

RCRA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Hammock Beach Resort | Palm Coast, FL



November 5-8, 2022
www.rcra.org



Message from President Annie Pilek

WELCOME TO THE 41ST RCRA NATIONAL CONFERENCE!

Welcome to RCRA's 41st National Conference. This year's conference planning has experienced some hiccups along the way but has been revamped and is packed full of educational sessions, socials, networking opportunities, creativity, and energy. Please 'Seas the Day' and take advantage of every opportunity made available to you.

There are quite a few people I would like to thank for their continuous support throughout this process. First, I must acknowledge our original committee for South Seas, Debbie Regnone, Jean Bear, and Michelle Kithcart for their efforts. As plans pivoted one person in particular really stood out, Catrina Vargas. Not only was she pivotal in the relocation but her daily hands-on efforts with rebuilding gaps in the program, establishing vendors, and so much more are very appreciated! She really did an incredible job getting us here.

A special thank you to Kari Bowman Leslie for her unyielding support, Kelsey Lehnerd for her diligence while working with the job fair packets, monthly/weekly newsletters, and Kevin Nelson and Scott Rood for their involvement with the development, screening, and administration of the Research Symposium.

I would also like to thank the Board of Directors, vendors, sponsors, and speakers for helping make this year's conference possible.

And last but not least, a big thank you to Peggy Tempero for all of her creativity, time, energy, and bright smiles that we are all accustomed to at each conference.

The Hammock Beach Golf Resort and Spa team is thrilled to be hosting this year's conference and to showcase their property, hospitality, and cuisine. So, please enjoy!

Annie Pilek



GENERAL INFORMATION

Registration Desk Hours

SATURDAY: 12:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. (Resort Lobby)

SUNDAY: 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (Ocean Ballroom Pre-Function)

MONDAY: 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (Ocean Ballroom Pre-Function)

TUESDAY: 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (Ocean Ballroom Pre-Function)

Sponsor/Vendor Showcase

VENDOR SETUP: Sunday 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (Ocean Ballroom Pre-Function)

VENDOR DEMOS: Sunday from 12:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. (various locations - see schedule)

VENDOR EXHIBIT HALL: Monday from 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (Ocean Ballroom Pre-Function)

VENDOR COCKTAIL HOUR: Monday from 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. (Ocean Ballroom Pre-Function)

Internship/Job Fair

JOB FAIR SETUP: Sunday from 12:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. (Atlantic Ballroom)

JOB FAIR PROPERTY INTRODUCTIONS: Monday from 10:00 - 10:30 a.m. (Atlantic Pre-Function)

JOB FAIR: Monday from 11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. (Atlantic Ballroom)

Interviews

INTERVIEW DRAFT: Professionals Only; Monday from 12:30 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. (Surf Room)

STUDENTS PICK-UP INTERVIEW SCHEDULES: Monday from 5:45 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.

(Registration Desk - Ocean Ballroom Pre-Function)

INTERVIEW BLOCK 1: Tuesday from 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Atlantic Ballroom)

INTERVIEW BLOCK 2: Tuesday from 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Atlantic Ballroom)

ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW TIME SLOTS: *It is possible that professionals and students will have conflicting schedules during the scheduled time for interviews. Separate interview sessions may be scheduled at the discretion of professionals.*

RCRA'S Membership Breakfast and RCRA Awards Gala

The Membership Breakfast and RCRA Awards Gala are for all RCRA Conference attendees. If you are traveling with a guest who is interested in attending, please register and purchase a ticket at the Registration Desk. The cost is \$30 for the Membership Breakfast and \$75 for the RCRA Gala.

If you have any dietary requests or restrictions and are attending the Membership Breakfast and/or RCRA Gala, please complete the dietary request form at the Registration desk.

Resort Packages Silent and Live Auction

Choose from FANTASTIC resort packages and more! During the conference, auction packages will be displayed at the RCRA Registration Desk in the Great Hall Foyer. There are minimum starting bids for each package that reflect extraordinary values. Silent auction bidding begins on Sunday evening at the President's Social. The live auction will take place on Monday evening at the RCRA Gala. Student specific packages at lower price points are available – great for Spring Break! Cash and credit cards are accepted for payment.

NOTE: *Agencies that are donating vacation getaways for the auction, please drop off certificates at the Registration Desk by noon on Monday.*

Lucky Logo Drawing

Participate in a great opportunity to win fabulous prizes! The "Lucky Logo" Drawing will be held on Sunday evening at the Theme Night Party. Tickets may be purchased from the Ways & Means Committee Members. Come dressed in your best By the Sea attire and be ready for a night of fun!

TICKETS: \$1 each, \$5 for 6, \$10/arm length or \$20/body length – BRING CASH!

NOTE: All members donating baskets for the raffle, please drop off items at the Registration Desk by noon on Sunday.

Dress Code During the Conference

Business casual is suggested for all of the sessions unless otherwise stated in the program.

Conference Badge

Please wear to all sessions.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Annie Pilek
President



Kari Bowman Leslie
Past President



Kevin Nelson
President Elect



Catrina Vargas
Treasurer



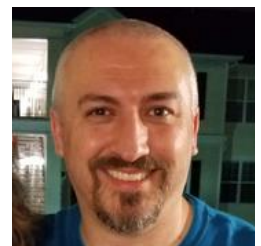
Kelsey Lehnerd
Secretary



Michelle Kithcart
Director-at-Large



Katie Liebler
Director-at-Large



Dan Merenick
Director-at-Large



Belynda Tharpe
Director-at-Large

Conference Virtual Scavenger Hunt

Created by

Wildly Different

Play Outside the Cubicle™

Come prepared with a charged phone and an adventurous spirit and you can participate in the RCRA Scavenger Hunt, brought to you by Wildly Different. Different challenges will release every day, starting on Saturday that will allow you to explore the resort, meet our vendors and test your knowledge about RCRA.

The more you play – the more chances you’ll have to win fabulous prizes, as you’ll earn entry into a prize drawing for every 50 points you score.



