



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

PREPARED BY
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Objective And Profile



Objective

Education is the foundation of talent development and talent is critically essential to the economic well-being of our community. That is why the Greater Gainesville Chamber places significant emphasis on cultivating business and community partnerships with PreK – 20 schools and providing all students with access to education and training opportunities.

Profile

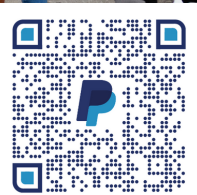
The Gainesville Chamber Foundation is to financially invest in today's learners by funding education and workforce development initiatives. By empowering all students, we build the earners of tomorrow.

The Foundation mobilizes the community around education to better prepare students for higher education and sustainable careers. This collaborative initiative—which includes leaders in education, business, philanthropy, workforce development, government, parents, and families—aims to improve systemic outcomes in education by aligning the efforts of our education partners to prepare students to seize career opportunities in emerging industries.



COLLEGE Signing Day

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Chamber Foundation celebrates College Signing Day!

After two years of being unable to have this event, College Signing Day at Celebration Pointe was a blast! College Signing Day Sponsored by Campus USA Credit Union celebrates graduating seniors moving on with post-secondary plans to attend a 4-year university, 2-year college, technical school, or the military.

We had graduating seniors from Gainesville High School, Eastside High School, Buchholz High School, Saint Francis Catholic Academy, Santa Fe High School, Oak Hall High School, and Lofton High School in attendance, where they received special recognition on stage with a photo op, certificate of congratulations, and a pennant!

These seniors will be attending a variety of different institutions, including UF, FSU, UNF, UCF, USF, UWF, United States Air Force Academy, US Navy, Florida Army National Guard, Florida Institute of Technology, New College of Florida, Florida A&M University, Florida Memorial University, Florida National University, Jacksonville University, Florida Southern University, Santa Fe College, Tallahassee Community College, Valencia College, Stetson University, Savannah College of Art & Design, The Culinary Institute of America, Summit Salon Academy, Albany State University, Nova Southeastern University, Embry-Riddle, Rasmussen University, Grand Canyon University, Aveda Institute, and Bethune Cookman.

The event also included a great raffle with prizes from Le Macaron French Pastries, Mi Apa, and Regal Celebration Pointe! Overall, parents and families had a wonderful time getting to commemorate their graduating seniors on such a momentous occasion.





CASH for College

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Just Take the Time and Fill It Out

Caleb has a plan for his future, and he will not let anything get in his way – not even the cost of attending college. So, when he heard about Cash for College, he immediately knew he was going to be in attendance.

Caleb Farina, 18, born and raised in Gainesville, Florida, recently graduated from Gainesville High School. Born to two parents who completed college, he knew college was in the stars for him. Today, he is enrolled in Santa Fe College pursuing an Associate's degree in Building Construction. He hopes to be a contractor or real estate agent one day.

Caleb took all the steps necessary to identify his dream occupation. He researched the industry and outlined the requirements for success. He weighed the pros and cons, including macroeconomic risks like the housing market and its trajectory. He even worked to gain experience in the industry. All that was left was to secure the financial resources to make college a reality and that is where Cash for College comes in.

Cash for College is a campaign that offers resources designed to make the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) more accessible and guide students and their families through the necessary steps to complete the FAFSA. On July 1st, the Greater Gainesville Chamber's Alachua County Education Compact (ACEC) launched the six-event-series, in collaboration with Alachua County Public Schools, The Education Foundation of Alachua County, Santa Fe College, SF Achieve, University of Florida, LYFEhouse and Dream on Purpose. The ACEC galvanized the Greater Gainesville community specifically to counteract the negative impact of COVID-19 on college enrollment by addressing the decrease in completed FAFSAs among 2020 and 2021 high school graduates. Caleb is one of several students who attended the workshop and leveraged the one-on-one assistance provided by financial aid professionals.

"Cash for College helped me to make connections with valuable people and understand the importance of saving money," says Caleb. With the aid of guided instructions and professional assistance, he found the process easy and did not experience any technical difficulties. When asked what he would say to a fellow student who is considering filling out the FAFSA, he said "Go for it. Just take the time and fill it out." During the 2021-22 School year, 51.8% of Alachua County seniors completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid with an estimated Pell Grant earning \$3,361,800.

For students and/or parents/guardians who need assistance completing the FAFSA, visit <https://acedcompact.com/> to learn of future events and connect with local resources.





reThink Service Fellowship

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The Greater Gainesville Chamber and LYFEhouse, Inc. partnered to create the 12-week reThink Service Fellowship program to engage at-risk high school students. The reThink curriculum allows high schoolers to research and implement a service project of their choosing while incorporating the Youth Service of America service project toolkit, the John Maxwell leadership curriculum, and U.C.L.A.'s Social Change Leadership framework to develop the student's leadership capacity and empower them to be community change agents.

reThink's program is divided into three 4-week modules that provide classroom lessons, multiple assessments (both self- and community-needs) and a reporting element (vlog entries). University students serve as mentors and community business leaders provide real-world guidance. Student service projects have tackled mental health, LGBTQ+, body positivity, foster care, juvenile detention, abandoned pets and food insecurity.

