

# our community



GIVING MATTERS

**FutureMakers  
Coalition REPORT  
2015-16**

INSIDE: ■ *What I've Learned as a FutureMaker* 3 ■ *Investing in our Community* 4 ■

*“Together, we’re better. Our work during the next nine years will build upon the past year – a year of finding strength in our numbers and our members, building a better coalition and creating the framework to continue developing the FutureMakers Coalition and transforming Southwest Florida’s workforce.”*

— Sarah Owen, FutureMaker, CEO and president of the Southwest Florida Community Foundation



*Sarah*  
**OWEN**

*President & CEO  
Southwest Florida  
Community Foundation*



PHOTO BY BRIAN TIETZ

▲ Nate Swan, group vice president of sales of Gartner, and Dr. Aysegul Timur, dean of the business school at Hodges University, share their story of collaboration after meeting at last year’s FutureMakers Coalition Breakfast of Champions. In the past year, these two FutureMakers got together on a curriculum in marketing and professional sales training to help better prepare students for the needs of Gartner and other local businesses.

## Reporting In

In this issue of *Our Community*, the Southwest Florida Community Foundation is turning over these pages to the FutureMakers Coalition.

As the backbone organization for the regional coalition dedicated to transforming the Southwest Florida workforce, we want to be sure the community knows what is happening inside the coalition and its resolve to create a great place to live, learn, work and play.

If you already call yourself a FutureMaker you were probably part of the coalition’s pep rally kickoff last year or have signed “the wall” somewhere along the way.

Just like any pep rally, a big game is not far behind. Over the last year nearly 200 diverse FutureMakers Coalition partners have participated in building a regional framework and developing outcomes for success. It hasn’t always been easy.

As you read these pages, please know that this is not OUR work but that of the partners who make up the FutureMakers Coalition. What the foundation does well is bring people together around a cause, organize them, connect them to resources, collect the important data and communicate both success stories and challenges to the region. This report is part of our role.

Early childhood specialists, educators, higher education administrators, economic developers, public servants, business owners, and caring citizens — our partners in the coalition - are the real experts. They do what they do best but are willing to come together to create collective change and impact.

This coalition works together to find ways to help Southwest Floridians get ready, get in and get done with a post-secondary degree or certification and then get connected to a career. That is how you transform a workforce. In this report you will see lessons learned, financial investments made and early success stories of the work.

I want to thank everyone who has called themselves a FutureMaker this year. For those of you learning of the coalition for the first time, the pep rally continues and we welcome you to this important work. Visit [futuremakerscoalition.com](http://futuremakerscoalition.com) to learn more about becoming involved.

Here we go,

*Sarah*

# OUR FUTURE IN THE MAKING

*Building a Coalition  
and Transforming  
Southwest Florida’s  
Workforce*

**“I**’M A FUTUREMAKER.” During the last year, educators, government and business leaders, students, private citizens and philanthropists have added FutureMaker to their credentials, expressing their support and involvement with the FutureMakers Coalition and its mission to improve the quality and sustainability of Southwest Florida’s workforce through post-secondary education.

Since its launch, the coalition has engaged 225 leaders from Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee counties who consider being a FutureMaker an integral part of their identity.

“It’s very powerful when everyone in the room steps up and says, ‘I’m a FutureMaker,’” observes teambuilding expert Jack Hess, executive director of the Institute for Coalition Building who has been coaching the local coalition the past year. “It’s a role they take with them outside of a FutureMakers meeting. That’s phenomenal.” The coalition’s goal is to transform the regional workforce by increasing the number of working-aged adults with a degree, certificate or other high-quality credential from 27 percent to 40 percent by 2025.

SEE FUTURE, 4 ▶

# FutureMakers Coalition Takeaways:



“We all tend to think of economic development as selling our sunshine and providing monetary incentives to get people to come here. It turns out there’s no question the workforce is an extremely important component for any community. Whether a business is moving its corporate headquarters here or supporting a building, we have to make sure we have the workers with the skills to staff these businesses. The workforce is also changing as baby boomers retire and millennials are coming into positions of responsibility. We need to attract millennials with nightlife and other things millennials value. Fortunately, Florida has the natural resources that appeal to millennials.”

