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With Labor Shortages, Tampa Bay Businesses Unite to Grow Local Workforce

Shumaker Advisors is a proud sponsor of Future Career Academy Job Fairs

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TAMPA, FL – About 50 local businesses are teaming up to help reduce labor shortage issues and grow a stronger workforce in Tampa Bay. On April 13th, the Future Career Academy (FCA), a program of Florida-based nonprofit Workforce Development Partners, recruited dozens of employers to launch a series of innovative career fairs. Shumaker Advisors is proud to be a sponsor of the event.

"There is a critical shortage of workers right now in Tampa Bay," Sandy Murman, Shumaker Advisors Principal, said. "At Shumaker Advisors, we know we can be difference makers and are honored to help make an impact in the community we love and serve."

Today's event at TPepin's Hospitality Centre is a unique approach to the typical job fair. The FCA works year round with high school students in East Tampa, South Hillsborough, and Plant City. In the classroom, students watch videos about growing industries with entry-level jobs, attend panels with local business leaders, and go on field trips to area companies.

"The job fairs are the finale of an entire year of preparation. For students who are not on a direct path to college, they can jumpstart their careers by directly applying with local companies," said Yvonne Fry, CEO of Workforce Development Partners, the Florida-based nonprofit behind both FCA and Best Florida Jobs. "This is a huge help to Tampa Bay's growing industries that are struggling with workforce issues right now. A lot of our employers offer entry level jobs at a great wage and will invest in training and higher education for employees."

Labor force participation is at the lowest level since the 1970s. The pandemic boosted retirements by one million workers, while another 2 million women are estimated to have stopped working. The FCA is strategically partnering with schools and businesses to fill this gap.

In the 2021-2022 school year, the FCA program operated in 10 area schools, serving about 7,000 students. The schools involved are Armwood, King, Middleton, Durant, East Bay, Lennard, Newsome, Plant City, Simmons, and Strawberry Crest. Continued expansion plans to serve the whole county are underway for implementation in the next few years. Also, two more job fairs are coming up:

- April 20th at The Regent (South Hillsborough – Newsome, East Bay and Lennard High Schools)
- April 28th at Hillsborough Community College's Trinkle Center (Plant City – Plant City, Durant, and Strawberry Crest High Schools, and Simmons Career Acceleration Academy.

In addition to students, the fairs will be open each day from noon to 2pm for adult job-seekers as part of Best Florida Jobs, which will help round out the hiring needs of businesses and serve both students' families and the community's hiring needs. Businesses can register by visiting the Future Career Academy's website.

"Support from our local business community is crucial to the success of the Future Career Academy," said Yvonne. "We need to invest in retaining our local workforce now more than ever as we continue to see the challenges of this historic labor shortage."

As a sign of FCA's impact, the Future Fairs will be followed by three Signing Days in May to celebrate the FCA students who have been hired by local companies or who are entering into training or apprenticeship programs.

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