How are Students Impacted by reThink?

Graduates of the reThink Service Fellowship program report tremendous value in their participation. In their own words, as documented in end-of-program surveys, our students say:

- "I gained a wealth of new skills, experiences, and depth as a community leader that will carry with me throughout high school and as I enter the workforce. As a rising junior and prospective college student, the opportunity I was given through reThink to organize and lead my own community service activity on Global Youth Service Day(s) significantly shaped how I view my goals, mission, and purpose as an advocate/volunteer moving forward."
- "I've kept [my project] BEING going and have been able to continue connecting with peers who have similar mindsets with me. Since reThink, my project has accumulated an additional \$1,000 in grants and sponsorships. We have had two successful events (self-defense and yoga) and have had a successful Instagram presence (posting daily). I also am leading our online curriculum with Girl Scouts through online seminars!"
- "It boosted my confidence when it came to leading. I realized that I am capable of leading and making a difference when I put my mind to it."
- "With the knowledge and experience I gained, I became a bit more confident."





BLI MASTERCLASS

For Childcare Centers



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BUSINESS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE FOR EARLY LEARNING ALACHUA COUNTY MASTERCLASS COHORT 1 GRADUATION

The Children's Trust of Alachua County joined the Greater Gainesville Chamber of Commerce and the Business Leadership Institute for Early Learning to celebrate the graduation of the first Early Learning cohort on August 13, 2022.

Members included owners and directors of Early Learning Centers and Family Based home businesses in Alachua County. The Trust funded the complete program.

Children's Trust Board Chair Maggie Labarta explained that the Trust views child care in a "holistic manner," saying that these early learning centers are small businesses. Like other small businesses, they need help providing professional services and expanding the capacity of their businesses.

Ian Fletcher, Chief Operating Officer of the Greater Gainesville Chamber, told the story of how the Children's Trust came to be: "The very first thing that was discussed was children from zero to five and ... about how they learn and how much their brain capacity can take during that time. So when the Trust came to the Chamber to talk about partnering with BLI to do this class, it was a no-brainer for us. We were at the table talking about how do we get our youngest population ready for school. We were talking about how do we help child care centers with the resources that they need not only to train their staff but to operate."

The curriculum explores the most important business concepts related to the early learning industry, expressing the social significance of this work and its essential role in the economics of the community. The subject matter of finance, marketing, human resources, and real estate was delivered in four sessions over four months at the offices of the Children's Trust, combined with a virtual curriculum platform and monthly zoom group discussions. Subject matter experts from the local business community facilitated each session.





The Amazing Give

School Counselors



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Better Together: Helping Students Live A Life Beyond Amazing

WHO IS AMAZING?! YOU ARE AMAZING!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Thank you to our donors and our sponsor, Campus USA Credit Union, during the 2022 Amazing Give. Your donation allowed us to present 64-gift baskets to Alachua County Public Schools Counselors!





Career

Discoveries Day

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Career Discoveries Days

The Greater Gainesville Chamber Foundation invites all middle and high school students and their parents/guardians to Career Discoveries Day. This career showcase and exhibition takes place this Saturday, November 5th, from 9 am to noon at Celebration Pointe, 4949 Celebration Pointe Ave, Gainesville, FL 32608. You will get a chance to talk face-to-face with employers of Alachua County, who will share potential career pathways and answer your questions.

Career Discoveries Day offers students, and their parents a sneak peek into local, emerging career opportunities in Distribution & Trade, Business Support Services, Agriculture Science & Technology, Human Life Sciences, and Digital Technology. In addition, attendees will engage with exhibitors as they share their selected career pathways and existing opportunities in their industries. Our keynote speaker is Greg Bradley, the President of the G. Bradley Insurance Agency, which operates an Allstate agency in Gainesville, FL.

FCAN's Kathy McDonald welcomed Ian Fletcher of the Greater Gainesville Chamber who shared examples of local college access networks (LCANs) bringing together employers, students, and education institutions to help students better understand careers that are available — and in-demand — in their community, as well as the education options that will help students prepare Fletcher, who also serves as head of the Alachua County Education Compact LCAN, shared highlights from their community's Career Discoveries Days. Held for the last several years on a Saturday in the fall, Career Discoveries Days expose students to exciting career options in Alachua and provide them with tools for their career pathways.

We promote the opportunity to middle and high school students and their parents. The event also gives employers the chance to connect with students about their industry, so students can learn more about potential futures they might aspire to. "It's an easy sell to employers because they understand this gives them a chance to showcase their career opportunities to students," Fletcher said. "Many of the students don't know what career pathways they want to take, and I haven't met an HR recruiter who doesn't love interacting with students and helping them find their career path."



Meet Our Team



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