | Downtown Clermont

Sips & Salsa is a community event in partnership with the City of Clermont that offers all things salsa! Centered in downtown Clermont this event features food trucks, vendors, a domino tournament, kids zone and chihuahua races.



## South Lake Business Awards

October 2021

The South Lake Business Awards honors our community's outstanding business leaders and highlights the "Best of South Lake."

2020 highlights include:

- Chief Charles Broadway named Citizen of the Year
- Dr. Jamin Brahmhatt honored with the Oakley Seaver Special Service Award
- Pittman Jewelers honored with the Heritage Award
- The Chamber partnered with southlake.tv to host an entirely virtual awards ceremony featuring all 61 businesses that were named the "Best of South Lake."



## Taste of South Lake

November 4, 2021 | Waterfront Park

Held annually at Waterfront Park this premier event showcases local businesses and vendors who compete for Best Appetizer, Best Entree, Best Dessert, Best Drink, Best Decorated Booth and People's Choice.



## South Lake Golf Tournament

December 3, 2021

The South Lake Golf Tournament offers members an opportunity to connect on the links and enjoy a day of golf at one of our beautiful courses.

2020 highlights include:

- 100 golfers participated
- Hole sponsorship opportunities were sold out



## Hob Nob

Biennial event

The South Lake Hob Nob is an engaging non-partisan political rally-style event that is held biennially in August. Attendees have the opportunity to meet and engage with candidates running for office and participate in a straw poll.

2020 highlights include:

- Completely virtual event through EventHub that included candidate break out rooms and a virtual straw poll
- We had representatives from the local, county, state and federal levels in attendance



## Communication & Updates

During the initial days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chamber pushed out communication to our members via our e-newsletter and social media platforms. Our goal was to inform members of the resources available to them and to reassure them that we, as a Chamber, would be a source of information and support throughout the pandemic.



## Business Resources and Webinars

Within days of quarantine, the Chamber created a #SouthLakeStrong page within the Chamber website.

This page included information on:

- Employment resources, including a listing of people currently hiring
- Curbside/Takeout/Delivery options at Chamber restaurants
- Local Health Updates
- Small Business Resources
- Education Resources
- Webinars



The page also linked to a separate post that was updated with new releases from various local, state and federal agencies regarding COVID-19.

The Chamber implemented weekly Zoom networking sessions called "Coffee with the Chamber." These weekly sessions allowed Chamber members to network virtually and ask questions of the Chamber staff regarding events, policy and resources.

In addition to the weekly networking sessions, webinars covering a broad range of topics were produced by Chamber members. Topics included social media, wellness, mortgages, legal needs, technology tips and town halls with elected officials. All webinars were recorded and archived on the South Lake Strong page of the Chamber website.

## #SouthLakeStrong Campaign

During the initial weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, member businesses reached out to the Chamber expressing concerns over business closures. The board of directors and Chamber staff visited several businesses to purchase gift cards, food and products to lend support.

Photos were compiled and shared on social media platforms tagging the business and using #southlakestrong.

In future weeks the Chamber purchased \$25 gift cards from 45 Chamber businesses and raffled them off to community members.



## Advocacy

The Chamber advocated for local businesses on the local, state and federal levels. We coordinated visits from former Congressman Ross Spano to discuss successes & challenges with the Payroll Protection Plan. Additionally, we hosted town halls with former Congressman Spano and Florida Representative Anthony Sabatini. Members of the Chamber and South Lake Community were invited to submit questions and engage with both representatives.

The Chamber also partnered with local business, Bloomin' Yard Cards, to show appreciation to the Clermont Police Department and the entire staff at Orlando Health South Lake Hospital.



## Reopening

During the reopening phases the Chamber shared updates from the Governor's office as well as continued to promote businesses. This promotion included sharing ways to continue to support small businesses as they reopened.

TOGETHER WE ARE SOUTH LAKE STRONG



Our membership comes from all walks of life and so do we. At the South Lake Chamber of Commerce, we are committed to cultivating and preserving a culture of inclusion and connectedness. Our individual differences, life experiences, knowledge, innovation, self-expression and talent represents not only part of our collective culture, but our reputation in the South Lake community and beyond.

At the South Lake Chamber of Commerce we welcome the unique contributions our members bring to community in terms of their education, cultures, ethnicity, race, sex, gender identity and expression, nation of origin, age, languages spoken, veteran's status, color, religion, disability, sexual orientation and beliefs. We are committed to serving our wonderfully diverse community for many years to come and look forward to continuing to serve our members and the community as a whole.

## Chamber Staff



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