

# STATE/LOCAL NEWS

## South Florida State College Foundation elects new executive board

### Special to the Highlands News-Sun

PROVIDED BY SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE FOUNDATION

AVON PARK — The South Florida State College (SFSC) Foundation recently elected a new Executive Board for its Board of Directors. Executive Board members began their term of office on July 1, and they serve for two years.

The new SFSC Foundation Executive Board members are Don Elwell, Darrell Jensen, Michael Kelly, and Robin Weeks. Elwell, representing Highlands County, was elected president and has been a member of

the Foundation Board of Directors since 2014. He is director of marketing and communications with Alan Jay Automotive Network. Darrell Jensen, representing Highlands County, was elected vice president and has been a member of the Foundation Board since 2018. He is a CPA. Michael Kelly, representing Hardee County, was elected secretary and has been a Foundation board member since 2014. He is editor and co-publisher of The Herald Advocate. Robin Weeks, representing Hardee County, was elected treasurer and has been a Foundation Board member since 2010. She is a CPA and owner of W2



ELWELL

Holdings, LLC.

“SFSC is one of the greatest assets we have in our district,” Elwell said. “It is a bright, shining star and I want to do everything possible to help it continue to grow and be outstanding. One of the Foundation Board’s biggest initiatives is construction of a new dorm facility for the Highlands Campus, which would



JENSEN



KELLY

be a major attraction for new students as well as returning students.

“As the new president of the Foundation Board of Directors, I look at the other members of the Board,” he said. “It’s a who’s who of leaders in the community and the region. I’m honored to be part of that. To even be mentioned alongside those folks and working alongside them is truly an



WEEKS

honor.”

Other members of the SFSC Foundation Board of Directors are: Cheryl Brown (Executive Board member-at-large), Corey Allain, Sandy Braxton, Dr. Catherine P. Cornelius, Judge Angela Cowden, Christy Crews, Robert Duncan, Judge Peter Estrada, Dr. Thomas C. Leitzel, Patricia Manderville, Becky McIntyre, Tres Stephenson, Dr. Vinod Thakkar, and Dr. David Willey.

The SFSC Foundation provides financial support for SFSC’s students and the opportunity for enhanced access to an affordable, quality education, training, and

experience they will need to excel as tomorrow’s leaders. As a partner in building a better community, the SFSC Foundation promotes higher education with student scholarships, support of instructional programs, technology, and new and improved facilities. A donation through the Foundation supports the College, improves students’ lives, and enhances the community. The SFSC Foundation held its first official meeting in 1984. It was established to offer grants and scholarships to SFSC students from its service district of Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto counties.

# Boys & Girls Club, SFSC partner for education event

SPECIAL TO HIGHLANDS SUN

AVON PARK — On June 27, South Florida State College (SFSC) partnered with the Boys & Girls Club of Highlands County to put together a fun-filled educational event called “Strive for Success to College.” The event was held at the Boys & Girls Club in Avon Park where residents from Avon Park and Sebring ranging from third to 11th grade attended the event. This event introduced students to college information and allowed them to use what they learned in the Boys & Girls Club summer program classes. There were a variety of activities that the kids participated in which helped students gain information about college, career options, educational facts, and vocabulary words.

“This is just a wonderful day for the kids to learn about college, that it should be a goal for them to strive to attend college and to know that SFSC



COURTESY PHOTO

Top, from right: Anastasia Saunders, SFSC Foundation, Coordinator of Institutional Advancement and Alumni Development; Sofia Ochoa, College Recruiter; Dr. Mark Bukowski, Dean of Student Services; Fred Hayes, Corporate and Community Education, Coordinator of Construction Trades Program. Bottom, from right: Dolores Breedlove, Take Stock in Children, College Success Coach; Cristian Luevano, HSI, STEM Coach; Emily Vickers, Nursing Department, Staff Assistant II.

has so many programs available for them,” said Boys & Girls Club of Highlands County’s Avon Park location Site Director Florine Anderson-Wells. “There is something for everyone and every interest.”

South Florida State College was all about school spirit with the SFSC representatives wearing their orange SFSC t-shirts and the walls were covered with SFSC spirit posters. The kids were awarded prizes at the end to thank them for their participation and to continue to strive for learning in education. As a local college in Highlands County, we want students to know that we are their community resource when they have questions about college and to help them explore career options.

“We love our community and are thrilled to have an opportunity to work with the Boys & Girls Club to motivate students to strive for higher education and spark a desire to go to college,” said Sofia Ochoa, college recruiter at SFSC. “I love my job as a college recruiter and events like this make me happy because we are working with kids who are going to be successful and make a difference one day. That’s what we see from our students who attended SFSC and



COURTESY PHOTO

Back row, from right: Rob Hampton, Director of Career Development Center; Andy Polk, Coordinator of Student Life and Assistant Baseball Coach; Dr. Mark Bukowski, Dean of Student Services; Cristian Luevano, HSI, STEM Coach; Fred Hayes, Corporate and Community Education, Coordinator of Construction Trades Program; George Livingston, Math Lab Specialist. Front row, from right: Anastasia Saunders, SFSC Foundation, Coordinator of Institutional Advancement and Alumni Development; Dolores Breedlove, Take Stock in Children, College Success Coach; Sofia Ochoa, College Recruiter; Emily Vickers, Nursing Department, Staff Assistant II.

we want to inspire future students to get started on their college and career journey and find the right resources available to them at SFSC. When the students from the Boys & Girls Club think back on this event, they may say, ‘I remember when SFSC came to visit us and we played games, but I learned a lot about SFSC and I want to know more.’”

