

Officers & Directors 2025-'26

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The Mid Florida Chapter presents:

General Membership Meeting Tuesday, March 24, 2026



Menu

Breakfast Buffet

**Served with Coffee, Decaf,
and Tea**

Bottled Juice and water

Program

Joint HHRA/HFTP Meeting

Presented By:

Fisher Phillips Firm

Justin McConnell

Molly Mullens



See more on pg. 3 and 4

Location & Parking

**Orange County Convention
Center**

Northside Restaurant

Free Self Parking

Cost

Members with RSVP \$35

Non-Members & Guests \$45

Student Chapter Members \$35

Additional Information:

R.S.V.P. is **required**. Please visit our website midfloridahftp.org or respond to your personal e-vite from the chapter Secretary. Please RSVP or cancel no later than 5:01 PM, Friday prior to the event. Unfortunately, we cannot accept walk-ins, or credit any no-shows or late cancellations.

**Any opinions expressed in the Mid-Florida Chapter newsletter and web-site are solely those of the editor, web master or author of the article and are not associated with HFTP Global. Additionally, all works and publications are created entirely through volunteer time. Please excuse any mistakes or errors. Please consider volunteering content to be shared with your fellow members by emailing the editor.*

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From Our President

Dear Mid Florida Chapter Members,

As we move into another exciting month, I want to take a moment to reflect on the momentum our chapter continues to build. Each meeting, each conversation, and each shared challenge reminds me why the hospitality finance and technology community in Central Florida is so special. Your engagement, your curiosity, and your willingness to support one another are what make this chapter thrive.

Florida 2026 Regional preparations are underway. I can assure you that we are working hard to ensure that come August, our chapter will deliver a great educational seminar for all of those who are planning to attend. A special thank you to all board members, affiliates and Mid-Florida members who are actively participating in bringing our regional event together. Your dedication to this chapter will not go unnoticed.

Looking ahead, we look forward to our joint breakfast meeting with HHRA which will take place on March 24th. The topic will be related to AI from a legal perspective so it should be interesting as we embrace advances in everyday technologies and in hopes that the legal system can keep up with the pace.

With all of this said, I encourage you to stay engaged, attend upcoming events, and invite colleagues who may benefit from being part of our community. As always, thank you for your continued support of the HFTP Mid Florida Chapter. Your dedication is what keeps our chapter strong and forward thinking. I look forward to seeing you at our next gathering and continuing the great work we're doing together.

Sincerely,

Dennis Villegas
President
Mid-Florida Chapter



2025-26 Committee Assignments

Call for Volunteers

Legislative/ By-Laws

Dennis Villegas– DVillegas@Rosenhotels.com

Membership Relations/ Recruitment

Glen Carr– Glen.Carr@gmail.com

Communications/ Social Media/ Webmaster

Grethel Flores– Grethel.flores@conradhotels.com
Daniel Morris– Demorris504@gmail.com

Newsletter

Jose Santos - Jose.santos@partnersfcu.org

Programs/ Speakers/ Education

Jose Santos - Jose.santos@partnersfcu.com

Locations

Amanda Masilunis– amasilunis@rosenhoteles.com

Scholarship/ Awards

Justin McCann– jmccann@mtg-fl.com

Nominations

Gayle Edwards– GEwards@Profact.com

Daron Sandberg– DSandberg@Rosenhotels.com

Chad Curtis– CCurtis@Rosenhotels.com

Chapter of the Year & Regional Conference

The Board*

Global Liaison

Gayle Edwards* - GEwards@Profact.com

Engagement Committee

Christina Finch* -Christina@FinchSearchPartners.com

Nametags

Nick Seddon– nseddon@cariberoyale.com

Registration Table/ 50/50:

Randy Andersen– RAndersen@Profact.com

Community Service

Gayle Edwards* - GEwards@Profact.com

Charity Golf Event

Camp Boggy Creek - It's all for the kids!

Jack Griffith* - Jack.Griffith@Sodexo.com

Historian/ Photography

Michael Dryden* - Michael.Dryden@Hilton.com

Job Board

Dennis Villegas– DVillegas@Rosenhotels.com

Keeper of the Calendar

Justin McCann– jmccann@mtg-fl.com

Meet Our Presenters

Justin McConnell

Justin McConnell is a partner in Fisher Phillips' Orlando office who helps employers navigate their most complex workplace challenges. With more than a decade of experience representing companies of all sizes in state and federal courts, administrative agencies, and arbitrations, Justin brings both strategic insight and a results-driven approach to every matter he handles.