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2022

Dress Code: Day/Casual; Evening/Wear your Colors

12:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Registration Desk is Open

Location: Resort Lobby

Pick up your name badge and learn how to access the conference brochure and app.

9:00 am - 6:00 pm

Property Spotlight

Location: Resort Grounds

Enjoy the 3 complimentary pool cabanas reserved special for RCRA, soak in the sun at the beach, explore the grounds with the complimentary bike rentals, and relax at the Spa with a 20% discount. Be sure to mention RCRA! Advanced reservations are highly recommended for the Spa. Call 386-246-5580.

3:30 pm - 4:30 pm



Behind the Scenes Tour

Location: Atlantic Pre-Function

Explore the grounds and get a look behind the curtain.

4:30 pm - 5:00 pm



Student Scholarship Orientation

Location: Coquina Room

4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Red Cross CPR/AED/First Aid Training

Location: Matanzas Room

Become Red Cross certified or renew a current certification. \$35 pp. Sign up by emailing: kcaffrey@reston.org. Class limit 12 people.

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm



Student Welcome Social

Location: Atlantic Pre-Function

Calling all students! Join us for some great ice breaker games with Wildly Different. Meet other students and have some FUN!

6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

DINNER ON OWN

7:30 pm - 7:45 pm

Welcome Kick Off!

Location: Vilano Room

The official Welcome to Hammock Beach and the 2022 RCRA National Conference. President Annie Pilek will help you 'Seas the Day' as she kicks off the conference with an introduction to the RCRA Board and our supporting Vendors. Don't forget to 'Wear your Colors'; Alma Marter, property you are representing or favorite team!

7:45 pm - 10:00 pm

Excellence in Programming & Games, Games, Games

Session #1

Presenters: Awards Committee & Brian Bevacqua, Gary Bleil, Emma Feakes, Kelsey Lehnerd.

Location: Vilano Room then move into Flagler/Crescent

Applicants for RCRA's Excellence in Programming Award will make a case for why their program is most deserving of the award through 'Top Rec' "pitches". A live audience of session attendees will be able to ask the contestants questions and have the opportunity to vote on the program they think deserves the Excellence in Programming Award. *Presenters, please set up by 6:30 p.m.

Following the presentations and voting, stick around for hands-on interactive session, 'Games, Games, Games', where you will be sure to learn and meet someone new!



- Symbols of a "person with a book" are specially geared sessions for *students*.
- Bring Cash to the Sunday Night Presidents' Social.
- The theme for the Sunday Night Social is 'By the Sea'.



Don't forget to set your clocks back by 1 hr tonight! Daylight savings ends and we 'Fall Back'

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2022

Dress Code: Day/Business Casual; Evening/ "Seas the Day" theme or Casual!

7:45 am - 8:15 am

Fitness Walk

Location: Main Beach Walk Over

7:45 am - 8:15 am

Spin Class

Location: Lodge Pool Deck Spin Room
Max 18 people.

8:00 am - 11:00 am

Vendor Setup

Location: Ocean Ballroom Pre-Function

8:00 am - 5:30 pm

Registration Desk is Open

Location: Ocean Ballroom Pre-Function

9:00 am - 11:00 am

Awards Breakfast & Keynote – The Hard Parts of Happiness

Session #2

Presenter: Anthony Poponi

Location: Ocean Ballroom

We will recognize members for their contributions to the recreation industry and RCRA by awarding the following: Outstanding Professor Award, Outstanding Student, Outstanding Vendor, Premier Recreation Operation Award, and Student Scholarships.

Keynote: Are you running towards what you want out of life or running away from the hard parts of life? More pleasure, more joy and more fun are part of living a happier life. There are also hard parts of happiness, like service, navigating tough relationships, and building mastery. Crafting a fulfilling life means staying connected to your deeper sense of purpose and your “why.” Happiness can be hard, but the hard parts of happiness are also the good parts.

11:30 am - 12:30 pm

LUNCH ON OWN

12:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Vendor Demos

Location: Grand Event Lawn

Location: South Tower Pool Deck

Location: Quarter Deck

Location: Clipper Room

Explore the grounds and venture out to engage and play with our Vendors. Start at the Ocean Pre-Function and work your way around from Vendor to Vendor.

12:00 pm - 11:00 pm

Job Fair Setup

Location: Atlantic Ballroom

1:00 pm - 1:30 pm



Internship Spotlight

Location: Clipper Room

1:15 pm - 1:45 pm

Research Symposium Block #1

Themes and the Quality of Guest Experiences Session #3

Presenter: Dr. Patti Freeman, Dr. Gary Ellis, Dr. Brian Hill, Dr. Sarah Agate, Mr. Austin Cook

Location: Galleon Room

Theming has long been assumed to be an important part of the atmospherics of resorts and tourist attractions. Yet, little is known about the effects of different types of themes or the features of themes that build quality guest experiences. Using an innovative mystery shopper approach, we examined two questions: a) Does theme type and theme coherence influence the percent of time guests are aware of a theme? and b) Does a theme elevate point-of-service experiences over and above service quality?

2:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Research Symposium Block #1

Participation, Commitment, and Loyalty Towards Youth Tennis: Player and Parent Perceptions

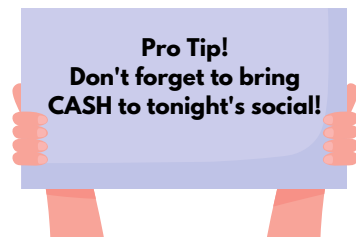
Session #2

Presenter: Dr. Jill Fjelstul

Location: Galleon Room

Sports offer diverse benefits for youth in social, physical, psychological, and mental dimensions. The current study examined player and parent perceptions of perceived benefits for participating in and commitment and loyalty towards tennis. Results offer opportunities for the tennis and sport promoting organizations to focus marketing efforts on the perceived benefits to increase participation in and loyalty towards the sport.

Pro Tip!
Don't forget to bring
CASH to tonight's social!



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2022

Dress Code: Day/Business Casual; Evening/ "By the Sea" or Casual!

