



exposure



FPRA Members Fill-A-Bucket for Polk County's Children in Need

The Dick Pope/Polk County Chapter of FPRA is teaming up with Project Hearth and Polk County Fire Services to administer Project Fill-A-Bucket. Buckets, filled with much-needed items, are given to students in the Polk County public school system who meet the federal criteria as homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless.

The buckets are decorated, filled and distributed prior to the Christmas holidays. For many children these buckets not only contain basic living necessities, but may be the only items they receive during the holiday season. The group's goal is to fill 550 BUCKETS and YOUR help is needed. Beginning November 1, donations can be dropped off at any Polk County-operated fire station. To find a location near you, go to www.polk-county.net/fire and click the "information" tab.

Items needed to fill these buckets include: shampoo, conditioner, bath soap, deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, brushes, combs, towels, wash cloths, stuffed animals and children's books (for middle and high school students).

The drive is being spearheaded by the chapter's community involvement committee. For more information, please contact committee chairperson, Shirley Whitney, at (863) 644-4145 or by email at rwhitney1@tampabay.rr.com.

Please drop your donations off at a location near you and become a part of this worthy cause.

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President's Message

by Cindy Rodriguez



You know it's a darn good day when there are so many exciting things happening that even a prolific writer sits down and wonders "where in the world do I START"? Happily, that was my dilemma as I began this message to you, the valued professional members of the Dick Pope Polk County chapter of FPRA.

Your board of directors is already "making it count" in many ways. First, we have accepted two new members, in addition to welcoming Ashley Bell Barnett into the chapter last month. We should be pinning them soon, so we're making it count in the membership column. We encourage each of you to reach out to your professional colleagues and extend a personal invitation to join us. Your story, about how FPRA benefits you is the most compelling thing your colleagues could hear. They know you won't steer them wrong, so I challenge each of you to bring someone new into the organization during November.

Why? Well, beyond the obvious benefits of membership and networking, we have some fantastic events planned over the next couple of months and we don't want anyone to miss out. First, on Oct. 30, at Webster University, you have a professional development opportunity at our PR (breakfast) Buffet. This is your chance to tap into the brainpower and expertise of several seasoned public relations professionals and ask them to help you address some of your stickiest challenges. And, in this economy who doesn't have challenges?

Happy Anniversary!

The following members joined FPRA during the month of September:

Ginnie Duffey Troyer, 37 years

Cindy W. Sternlicht, 27 years

Frances McMichael, 25 years

Susan Clayton Black, 7 years

Teresa O'Brien, 5 years

Kris Keprios, 5 years

Shirley Whitney, 5 years

Allison Beeman, 4 years

Danny Kushmer, 2 years

Arline Alexander, 1 year

Cathy Wolosin, 3 years

James Frankowiak, 3 years

Ashley Hall, 2 years



“Wow! I’ve been ‘married’ to FPRA almost as long as I’ve been married to my husband. Over the years, FPRA has given me the support I need to grow as a professional; to become accredited and certified; and my FPRA contacts are always available when I need outside counsel. But just like a spouse, FPRA also has played a very personal role in my life, because over the years, some of my best friendships have developed with the people whom I first met through FPRA.”

- **Frances McMichael**,
Lake Wales Charter Schools



“Having moved back to the Lakeland area about three years ago (after a 19-year hiatus in South Florida), I was anxious to get back into FPRA. I was a member in the mid to late 80’s and always enjoyed the opportunity for networking and sharing information—plus I remembered FPRA members as delightful folks. Since my return, I continue to find my time with FPRA to be a valuable asset – which increases the more I get involved.”

- **Cathy Wolosin**, Citrus Connection

Save the Dates for FPRA Events

October 30 - PR Buffet at Webster University 8:30 a.m.

RSVP to jim@cprg-web.com

Cost: \$10 for members, \$15 for non-members, and \$5 for students

See page 4 for additional details.

November 18 - Monthly meeting to be held at Southeastern University at 11:45 p.m.

RSVP to j baker@watsonclinic.com or call (863) 904-4654.

Luncheon: \$20 for members, \$25 for non-members.

The Press Box

Tips and tales from Polk County’s local media

by Chuck Welch, *Lakeland Local* publisher

You’ve worked hard and developed contacts in the new media. You’re on a first-name basis with hyperlocal bloggers, social media superstars, and popular online community influencers.