*A trusted advisor and accomplished litigator, Justin helps clients manage risk, ensure compliance, and resolve disputes efficiently and effectively. He is known for his ability to tailor strategies to each client's specific objectives and for his steadfast commitment to protecting their legal and business interests. Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*, Justin combines technical skill with a deep understanding of the human dynamics that drive workplace disputes.*



Meet Our Presenters

Molly Mullen

Molly Mullen, an associate in the firm's Orlando office, provides clients with legal and strategic advice on numerous aspects of labor and employment law including advising employers on day-to-day challenges, drafting and revising employee handbooks, ensuring compliance with employment laws, labor relations, and defending employers in Title VII, The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Florida Civil Rights Act (FCRA) matters.



Our Charity: Camp Boggy Creek

By Jack Griffith

In 2002, then President Randall Rickmann and Vice President Diana Hull, along with other leaders of our Chapter met with representatives of about a handful of local charities. The objective of this endeavor was to choose the Chapter's charity. Three (3) of the charities were JDRE, Give Kids the World, and Camp Boggy Creek. As the story goes there was a personal relationship between someone connected to our Chapter and the Camp that swayed the vote. That's how Camp Boggy Creek became the charity of our Chapter.

The Camp was relatively new as it had been founded in 1996, born out of the experience of a seriously ill child who had spent time at one of Paul Newman's "Hole in the Wall" camps for kids. Upon returning home to Central Florida, she asked her parents why there wasn't a camp like that in Central Florida. The Camp's literature refers to a poem written by Jennifer Masi, a South Florida teenager undergoing treatment for cancer. It was this poem that inspired many, including founders Actor Paul Newman and General Norman Schwarzkopf, Jennifer's parents Nick and Wendy Masi, and David Horvitz just to name a few. Here is her poem, *The Dolphin*:

A dolphin swimming through an endless sea,

Struggling through each new obstacle....

Scared, worried, unsure of what's to come.

Tough though.

Fighting, fighting.

Until one day she just couldn't anymore.

She wished to be in a place where she didn't have to fight for

Every inch.

And her wish was granted.

Before she died at the young age of 14, she enlisted neighbors, community leaders, and her parents to rally behind building a camp that would be a respite for other children facing serious medical illness just like her who were facing a serious medical illness.

The 232-acre plot of land in Eustis, Florida on which the camp is now located had been willed to Florida Hospital by a former patient of who in turn donated it to *The Boggy Creek Gang*- the actual name of the non-profit organization that runs the camp. The camp serves children ages 7 – 16 who have been diagnosed with a serious illness. As a year-round retreat, since 1996 the camp has provided over 90,000 campers with a serious illness and their families a FREE, life-changing camp experience.

For those of you who want to learn more about the camp and its deep history, go to boggycreek.org and be ready to smile and laugh. Also, view "The Healer" on Netflix for a very enjoyable family movie inspired by the Hole In The Wall Camps.

The BIG question next on the minds of our Chapter's leaders at that time was how best to fund our new Charity. They decided to host a golf tournament in conjunction with our General Meeting / Spring Social on June 13, 2003- our 1st Annual Golf Tournament benefiting The Boggy Creek Gang was born. It was held at Mystic Dunes Golf Club – The Wyndham Palms Resort in Kissimmee, Florida. The Committee Chairs were none other than Rod Bitterling and David Branson.

The proceeds of that first tournament given to the Camp were \$11,000!!!

To be continued.....

PRESENTING: YOUR 2025-2026

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

From top left to right: Jose Santos, Daniel Morris, Brittni Rosen, Angelika Balkarran, Amanda Masilunis, Glen Carr.

From bottom left to right: Gayle Edwards, Michael Dryden, Dennis Villegas, Randy Anderson, Justin



Your New Year's Assignment: Add HFTP to Your To-Do List



Written by James Bina

As a long-time member of HFTP, I have grown to take my membership for granted. It has become part of my professional identity, connecting me to a great group of like-minded professionals. And as a leader in the Global association, I have been happy to help guide HFTP into its new era. But I often lose sight of how much it provides to a professional navigating today's hospitality workplace. Because of this, I thought I'd showcase two initiatives that will be providing invaluable information over the next year.

