

# Spotlight on Success

the virginia gazette • williamsburg, virginia

march 12, 2014

## YOU can be an Ambassador for the Historic Triangle!

What are your thoughts when you see this invitation? Perhaps you thought "I don't know how to be an Ambassador!" Perhaps you thought "Why would I want to be an Ambassador?" Both responses are understandable. Both responses can be addressed by learning more about **Prepare, Care, Share, Hospitality Training** provided free of charge by the Greater Williamsburg Chamber and Tourism Alliance and Thomas Nelson Community College (TNCC).

By Warren Spence

### Why you should want to be an Ambassador!

The Historic Triangle is fortunate in having top ratings from AAA and other rating organizations as a destination for a vacation or daytrip for those within a day's drive. So, as our advertising and promotion draws visitors from New York or North Carolina or Ohio, each new or repeat visit creates jobs and supports our community. "Word of mouth is one of the most effective ways to promote the Triangle. So, by making sure that guests have an outstanding experience while they are here, we help people spread the word that greater Williamsburg is THE place to visit. This multiplies the economic benefit," says Dr. Carmen Burrows, Associate Vice President, Workforce Training & Continuing Education at Thomas Nelson Community College.

Tourist-related businesses that send employees to take the Prepare! Care! Share! Hospitality Training receive many benefits. Kristine Allard, Front Office Manager for Westgate Historic Williamsburg says, "This course and tour re-energized our front office staff about all the things Williamsburg offers. As a result, we saw a dramatic increase in guest satisfaction scores and how valued our staff made them feel. I asked the staff to repeat the training the next year. Guest ratings improved even more. Now I am having our Inspectors in Housekeeping attend because I believe anyone from any department who has contact with any guest will benefit from this training. It really reinforces essential customer service skills. Everyone wins: the guest, the employee, the employer, and our community."

The course is open to anyone who works or volunteers in the Historic Triangle. It is not limited to tourist businesses and their employees. If you are enthusiastic about our community, you can share this with your visiting family and friends, even your neighbors. It is wonderful to receive rave reviews! Also, as observed by Shelley Weisberg, a training facilitator since 2006, "The course is an outstanding way to make new connections in the area. Whether it is knowing the latest ride at Busch Gardens, the features of the newly revamped Yorktown Visitors' Center, or getting up to speed on the Chamber's drive to get more participants for Arts Month, this training will help you know the Historic Triangle like you never knew it before."

Shawn Berry attended college in Hampton Roads and has worked in Williamsburg. He now is in sales and travels the state. He attended the training a year ago. "I was so impressed with the energy of the instructors and the interaction in the work sessions. I learned how to anticipate questions a visitor might ask. To my amazement, on the tour I discovered all the archaeology underway at Historic Jamestowne. I had never been there! This just proves you don't have to be employed in the tourism industry to benefit from the course."

*"You exceeded my goals for your Prepare! Care! Share! Program. Our staff networked and learned valuable knowledge about the Historic Triangle. Thanks again for including us in the program."*

– Yankee Candle, Director of Sales & Operations.

*"The Prepare! Care! Share! Workshop and Tour enabled me to let people know what's available in our area. With new people always moving in, it's important to know what's new and exciting."*

– Staff Member, Verena at the Reserve.



**Prepare Care Share will introduce Busch Gardens® new Verbolten® to Ambassadors of the Historic Triangle.**

### Learn how to be an Ambassador for the Historic Triangle by enrolling in Prepare, Care, Share, Hospitality Training.

This training is designed to help local businesses, organizations, and individuals better understand the needs of our visitors. Especially for people directly involved in tourism, the training boosts their ability to become better Ambassadors for this region that is filled with attractions and great experiences. The training is provided free by the Greater Williamsburg Chamber and Tourism Alliance and Thomas Nelson Community College.

The training has two parts:

- First, there is a four-hour interactive classroom session in which aspiring community Ambassadors learn more about the major history, attractions, and amenities available here, as well as five-star guest service.
- Second, an eight-hour tour of the Historic Triangle, including lunch at a Colonial Williamsburg tavern. Dr. Carmen Burrows observes, "Experiencing first-hand the wonderful things there are to do here makes hospitality employees more enthusiastic, which makes it easier for them to convey to visitors the compelling reasons to choose this destination, year after year. Their excitement is contagious!"

During the training, participants learn how to handle the variety of questions and issues that visitors might have. Could you answer questions such as:

- "We only have a day here in town – what is the one thing we absolutely shouldn't miss?"
- "My son needs to get to his college from here. Is there a train he can catch to Philadelphia?"
- "Was Powhatan a person or a tribe?"
- "What is the difference between Jamestown Settlement and Historic Jamestowne?"

Prepare, Care, Share Hospitality Training was initially designed in preparation for the Jamestown 400th Anniversary in 2006/2007. To date over 4600 community Ambassadors have completed the training. The training is free, earns Continuing Education Unit Credits issued by Thomas Nelson Community College, awards Individual Employee Certificates, and a Chamber and Tourism Alliance pin.

### Register Now!

The first training class for 2014 starts on Tuesday, March 11. Five additional training dates are scheduled for March, as shown below. All classes are in Williamsburg at 4135 Ironbound Rd (corner of Ironbound and Monticello.) To register for classes, please contact Debra Loving, Thomas Nelson Workforce Development, at 757-825-3577 or LovingD@tncc.edu.

Tuesday – March 11

Wednesday – March 12

Wednesday – March 19

Thursday – March 20

Wednesday – March 26

Thursday – March 27

Tours (for those completing the class)

Fridays: March 28; April 4; April 11