For your latest materials you’ve constructed the ultimate beautiful, information-laded media packet. It’s full of charts, figures, testimonials, and beautiful photographs. It’s easy and enjoyable, to read. The fonts mesh well with the materials. The layout and design got you kudos from that difficult to please client. It’s all tied together in the latest PDF software. It has cost a pretty penny and hours of effort to develop, and you’ve delivered it to the top online influencers in your client’s market. And most give it a glance, appreciate the work, and publish the farm report.

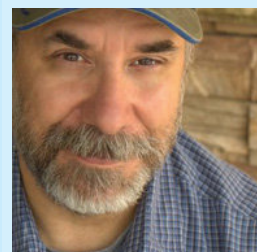
Why? You’ve forgotten to KISS - Keep it Simple Silly. Hyperlocal publishers, pro-am journalists, bloggers, and tweeters are almost always one-person operations. Unless your client really sparks their interest, they won’t bother to take the time to rewrite your material for their readers. They want to cut-and-paste a paragraph or two, grab a photo, add a few thoughts, upload and move on. By putting everything into a PDF, you’ve made that job more difficult. Just difficult enough that your material is pushed aside.

The next time you make such a packet, take two extra minutes and add a folder to the disk. Drop in plain text files of all the information. Add two or three 72 dpi jpeg format photographs. If you must send a graph or two, convert them to jpeg images. Don’t bother sending any image over 1000 pixels wide. Most sites won’t publish anything over 600 pixels wide. Don’t put copyright notices or logos on the images. They’re distracting if they are published.

This is even more important for your informational emails. Don’t bother sending PDFs of simple messages from your client. It balloons up the size of the email, and takes more steps to read the text. Just drop in a text file, and an image or two if needed. Place the materials as email attachments so they can be easily uploaded to the new media site.

It’s a very quick step to send materials you already possess, and you greatly improve the chance your client gets his or her message to the public.

Note: This information does not reflect the opinion of FPRA leadership, but is provided for you to consider and take that which is useful to you and your organization



Chuck Welch publishes the hyperlocal sites *LakelandLocal.com* and *Metrol4News.com*. Contact Chuck by email at lakelandlocal@gmail.com



Member Profile: Rachel Bulman, Public Relations Director for SPCA

As a Florida Southern College graduate majoring in sports journalism, Rachel Bulman once imagined herself as the next Linda Cohn on ESPN reporting the latest

sports news. However, upon graduating in 2005, she found herself more interested in the “other side” of the news business – public relations.

“In PR, it’s all about building lasting relationships with the media for the benefit of your organization. It’s challenging and extremely rewarding.”

Rachel currently serves as the public relations director for the SPCA in Lakeland, an organization committed to providing aid, comfort and relief to abandoned or suffering animals and placing pets in loving homes. Bulman says there is no typical day in the office – everyday is full of surprises and that is what she loves most about her job. Although she starts each day with a well-intended “to do” list, the list often gets set aside for more important issues – such as an animal cruelty case that needs the media’s attention.

“One of the most important things I have learned is that if you want to build a strong relationship with the local media, you have to treat them like they are your best friend – drop everything you are doing and help them get their job done,” said Bulman. “You would do the same thing for your best friend, and they will remember that.”

Although Rachel oversees all aspects of marketing for the SPCA, including advertising, public relations, and more – she said PR is the most valuable for her organization. “The most effective promotional tool we have is word-of-mouth marketing – and that’s exactly what PR does for us,” she said.

Rachel credits DP/PC FPRA member and past-president Lori Martini for encouraging her to join FPRA. As her predecessor at the SPCA, Martini left a note on Bulman’s desk with a list of organizations to join. FPRA was at the top of that list. Since that time, Bulman has found a valuable network of PR practitioners within the chapter. She has also had the opportunity to attend the state conference and currently serves as the chapter’s webmaster.



Hot PR Topic with Rachel Bulman *Social Media*

When did the SPCA begin utilizing social media?

We’ve been using Facebook for almost a year and a half. We joined Twitter a few months ago, and we just upgraded our YouTube channel using a non-profit grant that is available to all non-profits. The blog was added on this year as well.

What social media outlets are you currently using to market the SPCA?

Facebook – search SPCA, Inc.
Twitter – twitter.com/spcainc
YouTube – youtube.com/spcainc
SPCA Blog - Blog.lovemyspca.com

How much time does each site take to maintain on a daily basis? I always have Facebook and Twitter up on my computer. YouTube is updated throughout the week, but videos are taken by staff and volunteers and a few other staff know how to upload as well. The blog is updated weekly by various members of our staff.