2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Keynote Workshop- Happily Successful

Session #3

Presenter: Anthony Poponi

Location: Surf Room

Most people get the linkage right and the causality wrong in the order of happiness and success. If you think "I'll be happy when I'm successful" you fell into the trap. Research has shown that happy people are successful people and so focusing on how to be happy is a precursor for how to be successful.

**Pre-registration required. Max 50 ppl per workshop. Anyone not attending the Job Fair are encouraged to attend the 11/7/22 workshop. Sign up with be on the RCRA App.*

3:00 pm - 3:15 pm

Research Symposium Block #1

Exploring the Impact of Theme on Recreation and Tourism Experiences

Session #1

Presenter: Sarah Agate, Dr. Brian Hill, Mr. Austin Cook

Location: Galleon Room

Theme is an important aspect of recreation and tourism experiences. Little is known, however, regarding how theme impacts visitor experiences. We used an innovative approach of having mystery shoppers engage in various recreation and tourism experiences, as well as a variety of qualitative methods to explore their experiences. In this session, you will learn ways that theme impacts experiences and how to use them when facilitating recreation and tourism experiences.

3:30 pm - 4:15 pm

RCRA History Panel

Session #4

Presenter: Debbie Regnone

Location: Clipper Room

Please join this session as History Committee Panel goes through the history of RCRA with photos and stories. Hear about association successes and challenges from long-time members! Past conference brochures will also be shared.

4:30 pm - 5:15 pm

Recreation Life Panel

Session #5

Presenters: Natalie Clemens, Jessie Decker, Sally Evans, Paul Shockley

Location: Clipper Room

Top Recreation Leaders from various aspects of the Resort and Commercial Recreation Industry share their perspectives and insights. The audience will have an opportunity to ask questions related to industry advancements, career advice and related topics during this interactive panel session. Moderated By: Kelsey Lehnerd

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Vendor Exhibit Hall

Location: Ocean Ballroom Pre-Function

5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

DINNER ON OWN

5:30 pm - 6:00 pm



Resume Review

Location: Surf Room

Attending the Job Fair? Best to have a professional member review your resume for quick tips and helpful adjustments.

8:00 pm - 9:30 pm

Theme Night! By the Sea

Location: Ocean Bar Event & Champions Event Lawn

Swim on over and come dressed in your best 'By the Sea' attire and prepare for a night of **GLow** fun, games, and music. Special thanks to tonight's vendor, Sky Events Unlimited.

Don't forget to come ready to win at the Lucky Logo Auction! Donated swag from our agency members will be raffled off and you could be the lucky winner going home with some great prizes! *Don't forget to bring your CASH!* \$1-20 ticket options are available!

We Need

YOU!

**Future Speakers, Hosts for Regional Workshops,
Membership Drives, Vendor & Educator Contacts, or Future
Board Members!**

Please see a current RCRA Board Member to learn more.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2022

Dress Code: Day/Business Casual; Evening/Semi Formal

7:45 am - 8:15 am

Fitness Walk

Location: Main Beach Walk Over

7:45 am - 8:15 am

Stretch Class

Location: Lodge Event Lawn

8:00 am - 5:30 pm

Registration Desk is Open

Location: Ocean Ballroom Pre-Function

8:00 am - 5:30 pm

Vendor Exhibit Hall

Location: Ocean Ballroom Pre-Function

9:00 am -10:00 am

Business Meeting - all welcome

Location: Surf Room

10:00 am -10:30 am



Job Fair Property Introductions

Location: Clipper Room

Job Fair Professionals will be present a brief overview of what their property or company has to offer and what they're looking for in a future member of their team.

10:00 am - 10:30 am

Research Symposium Block #2

Who are our Emerging Professionals? An investigation into Recreation and Tourism student perceptions of their college experience and future professional goals and expectations.

Session #4

Presenter: Dr. Josh Carroll & Race O'Neil

Location: Galleon Room

An overview of current emerging professionals' perceptions. How different attributes of emerging professionals' degree experience affect their choices of recreation employment sectors. How emerging professionals from recreation and tourism programs evaluate their educational experience.

10:00 am - 10:45 am

T.E.A.M. Work Makes the Dream Work

Session #6

Presenters: Mindy Anderson

Location: Harbor Room

Teams. Whew, we are so jaded post the pandemic when we hear the word, Teams. Here we go again with another Teams virtual meeting. Not this time! During this high- energy session, we will redefine our definition of the word Team. We will do a quick dive into personality types and learn how we need a spectrum of personalities surrounding us to bring our dream alive. We will then wrap it up with an exercise to put your leadership to the test. Craig Groechel always says, "When the leader gets better, everyone gets better!" Let's make that happen today! Go Team!

10:30 am -11:00 am



Job Fair 101

Location: Clipper Room

10:30 am - 11:00 am

Research Symposium Block #2

Commercial Recreation & Tourism: An Entrepreneurial Approach - Highlights of the 8th Edition

Session #5

Presenter: Dr. Kate Price-Howard, Dr. Harriet E. T. Dixon, Scott Rood

Location: Galleon Room

This session will bring updated industry statistics, trends, and experiences to our participants. So many shifts and adjustments have been made since the pandemic, but the expectations are now higher than ever. Therefore, the delivery of these unique products and services must continue to thrive. This text will help to guide the foundation of this knowledge base!

11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Keynote Workshop- Happily Successful

Session #7

Presenter: Anthony Poponi

Location: Surf Room

Most people get the linkage right and the causality wrong in the order of happiness and success. If you think, "I'll be happy when I'm successful" you fell into the trap. Research has shown that happy people are successful people and so focusing on how to be happy is a precursor for how to be successful.

**Pre-registration required. Max 50 ppl per workshop. Sign up with engage on the RCRA App.*

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2022

Dress Code: Day/Business Casual Day; Evening/Semi Formal

11:00 am - 12:15 pm



Job Fair

Location: Atlantic Ballroom

Professionals and students bring your resumes and meet informally with perspective internship and employment opportunity properties.