— **Gary Griffin**, president, B & I, Fort Myers, and board member of the Horizon Council and Southwest Florida Economic Development Alliance



The FutureMakers Coalition is working to transform the workforce in Southwest Florida and promote the knowledge and skills needed for success in the workplace and in life. The Coalition was formed around existing regional collaborations between diverse stakeholders (from cradle to career) and citizens all committed to the region’s educational and economic success.



↑ 84

“Our presentation about workforce data in Southwest Florida (to the Florida College Access Network) lifted the veil of secrecy. It showed other organizations and education providers in different regions of the state how they can replicate what we did by showing the skill gaps and the educational requirements needed to fill these jobs. Florida does a better job than anyone in making this information available.”

— **John D. Meyer**, dean, School of Business & Technology, Florida SouthWestern State College, and co-author “2015 Southwest Florida Workforce Overview Study”



“I was invited to participate in the FutureMakers Coalition’s program because of my involvement with the Charlotte County Voice of Local Teens, a two-year countywide effort that also gives a voice to students. CCVOLT engages teens from all Charlotte County high schools, and like the regional summit allows us to see the differences we can make and how to accomplish our goals, whether staying in touch with local community members or simply starting service projects. With a bit of help, anything is possible.”

— **Ali Medico**, a student in Charlotte County



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## Regionalism is the Key

“Our goal in collective leadership and coalition building is not to go out and create another new program. In our experience it’s better to start with what’s already taking place. The FutureMakers Coalition is really trying to work at the regional level which adds to the complexity. In just a year we’ve seen a number of initiatives underway in many of the counties. The coalition is doing a nice job and is providing the backbone and support to make it happen.”

— **John Burnett**, chief executive officer, Community Education Coalition

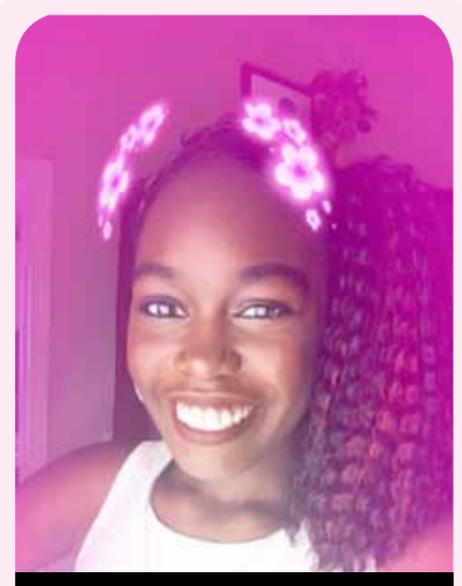


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## Partnerships Matter!

“The Certified Nursing Assistant Program was created on the basis of two Lee Memorial Health System missions: to reach the unemployed and the under-employed of Lee County; to fill the Certified Nursing Assistant openings in the system. Combining these two missions, we were able to come up with the CNA Program partnership with CareerSource and the Community Foundation so individuals could attend Fort Myers Technical and Cape Coral Technical Colleges’ CNA certification courses. The ultimate goal is to gain employment at LMHS. We are appreciative of the community partnerships in Southwest Florida that have made these programs a reality!”

— **Lindsay Tesniarz**, PHR, SHRM-CP Human Resources Project Specialist, & **Michelle Zech**, Human Resources Business Partner, Lee Memorial Health System Cape Coral Hospital



## GIVING STUDENTS A VOICE

“Before I attended the Regional Student Summit I felt I didn’t need to voice my opinions. After the experience I was confident to talk to my counselors and principal about my concerns and opinions. The summit also gave me the confidence to apply for the International Baccalaureate program and encouraged me to go out and make bigger decisions for me in life. Hopefully there will be another summit because it will help a lot of students who think they don’t have a right to express themselves.”