One fruitful partnership is with the Rosen College of Hospitality Management at the University of Central Florida (UCF). Under the guidance of Mehmet Altin, who is the HFTP Professor of Hospitality Financial Management and Technology, our organizations will collaborate on a series of research project over the next year. Together we will publish two survey reports, including the 2026 Compensation and Benefits Report, plus a series of blogs and white papers. Topics of research include the value of automation, AI's impact on the hospitality labor market, technology spending strategy, and more. Working with the college will benefit from their analytical expertise and the resulting information will provide important resources to HFTP members and the industry at large.

UCF is my neighbor here in Orlando and I was happy to personally meet with Mehmet and Dr. Cynthia Mejia, the dean of the Rosen College. I was given a tour of the college and its ongoing renovations, and we parted with great enthusiasm about this new partnership.

Getting you the information you need to work effectively in today's hospitality business environment is a priority for HFTP. In addition to the material we will develop with the Rosen College, HFTP is in the process of convening a Hospitality AI Council to deliver industry-specific guidance on this topic dominating many discussions. The council will concentrate on high-level AI governance, education, and best practices. The group aims to serve as a definitive resource for the industry, ensuring that hospitality organizations can adopt AI technologies ethically, effectively, and with confidence.

Leading this initiative are newly-appointed co-chairs Michael Goldrich and Shannon McCallum. Although a council framework has begun, HFTP is still accepting HFTP member volunteers. If you are an AI expert and would like to participate, submit your interest via this council volunteer form.

Having a grasp of best practices and new ideas should never be an issue for any HFTP member — working in hotels or clubs. The association draws from its expert network to build out professional development opportunities that are what's needed today. Our Spring event calendar is evidence of the extensive programming available to you: in-person events, virtual education and new certificates from the HFTP Academy. Now it is up to you as an HFTP member to take advantage.

Before I close out for the month, I would like to ask one favor from you. We are currently running HFTP's biennial Compensation and Benefits Survey, open through March 31. We rely on your participation to develop the most accurate statistics on current salary, deferred compensation, bonuses, performance metrics and more. It is imperative to collect a broad, comprehensive sample of data to properly reflect the industry. Consider making an important contribution to your HFTP network by participating in the survey and look for the results in the final report out this June. Events are across the United States, Europe and UAE with the calendar published on the HFTP website. And here is an insider's tip, do not neglect the value of the regional conferences organized by HFTP chapters. These include the Mid-South Atlantic Regional Conference (February 25–27), the Texas Regional Conference (May 6–8), and the Florida Regional Conference (August 12–14).

Travel is not a requirement for learning at HFTP. The association is already lining up a slate of interesting virtual education, which are NASBA certified to help you fulfill your certification requirements. The first webinar is coming up on January 13, "Breaking the Cycle of Cybersecurity Inaction."



HFTP Mid-Florida and You

Leadership

Your chapter provides you a vehicle to grow in your personal and professional life through serving on chapter committees and the Board of Directors. Learn how to run a small business and lead the greatest HFTP chapter in the Universe. You will learn public speaking skills and gain confidence in your expertise. You can get the opportunity to develop and execute chapter programs developing valuable leadership skills.

Scholarship

Your chapter provides the HFTP CHAE and CHTP reviews and the testing for those two HFTP certifications in accounting and technology. We need you to help yourself and get certified. This should be a normal progression in your professional career. Your Chapter also provides Continuing Professional Education seminars at the General Meetings and Mini-Education events.

Participation

Your chapter provides a chance for you to give back to your community by assisting at the chapter golf event to benefit the kids at Camp Boggy Creek. Don't shy away, the chapter needs your time and talent. It also gives you the unique opportunity for chapter leadership at these events, being part of the solution.

Service

Your chapter provides the avenue for you to give of yourself in serving your fellow members and your community. We encourage you to get involved in your Mid-Florida HFTP Chapter. We need places to hold the monthly general membership meetings. We need our members to support the chapter events by supplying prizes and helping make these events successful. We need speakers for the General Meetings and the Mini-Educational.



Hotels are Us.
Credit Cards are Us.
Nuff said.

postint.com
866.377.2649



Save the Date

2026 HFTP Florida Regional Conference

August 12 - August 14, 2026

More details to be announced soon.

Connect with industry leaders and gain valuable insights into the latest trends in hospitality finance and technology.



****UPCOMING MEETING****



Tuesday, 4/28/26 6:00PM

Lake Nona—Dockside

Menu

STARTER:

House Salad

spring mix, tomato, cucumber, radish, goat cheese, lemon thyme vinaigrette

ENTREE:

Chicken Piccata

linguini, lemon-caper sauce

DESSERT:

Nutella Donuts

fudge sauce, strawberries

Vegan Rice Bowl available