

**ASSOCIATION OF FUNDRAISING PROFESSIONALS, TREASURE COAST CHAPTER
NEW MEMBER AND PLANET PHILANTHROPY 2006 SCHOLAR REPORT**

Over the past five years, I have been volunteering within the public school system, but have been with the Education Foundation of Martin County for only a few months. While most of my volunteer time has been spent at Palm City Elementary, I have also worked on projects involving multiple schools within the district. These projects led me to the Education Foundation, where I knew my efforts would have a greater impact on students and teachers across the Martin County area. In June, I was asked by the Education Foundation to fill a vacancy as its new executive director. My enthusiasm and strong belief in its mission, along with the opportunity to make a notable difference in our community, made this one opportunity I couldn't turn down.

Shortly after stepping into the executive director's position, I met Chuck Sawicki. Talk about a crash course in everything from who's who to planned giving. What a fire ball! I couldn't have asked for a better mentor. One of his first recommendations was to join AFP. AF what? I went online, looked it up and joined in September taking advantage of a new member discount. What a deal! I attended my first meeting at Club Med and was overcome by the warmth and sincerity of those present. Expressing my intention to soak up the knowledge of this very experienced group, I asked for their guidance in leading me down the right path. Next thing I know, Suzanne Horstman was offering me a chapter scholarship to attend Planet Philanthropy at the beautiful Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando. Again, another opportunity I couldn't pass up...a chance to surround myself with a resort full of nonprofit knowledge.

Whether you're a novice, like me, or an experienced fundraiser, the conference offered several high interest tracks from which to choose. This year's tracks included annual giving, major gifts, special events, a CFRE review course, and an advanced course designed specifically for professionals with five or more years of experience. I selected the annual giving practicum as recommended by fellow AFP members. Over a two day period, this interactive session focused on who gives money to what, how to unlock their desire and ability to give, and how to map out strategies that match your organization's needs with charitable patterns of your donors. The facilitator provided an inviting opportunity for an open exchange of ideas and information including role playing exercises. The last segment of the session included developing a sample annual plan and strategies to avoid overextending resources.

Conference highlights included luncheons with keynote speakers Harry Rosen and Jeffrey Gould. "Philanthropy through the Eyes of the Philanthropist," provided Rosen and Gould the opportunity to share their philosophies of giving. The lunches were tasty, the company was delightful, and I was particularly impressed with Mr. Rosen, founder and president of Rosen Hotels & Resorts. He eloquently spoke of his commitment to the community and his desire to break the cycle of poverty and provide opportunity through education. To this end, Mr. Rosen has developed the Tangelo Park Pilot Program which provides child care for preschool children, post-secondary education scholarships for young students, and lifestyle classes for parents in a minority working class community. While Mr. Rosen

spoke, silence came over the room as all were enthralled in his speech and all came to their feet at its close. Congratulations to the conference committee for securing this inspiring philanthropist!

Still, the most enjoyable part of the trip was meeting, getting to know, and networking with the ladies in attendance from the AFP Treasure Coast Chapter. All seemed genuinely interested in helping me become better established in the fundraising field. Absent from the conference was any sense of competition. We exchanged ideas as they offered professional advice and fundraising tips. Several also extended an open invitation to call upon them for additional assistance. Being a newcomer to this profession, this was invaluable to me and I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to develop my professional skills and expand my knowledge by attending this conference. Thank you!



Lisa Rhodes
Executive Director
Education Foundation of Martin County
AFP Scholarship Recipient
Planet Philanthropy 2006