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

LUNCH ON OWN

12:30 pm - 1:15 pm

Interview Draft

Location: Surf Room

Professionals, if you would like to interview students during the Tuesday interview sessions, you must attend this draft to create your interview schedule.

2:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Research Symposium Block #3

Sustainable Tourism

Session #6

Presenter: Jeremy Schultz

Location: Galleon Room

In this presentation, we will discuss risks that can be problematic caused by your daily resort operations and independent contractors and vendors who step foot on your property. We will discuss ideas and strategies that can help minimize these risks and protect your business.

2:00 pm - 2:45 pm

Young Professionals: Making the Leap from Student to Professional

Session #8

Presenter: Caroline Halbert, Geri Pirkle, Danielle Wills.

Location: Clipper Room

Feeling nervous about graduation? Not sure what to expect after school? Come listen to our panel of professionals who made the leap in recent years. Bring questions, take notes, and leave ready. Moderated by Katie Leibler.

Identifying and Managing Your Resort Exposures

Session #9

Presenter: Chris Van Leeuwen

Location: Surf Room

In this presentation, we will discuss risks that can be problematic caused by your daily resort operations and independent contractors and vendors who step foot on your property. We will discuss ideas and strategies that can help minimize these risks and protect your business.

3:00 pm - 3:45 pm

Crafts Basic to BIG!

Session #10

Presenter: Maggie Kwolek & Annie Pilek

Location: Surf Room

Learn how to create complimentary to revenue enhancement crafts and kits for children's programs, art workshops and more.

Recruitment

Session #11

Presenter: Latisha Jackson

Location: Clipper Room

Join Hammock Beaches Employee of the Year on the is engaging and fun session on Recruitment.

Scope of the Industry

Session #12

Presenter: Kelsey Lehnerd & Dan Merenick

Location: Harbor Room

This talk will focus on helping Emerging Professional's learn what areas of employment are out there: resorts (golf, ski, family, corporate events, etc.), YMCA, Campgrounds, Commercial Recreation, P&R, and more! Find out what skills you need and how to find out what fits your expertise.

4:00 pm - 4:45 pm



Moving up Through the Ranks

Session #13

Presenter: Belynda Tharpe & Kevin Nelson

Location: Clipper Room

What can you do to stand out to your supervisor? How do you know when to take the next step? What can you take from school to make the best impression at work? Earning that next promotion is not as tricky as you may think. Listen in on these essential tips that can help you on your journey.

Teambuilding

Session #14

Presenter: Brian Bevacqua

Location: Harbor Room

From corporate groups to staff trainings – the art of designing the perfect teambuilding program is essential to any recreation professional. In this session, we will learn not only how to facilitate different activities – but how to artfully craft the perfect experience to any group. Plan on being active, engaged, and maybe a little outside your comfort zone as we ideate, create, and learn together.

Mental Health Awareness

Session #15

Presenter: Katherine Caffrey

Location: Surf Room

Your mental health is an essential part of wellness. Are you feeling burnt out? Do you want to find out ways to regulate and reset when things are getting tough? Katherine will provide simple tips and tricks on self-regulation and boundaries.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2022

Dress Code: Day/Business Casual Day; Evening/Semi-Formal

5:45 pm - 6:15 pm



Students Pick up Interview Schedules - Registration Desk

Location: Ocean Ballroom Pre-Function

6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Pre Gala Mixer & Vendor Cocktail Hour

Location: Ocean Ballroom Pre-Function

Members, come gather before the gala for photos and continue to meet with our amazing RCRA vendors.

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Andy Holdnak Awards Gala

Location: Ocean Ballroom

Experience the National Conference in RCRA style at this semi-formal event. Enjoy a wonderful dinner, induction of officers, silent and live auction for multiple exciting vacation getaways, 2022 National Conference showcase and awards presentations to include: Debbie Regnone Service Award, Howard Uibel Award, President's Award, Property Host Award, Excellence in Research Award, Excellence in Programming Award, Making the Difference Award, and Exiting Board Member Awards.

Auction: This is your chance to buy your next vacation, spring break or family getaway. There will be a Silent Auction to start, and some packages will go live after dinner. Resort Packages start at \$250! You do not have to be present to win. Contact a member of the Ways and Means Committee if you would like the option to bid via phone.

9:00 pm - 11:00 pm

After Gala Dance Party!

Location: Ocean Ballroom

Boogie on down and join us for an after-gala celebration with music and dancing courtesy of Sky Events Unlimited.

Thank you to our evening sponsor Sally Evans!

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2022

Dress Code: Day/Business Casual Day; Evening/Casual

8:00 am - 5:30 pm

Registration Desk is Open

Location: Ocean Ballroom Pre-Function

**Call for Board Nominations
2024**

**1 Treasurer
2 Director at Large
1 President Elect**

8:00 am - 9:00 am

Townhall Meetings

Join us for a recap on the 2022 RCRA National Conference. Committee Chairs gather real time feedback and discuss strategic plans for the future of the organization.

Educator Townhall

Location: St. Augustine B Room

Emerging Professional

Location: St. Augustine A Room

Professional Townhall

Location: Matanzas Room

Vendor Townhall

Location: Coquina Room

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2022

Dress Code: Day/Business Casual Day; Evening/Casual

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Property Spotlight

Location: Resort Grounds

Enjoy the 3 complimentary pool cabanas reserved special for RCRA, soak in the sun at the beach, explore the grounds with the complimentary bike rentals, and relax at the Spa with a 20% discount. Be sure to mention RCRA!

Advanced reservations are highly recommended for the Spa. Call 386-246-5580

9:15 am - 10:30 am

Social Purpose

Session #16

Presenter: Michelle Kithcart

Location: Ocean Pre-Function

Come help us prepare and organize the donations for Hurricane Ian relief.

9:30 am - 12:00 pm



Interview Block #1

Location: Atlantic Ballroom

Students and professionals, please refer to your interview schedule for time allotments.

9:30 am - 4:30 pm



Student Prep Room

Location: Atlantic Pre-Function

Relax in between interviews here.