— **Francisca St. Germain**, junior and IB student at Cape Coral High School

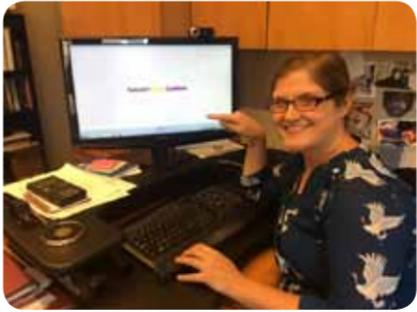


## EmPOWERing Students

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“Power Hour gives students more ownership and independence to design their day and have time to participate in clubs, meet with teachers for help, work on homework or participate in a FAFSA workshop.”

— **Lucinda Kelley**, director of Exceptional Student Education & Student Services, Hendry County School District



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### Talk About Talent

"#TalentTuesday provides Lumina with the opportunity to show the great work happening in higher education and through our partner communities while driving new and existing information about the skills and abilities we need to move the needle of our country (to increased post-secondary education attainment). Because it's social network-based, we're able to reach a lot of people."

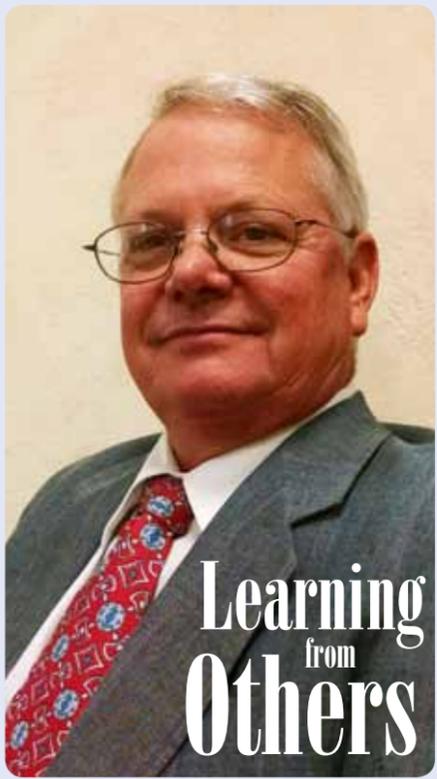
— **Haley Glover**, strategy director, Lumina Foundation



### May the Workforce Be with You

The 2015 Southwest Florida Workforce Overview Study "highlighted the different short-term and longer-term occupations and shortages in Southwest Florida. Our report might give FutureMakers a direction as to what types of certifications and licenses should be pursued."

— **Chris Westley**, director, Regional Economic Research Institute at Lutgert College of Business and professor of economics, Florida Gulf Coast University, and co-author "2015 Southwest Florida Workforce Overview Study"



### Learning from Others

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"Lumina Coaches John Burnett and Jack Hess "helped us explore additional ways to attract industries and businesses to the Glades Training Center during a steering committee teleconference. FutureMakers' whole goal here is to bring certification and training to Glades County, and the coaches helped us explore funding and grants to operate the facility."

— **Paul Carlisle**, Glades County Manager



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### Help Wanted

"FutureMakers' recruiting project for certified nursing assistant students helped us develop a better system to track and qualify eligible students and prepare them for success."

— **Sandy Shimp**, financial aid officer, Fort Myers Technical College



↑ 18.1k

### Finding a Cure

"With the FutureMakers Coalition's focus on the cradle-to-career pathway, we're not treating a symptom but finding a cure to show folks how to take a step up in life regarding education and the skills needed in Southwest Florida. We're transforming the region to attract the types of careers and jobs people want so they can grow up and live in Southwest Florida and have the opportunity to say 'this is my forever home.'"

— **Eric Berglund**, president, Southwest Florida Economic Development Alliance



### Shifting the Culture

"A true partnership realizes everyone is collectively responsible for the outcomes. When you create together, there is better buy-in. You have to have the community and private sector at the table."

