



Executive Director Betsy Friedman of Sarasota Strong speaking in the Academy at Glengary's dining room

LIKE-MINDED MISSIONS

We love opening our doors to like-minded missions that focus on transforming lives - it gives us an opportunity to express our value of service. Such was the case this past week when the Academy at Glengary had the pleasure of welcoming Sarasota Strong for a three-day training on Trauma-Informed Community Development. Our Culinary team graciously hosted guests in our Academy dining room while offering beverages and nutritious meals prepared by members and staff.

The training was offered by the Neighborhood Resilience Project, under the leadership of Father Paul and Sister Kristina Abernathy, who traveled from Pittsburgh, PA. With 50 attendees from all walks of life from our Sarasota-Manatee community, Sarasota Strong cultivated passionate, future agents of change. Academy colleagues Vanessa Alcantara and Patricia Haltinner also participated in the training and will be sharing their experiences with Academy members and staff.

Special thanks to Academy member Long Pham who helped kick off the event by sharing her testimony and experience of gaining Transitional Employment at the State Attorney's Office.

Thank you, Long, for your courage in public speaking!

WARM WELCOME TO RAY REILLY

by Ray Reilly

My name is Ray Reilly. I was born in Long Island, New York, and moved to Bradenton, Florida, when I was 13 years old.

I enjoy movies, music, media, and spending time with friends. Also, my faith in God is a very important part of my life.

I learned about the Academy at Bradenton through Emergency Medical Services (EMS) at the Manatee County Government. I'm eager to learn as much as I can through the Academy to improve myself and find a better job.

I also hope to update my computer skills to meet today's standards. My long-term goal is to return to the workforce—possibly in church ministry.



Ray Reilly working on his computer skills



Medical student Ryann Gilchrist (second from left), with members and staff in her recent workshop

THE ART OF STILLNESS

by Ryann Gilcrest

My name is Ryann Gilchrist, and I am a senior at the University of Florida Honors College, majoring in Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience. I'm currently interning at the Academy at Glengary to gain broader professional exposure to the many facets of health, especially mental health.

In alignment with the Academy at Glengary's mission to promote recovery through the power of meaningful work and community, I recently had the privilege of leading a wellness workshop titled "Safe Space." Rooted in the Academy's holistic approach and the Eight Dimensions of Wellness, the session invited members to explore emotional, spiritual, and environmental wellness through creative self-expression.

The workshop centered on the idea of a personal safe space—an internal refuge to return to in moments of stress or uncertainty. Through reflective prompts, members considered what brings them peace: calming colors, familiar sounds, comforting places. Each participant then created a visual

(continued at right)

representation of their safe space, drawing from their own unique sources of comfort and strength.

The results were deeply personal: a quiet home, a serene church, a campsite in the woods. These individual creations sparked meaningful conversation and connection, reinforcing the Academy's belief in honoring each person's path to wellness.

While artistic in nature, this experience touched many dimensions—emotional awareness, spiritual reflection, intellectual curiosity, and social connection. Most importantly, it left members with a tangible reminder of their own inner calm, a tool they can return to at any time.

The "Safe Space" workshop reflected the Academy's commitment to whole-person wellness and the value of creative exploration in the journey of recovery.



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