10:45 am - 11:45 am

RCRA Rebrand Meeting

Location: Matanzas Room

Want to come help with the rebranding of RCRA? Stop by!

12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

LUNCH ON OWN

1:30 pm - 2:15 pm

Fine Tune Your Facilitation

Session #17

Presenter: Dr. Phileshia Dombroski

Location: Matanzas Room

From staff trainings to childhood clubs, the overuse of lame name games and bonding activities has brought us to a time when the words "teambuilding" and "icebreakers" often result in eye rolls and groans. To turn this tide, fine-tune your facilitation skills with Dr. Phil in this lively session.

1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Head Shots

Location: Lodge Event Lawn

Eventbrite link registration required. Update your professional head shot today! Sign up for head shots through the RCRA app.

1:30 pm - 4:30 pm



Interview Block #2

Location: Atlantic Ballroom

Students and professionals, please refer to your interview schedule for time allotments.

3:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Premier Property Nominees Roundtable

Location: Matanzas Room

Inviting all to partake in a roundtable discussion of the RCRA premier recreation operation nominees' new programs and charity work.

5:00 pm - 6:30 pm

Farewell Mixer

Location: Loggerheads

Join us for a last farewell as we say our goodbyes and rehash all the fun we had!

To all Interviewees:

Good Luck!

Join the Re-branding Committee

**Speak to Annie Pilek or email
annie.pilek@rcra.org**

SPEAKER BIOS

Sarah Agate



Sarah Taylor Agate completed her bachelor's and master's degrees at BYU (B.S. in Family Studies, M.S. in Youth and Family Recreation). She completed her PhD at Clemson University in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management. She has taught at Southern Illinois University, Clemson University, Southwestern College, and SUNY Brockport, where she was a faculty member for four years before joining the faculty at BYU in 2019. Her research focuses on exploring how transformative experiences contribute to developing different components of emotional intelligence.

Mindy Anderson



Mindy Anderson serves as Director of Lifestyle for the South Region, where she oversees and provides lifestyle operations support to FirstService-managed communities. Anderson joined FirstService Residential in 2021, bringing more than 20 years of property and luxury lifestyle and amenity management experience with her. Prior to joining FirstService Residential, Mindy held leadership roles at the Castle Group and WTS International, where she served as Regional Director. Originally from Tampa, Mindy has a Bachelor of Science degree in Exercise Science and Health Promotion from the University of South Florida. She is a licensed Community Association Manager (CAM) and is a Certified Manager of Community Associations (CMCA). Mindy lives with her husband, two children and their puppy in Lithia, Florida and enjoys fitness and sporting activities in her spare time. She supports a variety of causes, including the YMCA's Teen Leaders Club.

Brian Bevacqua



Brian has been an active professional in the Commercial Recreation industry for nearly a decade. Opening his own adventure business in 2010 then joining the Quechee Club in 2014 as their Recreation Programs Coordinator then as the Recreation Director in 2016. In 2015 he became an active member of the RCRA – attending his first conference. In 2017 Brian joined the BOD as a director at large – serving 2 terms through 2021. In that time, he transitioned from the Quechee Club in VT to the Activities Manager at a 4 Diamond Property in CA. After the COVID lay-offs, he was able to join the luxury hotel brand Montage International as the Recreation Manager at their Deer Valley Property, and now leading the recreation program at their new Pendry Park City location.

Gary Bleil



Gary Bleil has been involved with RCRA for more than 19 years, first as a student and as a professional from Omni Amelia Island Resort in North Florida. Gary graduated from Slippery Rock University in Resort Recreation Management/Tourism and a Minor in Business. Since graduating, Gary has worked his way through the recreation field in various positions including Activities and Group Recreation Intern, Pool Technician, Assistant Club Manager, Manager of Amelia's Wheels and currently the Director of Recreation and overseeing 9 departments and up to 95 team members at his property. Under Gary's ten-year as Director the Omni Amelia Island Resort has been awarded 8 Premier Operation awards by RCRA, two excellences in program by RCRA and he was named by Jacksonville Business Journal one of Jacksonville's '40 under 40' in 2017.

Katherine Caffrey



After graduating from Marymount University with a degree in Business Management, Katherine worked in the surf/skate/snow recreation industry. Realizing a career working with children was her passion, she spent 10 years teaching kindergarten, obtaining certifications in mental health for youth/adults and serving on a community service board for changes/increases in youth mental health services. In 2017 Katherine moved back into the recreation industry, becoming the Recreation Manager at Reston Association. She currently oversees youth programs, including 16+ summer camps, allowing her to hire/work with 70+ staff members, as well as touch the lives of thousands of children.

Dr. Joshua Carroll



Dr. Joshua Carroll is an Associate Professor of Recreation, Parks and Tourism at Radford University. His teaching and research focus on sustainable, nature-based tourism and how this can be used as a pathway toward positive community development and ecological integrity. Dr. Carroll holds a Ph.D. and M.S. in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources, both from Colorado State University.

SPEAKER BIOS

Natalie Clemens



Natalie is the Corporate Wellness & Activities Director for McConnell Golf and has worked for the company for 10 years. She is originally from the Buckeye State and graduated from Kent State University in 2001. Natalie started her career by working at luxurious resorts on Captiva and Sanibel Island, at the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club, and then finally took her career out to the high seas. She worked in the entertainment department on Celebrity Cruise Lines for four years, starting off as an activity staff member, and worked her way up to the Cruise Director position. She got her land legs back in 2008 and moved to Raleigh, NC to continue her career at Hasentree Country Club. After three years helping build the activities program there, she moved down the road to The Country Club at Wakefield Plantation. Since joining Wakefield Plantation, she built the activities program from ground up, oversees eight McConnell properties on the wellness & activities side, helped design and open 6 fitness facilities within the company and continues to grow as a director, leader and mentor. She has a passion for planning events, creating new programs and helping lead and train her team into becoming the best they can be. When she is not working, she enjoys playing beach volleyball, traveling and spending time with her friends and family.