Janice Rearick, Operations Director with The Boys & Girls Club of Highlands County, reflected on the partnership with SFSC. “The partnership the Boys & Girls Club enjoyed with the team from SFSC worked superbly and the kids had a lot of fun and learned more than they may have realized. This kind of program fits well with the mission of the Boys & Girls Clubs, ‘To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive,

caring, responsible citizens.’ At our club here in Highlands County, we are committed to preparing our club members for graduation from high school and finding a direction for meaningful careers as adults. Strive

for Success to College Day was a great introduction to our local college, which we hope will create an affinity to SFSC and all that it can provide in academic learning, career training and cultural experiences.”



COURTESY PHOTO

Rob Hampton, Director of Career Development Center with SFSC, talks Boys & Girls Club kids at Strive for Success to College Day at South Florida State College on June 27.

July 15, 2022



KIM MOODY/STAFF

AdventHealth President and CEO Randy Surber cuts the ribbon to dedicate the AdventHealth Sebring Center for Nursing Excellence at South Florida State College.

# Center for Nursing Excellence unveiled

By KIM MOODY  
STAFF WRITER

AVON PARK — The new AdventHealth Sebring Center for Nursing Excellence was unveiled at South Florida State College on Wednesday. AdventHealth President and CEO Randy Surber was surrounded by dignitaries from SFSC as he cut the ribbon to dedicate the new center.

SFSC President Dr. Thomas Leitzel welcomed everyone to the event in the lobby of the in the Dr. Norman L. Stephens Jr. Health & Science Center. Nursing educators, nursing students and members of the AdventHealth staff were in attendance and thrilled to see the dedication. Many of the nursing leaders were proud to say they were graduates of SFSC.

Leitzel introduced key members from SFSC and AdventHealth who brought the dream to fruition. He presented Surber with a new patch the nursing students would wear on their uniforms. Surber decided it would not



KIM MOODY/STAFF

**On left, AdventHealth Sebring Chief Nursing Officer Elsie Graves and President and CEO Randy Surber are at the ribbon cutting for the AdventHealth Sebring Center for Nursing Excellence on Wednesday.**

go with his sports coat but would keep it to remember the momentous day.

"The demand of healthcare services is unmeasurable right now," Surber said.

The AdventHealth Sebring Center for Nursing Excellence was established to counter the nursing shortage and provide outstanding education for the student nurses.

"We cannot grow without the nurses that you produce and the staff that you produce," Surber said.

Surber went on to thank SFSC for their dedication to the quality education their nursing students receive.

Tami Cullens, chair of the SFSC District Board of Trustees, shared a few words about the two organization working together for the betterment of the community.

"Helen Keller once said, 'Alone, we can do little, together we can do so much,'" she said. "The AdventHealth Center of Nursing Excellence is a public example of her words; the public and private sector working together to address a need in your community, nursing shortage."

An invocation was given by



KIM MOODY/STAFF

Nursing educators, students and others watched the ribbon cutting for the AdventHealth Sebring Center for Nursing Excellence on Wednesday.

## NURSING

FROM PAGE 1A

AdventHealth Chaplain Linda Lynch before the ribbon cutting took place.

Continuing a partnership between AdventHealth Sebring and SFSC, the Center for Nursing Excellence will train nurses who will eventually do their clinical studies in AdventHealth hospitals in Lake Placid, Sebring and Wauchula. In 2018, AdventHealth funded nursing faculty positions at the school.

The class of 18 students will receive a \$10,000 scholarship to be used for tuition and books etc. Another bonus for the students is upon graduating, they will be

offered nursing positions at AdventHealth hospitals where they trained.

Nursing students and staff gave a tour of the complex after the ribbon cutting. Guests were ushered into a simulated hospital setting complete with a nurses station, critical care room, a pediatric room and an obstetrics room.

Each SIM (simulated) patient was hooked up to monitors and their chests even rose and fell while breathing. Nursing Professor Mary Ellen Pourie said the simulated infant turns blue when his oxygen rate falls.

"I pinch myself to think we have done this," she said.

AdventHealth's Chief Nursing Officer Elsie



KIM MOODY/STAFF

From left, Mary Ellen Pourie and Lisa Dela Cruz are very happy with the new AdventHealth Sebring Center for Nursing Excellence at South Florida State College.

Graves said the center was about two years in the making and will locally help combat the national nursing

shortage.

The tour wrapped up with a lasagna luncheon in a large classroom.