



Visit Hershey & Harrisburg Career Connections Day

Industry Professionals, College Students, Recent Graduates, and Educators Connect to Discuss Careers in Hospitality & Tourism

**Misc event photos included at the end of the release.*

(Harrisburg, PA | March 16, 2022) -- To address the hiring and job vacancy challenges facing the Hospitality and Tourism industry, Visit Hershey & Harrisburg (VHH) partnered with the School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management at Temple University (STHM @ Temple) to facilitate a day of education and networking to highlight the benefits and opportunities that come with careers in tourism-related fields. VHH Career Connections Day took place at the PA Farm Show Complex & Expo Center on March 16, 2022 – almost two years to the day after businesses in the Hershey Harrisburg Region and across the world began to close, transition to remote work, or otherwise drastically adjust traditional operating procedures due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The day-long agenda featured site tours for students and recent graduates to learn about a variety of venues and attractions in the Hershey Harrisburg Region such as the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex & Expo Center, Hershey's Chocolate World, and Hersheypark®. The students then joined VHH Partners representing attractions, hotels, event venues, restaurants, wineries, and breweries for panel discussions and rotating roundtables.

More than 50 students and faculty from Temple participated along with more than 20 VHH partner businesses including Hershey Entertainment & Resorts, Hershey's Chocolate World, Harrisburg Senators, Hilton Harrisburg, Cocoa Kayak, The Vineyard & Brewery at Hershey, Dauphin County Parks & Recreation, Adventure Sports, Staybridge Suites Harrisburg Hershey, and more.

"We developed this event to collectively address the challenges facing the state of the tourism workforce and to do so in a way that encourages discussion by shedding some of the time constraints of a traditional job fair," said VHH Director of Sales Audrey Bialas. "Dynamic leaders in the tourism industry highlighted the many professional development paths available in fields like hotel, venue, and event management, sports tourism, catering, and marketing & communications, while educators and students had the opportunity to talk with those experts about what's important to them in their potential career paths," Bialas said.

According to U.S. Travel Association (USTA), roughly one in six (or 1.8 million) of job openings in the United States were in leisure and hospitality entering Q4 2021. "Hiring is not keeping up with the pace with new openings, so we hope events like this can provide a boost to the perceptions of the variety and quality of rewarding career opportunities in tourism," Bialas said.

Restoring the depth of the tourism workforce is critical to the region's economy. Prior to the pandemic, the Hershey Harrisburg Region traditionally welcomed more than 10 million visitors annually with visitors cumulatively spending more than \$2 Billion. "As traveler sentiment continues its positive trend and guests return in greater numbers for getaways, meetings, sports, and special events, we must do our part as

leaders in tourism to help rewrite the narrative about careers in the industry and help to spark excitement so that our workforce can effectively and excitedly meet the demands of increased travel,” says VHH President and CEO Mary Smith. “The success of our efforts as a Destination Marketing Organization to drive tourism to the region relies in large part on the health, happiness, and growth & development of a strong and energetic workforce working in concert to provide world-class guest experiences,” Smith continued.

SITE TOUR HOSTS

Hershey Entertainment & Resorts, Hershey’s Chocolate World, PA Farm Show Complex & Expo Center

SPEAKERS & PANELISTS

Temple University Faculty Presentation to VHH Partners

Amanda Voit, Associate Director, Professional Development and Campus Engagement Center for Industry Engagement - School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management, Temple University

Welcome

Mary Smith, President & CEO, Visit Hershey & Harrisburg

George P. Hartwick III, Dauphin County Commissioner

Tourism Industry Panelists

Jaime Berger, Owner & CEO, C&J Catering

Gregg Cook, Executive Director, Hershey Harrisburg Sports & Events Authority

Terri Elfner, Opening Manager, Springwood Hospitality

John Longstreet, President & CEO, PA Restaurant & Lodging Association

Joe Massaro, General Manager, Hilton Harrisburg

Christine Cleaver, Assistant Professor & Program Director for Temple’s School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management (moderator)

Special Presentation: Dare to Dream

- Diane McGraw - Owner, McGraw Productions

SCROLL FOR EVENT PHOTOS

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ABOUT VISIT HERSHEY & HARRISBURG

Visit Hershey & Harrisburg (VHH) is the official non-profit 501c6 partnership-based Destination Marketing Organization serving Dauphin County. Visit Hershey & Harrisburg is responsible for developing and executing comprehensive sales, marketing, and communication programs to compete for leisure, business, group, and sporting event travel market segments among leading and national destinations. VHH seeks to generate economic growth and stability through the marketing and promotion of travel to the Hershey Harrisburg region and to coalesce, develop, and expand its hospitality industry, products, and workforce.

Photo notes: Photo Credit to Visit Hershey & Harrisburg. Captions above each photo.