Austin Cook



Austin Cook is an undergraduate research assistant with a keen interest in experience design.

Jessie Decker



Jessie Decker is a Human Resources Specialist with the heart of a Recreation professional. Currently she is Corporate Trainer at Chatham Bars Inn, a luxury Cape Cod resort, rated as a Forbes Travel Guide 4-Star property. She holds a degree in Recreation Management from the University of New Hampshire and has worked with the luxury resort since 2000. In addition to leading the resort's training and development initiatives, Jessie has held the positions of Intern, Activities Coordinator, Recreation Manager and Human Resources Manager at the resort. In her time away from the resort, she can be found at a baseball field or basketball court with her boys, hula hooping or playing pickleball.

Harriet Dixon



Harriet E. T. Dixon earned a Ph.D in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management from Clemson University and a M.S. in Recreation and Leisure Facilities and Services Administration from East Carolina University.

Dr. Phileshia Dombroski



With over two decades of experience in recreation management, and a smattering of related academic degrees, Phileshia currently engages students in learning at Winona State University, in Minnesota. Colloquially, she is known to her colleagues and students as Phil or Dr. Phil. Years ago, she started her professional career in camp administration in upstate New York, however, she has since been employed as a resort activities manager, executive director of a community foundation, paddling instructor, challenge course facilitator, and youth sport specialist in Morale Welfare and Recreation for the U.S. Army. In all of her work... engagement and connectivity have been paramount. And, to give the appropriate "shout-outs" to academia, Phil received her Ph.D. from Penn State University in Recreation, Park & Tourism Management; she completed her B.S. at Lock Haven University in Recreation, focusing on outdoor management; and she received her M.S. from Slippery Rock University in Park & Resource Management.

Dr. Gary Ellis



Dr. Ellis earned a B.S. at Eastern Kentucky University in Recreation & Park Administration, an M.S. at University of Kentucky in Recreation and Park Administration, and a Ph.D. from the University of North Texas in Higher Education Administration.

SPEAKER BIOS

Sally Evans



Daughter, Sister, Friend and of course FUN! Sally was lucky to know what she wanted to do since she was 16. She has been a camp counselor, taught many children, teens, and adults how to have fun, won multiple RCRA awards along with an ARDY award, and she graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in Leisure Studies. She has served on the board of directors for RCRA, volunteered for multiple causes, and hired many fabulous folks to the cruise industry. She has enjoyed over 35 years of support, professional career growth and incredible friendships through RCRA. Sally built her own company, joined Disney Cruise Line to launch their first two ships, created memories for Wish Children and their families. Sally became a Director of FUN, then an Ambassador of FUN and now a Corporate Area Director overseeing 6 Orlando resorts. She can't wait for what is next!

Dr. Jill Fjelstul



Jill Fjelstul has aligned her academic and research interests in the areas of sport, tennis, and drive tourism. She successfully created the official academic alignment between UCF and the United States Tennis Association. Dr. Fjelstul also secured the UCF Undergraduate Certificate in Professional Tennis Management and the UCF Undergraduate Certificate in Managing Sporting Events. She is a lifetime member of the LPGA Teaching and Club Professional Division. Co-authors on this paper are Dr. Asli Tasci and Dr. Alan Fyall both also from the UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management.

Patti Freeman



Patti Freeman earned a B.S. in Recreation Management & Youth Leadership from Brigham Young University, an M.S. in Recreation Administration from Western Illinois University, and a Ph.D. in Human Performance from Indiana University.

Caroline Halbert



Caroline Halbert is the Recreation Group supervisor at Salamander Resort and Spa in Middleburg, Virginia. She started working at Salamander as an intern in 2017. Caroline graduated from Lock Haven University in Pennsylvania in 2017 with a Recreational Management degree. She also has been a part of the fun committee at Salamander since 2021, planning fun activities to bring fellow employees. At Salamander, Caroline teaches archery, axe throwing, kids camps, leads guided hikes and corporate group activities. Caroline has been a member of RCRA since 2019. Her favorite part of her job is interacting with guests and giving them a memorable experience while teaching the activities.

Dr. Brian Hill



Brian Hill has co-authored several studies related to theory of structured experience and has an extensive background in tourism with particular emphasis on tourism economics and outdoor recreation.

Latisha Jackson



Latisha Jackson is the current Employment & Recruitment HR Manager and Executive Assistant at Hammock Beach Golf Resort & Spa. The company's mission: Creating the World's New Standard in Hospitality, is something that Latisha works hard to deliver on every day and focuses on embedding this into the "Culture" of her employees. She graduated from the University of Phoenix in 2017 with her Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Human Resource Management. It was a long road to get that degree and there were some major losses she faced along the way. But still, "She believed she could, and did". In 2021, Latisha was unanimously voted as the Hammock Beach Golf Resort & Spa's Manager of the Year. It is truly an achievement that she does not take for granted. With over 20 years of experience in the Human Resources world, she motivates and encourages others to be their best selves. Latisha's hobbies include baking, Event Planning and Decorating, watching college football (Go Gators!), and spending time with her family.

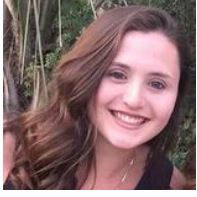
Michelle Kithcart



Michelle attended SUNY Brockport graduating with a degree in Recreation Management and a minor in Coaching. She moved to Florida to complete an internship with Resort Sports and decided to call the sunshine state home! She has worked in the special events field, resort recreation, and in the gated community sector of recreation for almost two decades. She is the Director of Lifestyle Programming for First Service Residential and works closely with our market leaders and our regional support teams to provide additional resources and support for our lifestyle communities across the East Division. She is responsible for coordinating lifestyle summits, programs, events, as well as providing valuable input on the development of lifestyle programming SOPs, Tips of the Week and other resources. In 2019 Michelle helped to start the "Be the Change" initiative for our region, encouraging our teams to be involved with a company wide service day for our communities.