— **Jack Hess**, executive director, Institute for Coalition Building



↑ 279

### Sign the wall and become a FutureMaker!

futuremakerscoalition.com



### Start Early

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"We've learned you have to start preparing students early for a better life and a college education. You can't start in the 11th grade. That doesn't work anymore. Our plan in Glades County is to introduce students in grades six to nine to AVID About Success, a mentoring and academic success program, as an elective so they aspire to post-secondary education and certifications."

— **Laura Perry**, president and executive director, Glades Education Foundation



### COMMON GOALS

"As Director of Business Services for CareerSource Southwest Florida, I am proud to be a FutureMaker! CareerSource Southwest Florida and the FutureMakers Coalition share common goals. Increasing post-secondary education completion and certifications will help ensure businesses have the talent they need to grow and thrive and individuals have the capacity to earn self-sufficient wages. Through collaboration, we can reach our goal to have 40% of Southwest Florida's adults have a degree or credential by 2025."

— **Peg Elmore**, Director of Business Services, CareerSource Southwest Florida

► FROM PAGE 1

A year ago, the Southwest Florida Community Foundation, which is serving as the backbone organization for the FutureMakers Coalition, convened the coalition's first meeting of FutureMakers Champions, key influencers committed to this one shared goal. Through the Champion's vision and support, the coalition collected baseline data; compiled a numerical outlook detailing Southwest Florida's existing and future workforce shortage and talent gap; established 15 regionally vetted outcomes across five collaborative teams; and created six outcome-related partner programs and projects.

"The data has been very important because it shows where the jobs are and the necessary degree, certification and credential requirements to fill these positions," said Tessa LeSage, director of social innovation and sustainability for the Southwest Florida Community Foundation. "The coalition is using this information to make a positive impact on the workforce and economy and identify well-paying careers."

**Learning Together as FutureMakers**

The coalition has been listening and learning, investing in programs throughout the five-county region to:

- Strengthen Collier County Public School's program for high school interns;
- Understand how to better prepare Southwest Florida residents to receive financial assistance;
- Assemble a collaborative program that offers the necessary skills to begin a career in healthcare as a certified nursing assistant; and
- Award grant funding to ensure the academic success of Glades County middle school students.

These are just a few of the many projects supported. Coalition partnerships have broadened geographically and participation has increased from businesses, early childhood educators, individual influencers and funders.

**Local and National Support**

The coalition depends on its local,



LESAGE



PHOTO BY BRIAN TIETZ

▲ Breakfast of Champions chairs Dr. Wilson Bradshaw, of FGCU, and Mary Beth Geier, of the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation, share a moment during the Breakfast of Champions event held last week at Six Bends Harley Davidson in Fort Myers.

regional and national support system to strengthen its programs.

As a member of Lumina Foundation's Community Partnership for Attainment, the coalition received financial and programmatic support, tapping into the expertise of leaders like Mr. Hess and John Burnett, chief executive officer of the Community Education Coalition. These coaches have been instrumental in guiding us through a regional collaborative teambuilding process as well as shaping specific plans, including sharing their experience and insight to develop an action plan for the new Glades Training Facility. Lumina also connected Florida Gulf Coast University to the Student African American Brotherhood, an organization dedicated to helping all black males on educational campuses to take full advantage of their academic years.

"Lumina's support is a reminder these communities are not alone," says Haley Glover, strategy director for Lumina Foundation. "There are other people they can call and examples of successes throughout the country. Southwest Florida is a great example of a region working together and leveraging individual strengths across a broad and diverse geographical area."

From Lumina's annual "Stronger Nation" report and through local data, the coalition learned there is no longer a traditional student. Rather, those pursuing degrees and industry certifications are often first-generation students working full-time while balancing coursework and caring for families. To create the needed workforce, the system has to adapt to these changed needs.

The partners understand reaching first-generation college and underrepresented students is a major challenge locally and across the nation. Nearly 61 percent of the students attending the coalition's inaugural Regional Student Summit represented first-generation college hopefuls who now know they have support in their post-secondary endeavors.