In what ways has social media been a successful tool for the SPCA? We have really been able to connect with media, donors and other supporters using these tools. Social media allows you to do just that – get social, without ever leaving your desk. It’s an innovative way for people that are far away from you to feel like they are right next to you.



Dig in at the PR Buffet

Join seasoned PR practitioners at the **PR Buffet on Friday, October 30**. This is an opportunity to pick the brains of some of the “more seasoned” members of the chapter on whatever questions you may have about the public relations profession.

Planning, program development, measurement, social media, blogging, crisis communications, dealing with difficult people, how to be a spokesperson, media relations, special events, working with limited resources and more. Confirmed faculty includes Bob Gernert, Frances McMichael, Jennifer Bush, Jim Frankowiak and the list grows daily.

Enjoy coffee, OJ and Danish while learning about PR. Groups will rotate so all attendees will have a chance to pose their questions to all faculty members. **Registration** will be from **8 a.m. until 8:30 a.m.** and the **workshop** will take place from **8:30 a.m. until 10 a.m.** at **Webster University**, 101 Main Street, Lakeland.

The cost to chapter members is \$10, students are \$5 and non-members are \$15 (cash or check only). For more information and to RSVP please contact Jim Frankowiak via email: jim@cprg-web.com.

President's Message

(cont'd from pg. 1)

Then, in November, we get to interact with and offer professional insight to our student chapters when we meet at Southeastern University for our monthly luncheon. I don't know about you, but I always feel extremely rewarded whenever I can “give back” to the profession and encourage young talent.

And, if that wasn't enough, in November, we kick off our fantastic “Fill-a-Bucket” Campaign. A media event, on November 2, will get the campaign underway, and we already have several local dignitaries lined up to commemorate the “first donations” at Polk County's Peace Creek Fire Station (Rifle Range Rd. and Hwy. 60) just east of Bartow. Invited are Commissioner Sam Johnson, Sheriff Grady Judd, Congressman Adam Putnam, Superintendent Gail McKinzie, Fire Chief David Cash and many others,

This important Community Involvement project is our way to “make it count” for over 400 “homeless” public school students right here in Polk. Hard to imagine, isn't it...kids trying to learn and succeed without a permanent residence? What a rewarding way to move into the holidays. We're thrilled to partner with the Polk County School Board and Polk County Fire Rescue on this worthwhile campaign.

We'll accept donations until Dec. 10 – when we have an opportunity to get together, socially, for some professional networking at our first PRowl at Ruby Tuesday's in Bartow. After the PRowl, the evening continues when we move over to the school board offices and actually fill the 5-gallon buckets that are already being decorated by public school art students. Mark your calendars to join us for these upcoming events, and start your holidays off with a true sense of giving and the absolute assurance that you're part of a group of professionals who know how to “make it count” in, and for, our community!

Then, stay tuned, because, (and I know it's hard to believe) there are even more exciting things just around the corner! If you've never been actively involved in chapter activities, now's the perfect time to start. If you've been so busy lately that you've taken a bit of a hiatus from involvement with your chapter, now's the time to get back in the mix. These are exciting times and EVERYONE has a role to play. What role will you embrace? How will you “make it count”? I can't wait to see!

EARN YOUR APR

Thinking about becoming Accredited in Public Relations?

APR is a mark of distinction for public relations professionals who demonstrate their commitment to the profession and to its ethical practice, and who are selected based on broad knowledge, strategic perspective, and sound professional judgment.

If you are thinking about sitting for the APR exam, you might be wondering if you're ready. The answer is “YES” – if you can say yes to the following questions:

- Do I have a thorough understanding of PR principles and how to apply them?
- Do I have real world experience in the practice of public relations? (A specific number of years experience is not required to sit for the exam, but a minimum of five years is recommended.)
- Do I have the skills to research, plan, implement and evaluate comprehensive PR programs?
- Do I have the skills to make a 30-minute presentation on how I planned or participated in the planning of a specific public relations program for my organization or a client?

The DP/PC FPRA Chapter is joining the Tampa Chapter as they conduct study sessions for the APR exam. On Nov. 2, an information session will be held in Tampa. Details regarding the time, location and cost will be communicated to chapter members via email.

For information about the APR process, please contact Cindy Rodriguez at (863) 534-6090 or cindyrodriguez@polk-county.net

Did you know...

Accredited professionals
earn nearly 20% more
than their colleagues?