SPEAKER BIOS

Maggie Kwolek



Maggie Kwolek is the current Camp & Activities Manager at the Kiawah Island Golf Resort who has been managing the Camp and Art Studio Programming for the past two years, and is currently acting as the interim Aquatics Manager as well. She is a graduate from Slippery Rock University and has worked for the Kiawah Island Golf Resort since 2013.

Kelsey Lehnerd



Kelsey Lehnerd is currently the Revenue Specialist with Blue Water Hospitality, a hospitality management company managing hotels, rv resort, and attractions across the country. Kelsey started her career after graduating from Slippery Rock University in Resort, Recreation & Hospitality Management. She has worked in Recreation & Events in various hotels and campgrounds on the East Coast before transitioning to her Revenue Specialist role earlier this year. On behalf of Blue Water, Kelsey was awarded RCRA's Premier Recreation Operation Award in 2020 for the department she oversaw at the Chesapeake Bay KOA / Sunset Beach Hotel. She is passionate, driven, and knowledgeable in multiple areas of hospitality management. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with family and friends and soaking in as many beach days as possible.

Dan Merenick



Dan Merenick is the Sr. Program Manager at Reston Association in Reston, VA. Prior to Reston Association he spent 25 years at a variety of jobs in recreation, from resorts, private clubs, YMCA's, city & county parks and recreation agencies, and a variety of homeowner associations. He has been a member of RCRA for 17 years and is currently a Director at Large board member and has served as chair for both the Ways and Means and Professional Committees. He is a proud recipient of the 2009 Debbie Regnone Service Award.

Kevin Nelson



Kevin Nelson has been at Western Colorado University since 1999 and teaches in the Resort Management Program. Kevin's expertise lies in the management and economics of tourism and commercial recreation. He is currently the Associate Dean of the Business School. He is also President-Elect of RCRA. He has years of experience with large budgets and leading organizations. Kevin received his bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University and his master's and Ph.D. degrees from Michigan State University. Kevin enjoys travel, golf, softball, and basketball and has officiated high school varsity sports for 30 years.

Race O'Neil



Race O'Neil is a recent graduate of Radford University whose passion and expertise for the natural world have taken him into professional capacities as a river guide, climbing instructor, and ski school employee.

Geri Pirkle



Hello! My name is Geri Pirkle. I was born and raised in the central coast of California. I graduated from Cal Poly SLO in 2020 with a major in Experience Industry Management and minors in Psychology and Environmental Sustainability. I came to Vermont in May of 2021 to do a summer internship at The Quechee Club where I now work as the Recreation Program Coordinator. I absolutely love animals and the outdoors, especially hiking, skiing, and lacrosse.

Anthony Popino



Anthony Popino is a Happiness Expert and the founder of the Focus on the 40™ approach. Anthony works with both groups and workplaces looking to improve productivity, success, trust and fulfillment! His programs and presentations bring out the best in his attendees, resulting in happier people at work and in life. Research proves happier people are more successful and productive than their less happy peers. Anthony's work is rooted in the applied fields of Positive Psychology, leadership, and neuroscience. Anthony's purpose is to help others re-focus on what really matters, instead of unwittingly chasing what doesn't bring lasting happiness or success. This intentional refocusing on the simple sources of happiness directs your attention to the 40% that really matters. Focusing on happiness first allows holistic growth and success inevitably follows.

SPEAKER BIOS

Dr. Kate Price Howard



Kate Price-Howard, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in Hospitality at Troy University in the Sorrell College of Business in the school of Hospitality, Sports and Tourism Management. She has worked in the resort recreation industry for 30+ years before and while obtaining her path that led her to academia. She has been an active member of Resort and Commercial Recreation Association since 1998 and has run her own recreation consulting business, Go Play, Inc. since 2001.

Debbie Regnone



Ms. Regnone has always created her own opportunities. Most every position she has ever held was one that did not exist before her. From her student internship with the City of Fort Myers Parks & Recreation Department to her ownership of Resort Sports, Inc. (34 years and counting!), Debbie has shown the vision to see a need and convince others to believe in her and create an opportunity to the benefit of all. Debbie has extensive resort experience at South Seas Plantation and Marquis Hotels & Resorts. She is most notable known for being a co-founder and the first President of RCRA. Ms. Regnone has been involved in numerous community groups throughout her career in a leadership capacity. Many young people, both locally and nationally, credit Debbie with giving them their start, their inspiration or the courage to create new opportunities and reach unexpected heights.

Scott Rood



Scott Rood is a professor and former chair of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Grand Valley State University. Rood is the cofounder, one of the editors, and administrator of the Journal of Tourism Insights. He is the Senior Editor of the 8th edition of “Introduction to Commercial Recreation and Tourism – An Entrepreneurial Approach.” He also served as president of the Resort and Commercial Recreation Association.

Jeremy Schultz



Jeremy Schultz, PhD (presenter, co-author) Dr. Schultz is an assistant professor of Parks & Recreation Management (B.S.) and Experiential & Outdoor Education (M.S.) at Western Carolina University. He completed his PhD at the University of Utah where his research focused on sustainable tourism certification programs, ecotourism, and sustainability in the USDA Forest Service.

Kelly Bricker, PhD (co-author) Dr. Bricker is a professor and the director of Hainan University-Arizona State University Joint International Tourism College or HAITC. She completed her PhD with the Penn State University, specializing in sustainable tourism and protected areas.

Paul Shockley



Paul has spent the past 13 years in the resort and club business working at three luxury properties in Virginia and South Carolina. In his current position- Paul serves as the director of Recreation at Farmington Country Club in Charlottesville, Virginia having started in this role in December of 2020. Paul oversees youth programs, camps, holiday and special events, teambuilding, art studio, kids club, and employee events and programs. Prior to relocating to Virginia, Paul spent seven years at Kiawah Island Golf Resort. Hired initially as a summer intern, he worked his way up to oversee Camp Kiawah, Turtles Nest Art Studio, family and holiday events, corporate team building events as well as the co race director of the Kiawah Marathon and Triathlon. Paul graduated from George Mason University with a degree in parks and recreation management. He is a past president of RCRA (2017) and spent 6 years on the board of directors. In his free time Paul enjoys spending time outdoors running, mountain biking, hiking and camping! Paul, his wife Lauren, their 3-year-old daughter Suzanna, and 1 year old son Braden live in Charlottesville.