Filename CC1 (Tourism Industry Panelists) Visit Hershey & Harrisburg Career Connections 3.16.22

Back Row L-R: Jaime Berger, Owner & CEO, C&J Catering; John Longstreet, President & CEO, PA Restaurant & Lodging Association Front Row L-R: Joe Massaro, General Manager, Hilton Harrisburg; Gregg Cook, Executive Director, Hershey Harrisburg Sports & Events Authority; Terri Elfner, Opening Manager, Springwood Hospitality



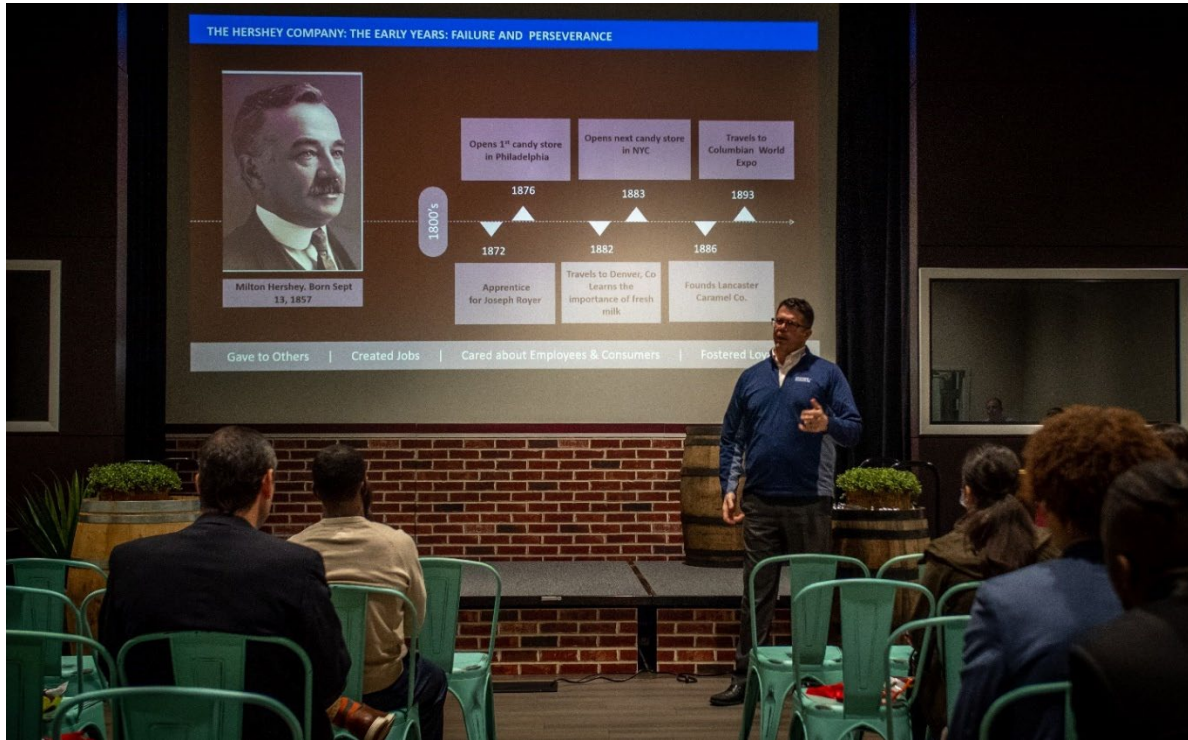
Filename CC2: Students from Temple University's School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management hear from representatives of Hershey Entertainment & Resorts during the morning site tours. Visit Hershey & Harrisburg Career Connections 3.26.22



Filename CC3: Students from Temple University's School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management visit Hershey's Chocolate World during the morning site tour. Visit Hershey & Harrisburg Career Connections 3.16.22



Filename CC4: Students from Temple University's School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management hear from Roger Sansoni, Guest Experience Manager at Hershey's Chocolate World during the morning site tour. Visit Hershey & Harrisburg Career Connections 3.16.22



Filename CC5: Students from Temple University's School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management hear from Sharon Myers, Executive Director of the PA Farm Show Complex & Expo Center, during the morning site tour. Visit Hershey & Harrisburg Career Connections 3.16.22



Filename CC6: Dauphin County Commissioner George Hartwick addresses attendees at the Visit Hershey & Harrisburg Career Connections event with VHH Partners and Students from Temple University's School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management at the PA Farm Show Complex & Expo Center. 3.16.22



Filename CC7: Students from Temple University's School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management talk with Visit Hershey & Harrisburg Partners about tourism-related businesses at the PA Farm Show Complex & Expo Center. Visit Hershey & Harrisburg Career Connections 3.16.22



Filename CC8: (L-R) Visit Hershey & Harrisburg President & CEO Mary Smith (left) and Christine Cleaver, M.Ed., Assistant Professor & Program Director, School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management at Temple University (middle), and Michael Sheridan, Associate Professor of Practice & Academic Director of MS in Hospitality Management Program at Temple University (right), prepare to record an episode of the STHM Vodcast.