The partners have developed programs to address a general workforce deficiency in foundational skills, first identified by the Horizon Council in Lee County. Now

that work is shaping a regional approach to enhancing active listening, critical thinking/problem solving, interpersonal skills, teamwork and work ethic to increase success in the workplace.

"This is another great example of how a good idea in one part of the region can take off and have the potential for greater impact throughout region teamwork," Ms. LeSage says.

**Communicating with our Community**

The FutureMakers Coalition has been persistent in communicating a message of collective leadership to transform the workforce and promote a more sustainable economy.

"More people in our community now fully understand the impact of a better educated workforce to our future economic viability and sustainability," says Sarah Owen, president and CEO of the Southwest Florida Community Foundation. "More importantly, traditional and nontraditional students know we're walking alongside them and supporting their post-secondary success."

"The FutureMakers Coalition is a national leader in using the power of communications and the media to keep its message at the forefront," says Lumina's Ms. Glover. "During our big convening network, Southwest Florida presented a session on its communication tactics and the results."

Teamwork and a collective approach to helping our residents achieve post-secondary success are the foundation of FutureMakers.

"Together, we're better," says Ms. Owen. "Our work during the next nine years will build upon the past year - a year of finding strength in our numbers and our members, building a better coalition and creating the framework to continue developing the FutureMakers Coalition and transforming Southwest Florida's workforce."

"Southwest Florida has made really great strides and has really contributed to our network in a number of ways," says Ms. Glover. "We're excited about everything they've accomplished and are excited for the next nine years." —OC

**Reinvesting in Our Future, Strengthening Our Community**

The FutureMakers Coalition has received tremendous support from the Southwest Florida community during the past year. Through monetary donations totaling more than \$177,000 and gifts of time, venues and services, we have funded education attainment programs in school districts throughout the five-county region and have convened several FutureMakers partners to identify and provide scholarship funding for potential certified nursing assistant candidates through technical college certification. It's just the beginning of the coalition's sweeping regional work.

Here's how the money was granted in schools, communities and agencies to transform the workforce:

- Glades Education Foundation to support the introduction of AVID About Success, a mentoring and academic success program reaching 97 students in sixth through ninth grades this school year.
- Southwest Florida Economic Development Alliance to expand and replicate promising programs already in place by local businesses dedicated to increasing the skill level of their existing employees by supporting attainment of degrees, certificates and other high quality credentials.
- Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board to align economic development and workforce needs with programs offered at the Glades Training Center.
- Lee County School District to improve perception and increase awareness of the benefits and career opportunities available through technical education.
- Cape Coral and Fort Myers technical colleges received scholarship funding.

A \$300,000 donation from the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation to the FutureMakers Coalition through the Southwest Florida Community Foundation provided:

- A grant to a regional Free Application for Federal Student Aid completion campaign.
- A grant to the iWILL Mentorship Foundation to create mentoring opportunities between teens in Dunbar and the Fort Myers Police Department by working together to recondition bicycles and riding together during bike patrols.
- A grant to pay the wages of five of 16 Collier County high school student interns this summer. The remaining funds could support as many as 10 internships during this school year.
- Awarded a grant to Champions for Learning for continued facilitation of Future Ready Collier.
- More to come

—OC

**Meet the Original FutureMakers**

Three years ago the Southwest Florida Community Foundation brought together education, business and nonprofit leaders around increasing the number of regional high school seniors completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. We were stunned - to learn more than \$100 million in Pell Grants and other financial aid went unclaimed by Florida high school students in 2012.

The inaugural FutureMakers movement focused on increasing FAFSA completion at eight high schools throughout the region with great results.

The insight and perseverance of these organizations and individuals - Marshall Bower of the Foundation for Lee County Public Schools, Joe Paterno from CareerSource Southwest Florida, Susan McManus with Champions for Learning and Joy Maher of Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the Sun Coast - shaped and inspired the FutureMakers Coalition and the goal of improving the workforce and the lives of Southwest Floridians through post-secondary attainment.

—OC



**OUR COMMUNITY IS A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

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