

Steven Stanley's job is cool because he is in the business of creating positive memories for the guests who choose to stay in the hotels he manages.

"In my business, I am not really selling material goods, I am selling memories, communicating with people from all walks of life and having meaningful relationships with guests that last a lifetime," he said.

Speaking from his home base at the Fairfield Inn and Suites Marriott in South Hill, he said, "If I can get them to stay here once, I can get them back."

Stanley's career in the hospitality industry began 25 years ago when he worked for the Holiday Inn owned by Emmett Williams. During that time in 1993, he worked and attended Southside Virginia Community College on a part-time basis. His advisor at the College, Dr. Terry Whisnant, encouraged him to take a few classes at a time, not to rush the college experience since he was also working full time. Stanley said this great advice helped him to be successful at SVCC.

Later, Stanley decided to continue his education through the Old Dominion University Teletechnet Program offered at SVCC. He completed a double major with Management and Accounting degrees in 2005.

During the ODU commencement, Stanley was recognized as one of six graduates named outstanding scholars, given to the student with the highest grade point average in each of the colleges. He had a 4.0 average in the College of Business and Public Administration. Since his college completion, he has continued to excel throughout the hotel industry.

After working for Holiday Inn, he joined the Beck Company in 2007. He was the manager at the local Fairfield Inn during the entire year it was under construction.

Currently, he is Area General Manager for Fairfield Inn and Suites Marriott in South Hill and the Hampton Inn in Emporia. These hotels are directed by ONE Lodging Management, which currently operates over 119 hotels across 30 states in the U.S. and one province in Canada. With this company, Stanley's expertise in the industry has been recognized and he has been named as Team Leader for Transition Teams, tasked with integrating newly acquired properties into the ONE brand.

As a transition leader, he travels often, most recently to Texas, Maryland and Pennsylvania. He notes the importance of taking care of not only hotel guests, but also the supporters (employees) of the company.

"My philosophy is basically, you need to care for guest needs and people needs, both external and internal," he said.

SVCC has been an integral part of the educational life of the Stanley family for many years. His wife, Vonda Stanley, Nurse Practitioner at South Hill Family Medicine attended SVCC working toward her Registered Nursing degree. She later continued at ODU and then, Medical College of Virginia. Two of their three children are also enrolled at SVCC as high school students. Jonathan is in the Governor's School of Southside Virginia and will graduate from SVCC in May of this year. Ethan, as a student at Park View High School, is also taking advantage of the Dual Enrollment Program. His daughter, Nicole, will hopefully follow the family tradition.