Belynda Tharpe



Belynda Tharpe is currently a Director at Large on the current board. She has been a member of RCRA since 1988. She was the RCRA President 2001-2002, RCRA Board Member 1999-2003 and 2021/22 and an RCRA Debbie Regnone Service Award Recipient. Belynda currently works at FirstService Residential in Florida. She has over 30 years of event planning, member/employee satisfaction, team building and budgetary control. She holds a B.A. Recreation Management, Flagler College.

SPEAKER BIOS

Chris Van Leeuwen



Chris Van Leeuwen started his insurance career in 1987 working as an independent agent with his family's agency. Chris is a third-generation insurance professional and became the agency owner in 1994. In 2007, Chris sold the agency to a top 100 firm and focused his efforts on commercial lines accounts and specialty niche markets. Chris left the independent agency system and joined Veracity Insurance Solutions in 2012. He is currently VP of Business Development and is involved with various aspects of management, sales, training, and carrier relations within the agency. Chris has also been instrumental in the development and implementation of several national program and Risk Purchasing Groups. Chris' interests outside the insurance industry include international travel, cycling, fishing, cooking, and spending time with the family.

Danielle Wills



Danielle began her recreation career at The Cove on Ormond Beach where she found her passion for recreation. With her proven skills she grew their recreation program to include Kids Check In, themed weekly parties, and various new crafts. Looking to continue her career in recreation she joined the Plaza Resort and Spa team where she spear headed creating the recreational programming including the Adventure Squad kids camp. Her journey found herself at the Hammock Beach resort where she managed the kids camp, special events, bike rentals, and putting course. Her continued dedication to the recreation field and her dedication to her employees granted her a promotion to Water Park, Pool, & Beach Operations Manager where she leads a team of 40 staff members that service an 81,000 sqft water park , 6 pool decks, 13 bodies of water, and a full service beach.

5 TIPS TO MAKE RCRA WORK FOR YOU

#1 NETWORK

Increase your professional connections in the recreation field by attending as many conferences, seminars and roundtables as possible. Use the Member Directory to locate RCRA members in your area and form a monthly roundtable discussion. RCRA's National Conference is a MUST attend networking event, as students, professionals, educators and vendors attend from around the world. Regional Workshops are also emerging as ways to gain knowledge of the latest trends and how to facilitate them effectively.

#2 RECEPTION & AWARDS

RCRA is proud to recognize the outstanding contributions of its members with awards that are presented at the National Conference. Nominate your colleagues, programs or properties for going above and beyond! YOU can make it happen!

#3 RECRUIT EMPLOYEES & STUDENT INTERNS

Contact RCRA to have job listings posted on the RCRA website. This is also a great student tool when looking for an internship. The National Conference hosts the annual RCRA Job Fair & Internship Fair where a majority of our professional members recruit for full-time and internship positions.

#4 GET NOTICED

Write an article and share photos of your property and be showcased in an upcoming newsletter. Consider making this an assignment for student interns, providing great experience and exposure for them. The articles will make a great addition to your personal portfolio and will have a definite impact on your manager.

#5 GET INVOLVED

RCRA is successful because of the dedication its members devote to the Association's future. Sharing new ideas and creativity is accomplished through active participation in the Association's committees. Contact RCRA and see what committee is right for you.

Get Involved with RCRA and become a Committee Member.

Ask a Board Member how!

- Membership Committee
- Communication Committee
- Ways & Means Committee
- Conference Program Committee
- Vendor Committee
- Site Selection Committee
- Awards Committee
- Internship / Approval Site Committee
- Social Committee

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



Kevin Nelson

Contact: Debbie Regnone
President
debbier@resortsportsinc.com
www.resortsportsinc.com



Contact: Laura Hawkins
laura@gamemastersescapes.com
www.gamemastersescapes.com



Contact: Clay Weger
clay@gellyball.com
www.gellyball.com



For Your Event Needs, Sky's The Limit

Contact: Justin Kerin
jkerin05@msn.com
www.skyeventsunlimited.com

SALLY EVANS



Sally made this donation in honor of her mother, 'Whizzie' Evans, who sadly passed away in November 2020. Whizzie LOVED all of her friends and family within RCRA and so looked forward to being at the conferences each year. She loved seeing new resorts and of course experiencing the Spa when that was available.

Thank you RCRA Vendors!



www.9squareintheair.com
niki@9squareintheair.com



www.anythingweather.com
gregg@anythingweather.com



www.ashevilleplays.com
ashevilleplaystoday@gmail.com



www.crunchytech.com
jamesbengel@gmail.com



www.gamemastersescapes.com
laura@gamemastersescapes.com



www.innovativesportsurfacing.com
sales@innovativesportsurfacing.com



www.gellyball.com
clay@gellyball.com



www.geoargames.com
info@geoargames.com



www.innovadiscs.com
chris.brophy@innovadiscs.com



www.insurancecanopy.com/vendor-insurance
troy@insurancecanopy.com



www.jmmusicdesign.com
justin@jmmusicdesign.com



www.keylogrolling.com
info@keylogrolling.com



www.magicmilkislandart.com
awmagicmilk@gmail.com



www.minimeltsvending.com
rfox@minimeltsvending.com



www.plasterofparadise.com
maureen@plasterofparadise.com



www.sharppromo.com
nestor@sharppromo.com



www.skyeventsunlimited.com
jkerin05@msn.com



www.thebiggameshow.com
info@thebiggameshow.com



www.tmprsports.com
doug.clark@tmprsports.com



www.laserbattle.com
info@tropicalextremes.com

Wildly Different www.wildlydifferent.com
sales@wildlydifferent.com
Play Outside the Cubicle™



Winterland www.winterlandinc.com
madelyn@winterlandinc.com