



# ANNUAL REPORT



*The*  *of Southwest Florida*

**2023/2024**



Impact Partners are the engine of the Greater Estero Chamber of Commerce and get multiple exclusive ways to participate in events, share information with colleagues, and be recognized for their contributions.



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# LETTER OF GRATITUDE

Dear Greater Estero Chamber of Commerce  
Board of Directors and Chamber Members,

We, as the Chamber Chairman and the President of the Estero Chamber, are writing this letter to express our sincere gratitude to you for your unwavering support and dedication throughout the years 2023 and 2024. Together, all of us are building an incredible chamber in Estero and have made a positive impact on our community.

In this annual report, we aim to provide you with a comprehensive overview of our activities, membership statistics, financial standing, social media presence, community impact, and our future goals and initiatives. Transparency is important to us, and we want to keep you informed about the progress we have achieved.

Your commitment and leadership have played a pivotal role in the remarkable success of our chamber and the entire community. Your unwavering dedication to various initiatives and events has had a profound and positive effect on our community. From your support for the second annual leadership class, the highly successful EsteroFest which featured over 80 business exhibits and a memorable Ben Allen & Band concert, to the annual golf tournament shared with the Estero Historical Society, the Food for Thought luncheons, Alive After Five, the coffee & conversations, and the heartfelt ribbon-cutting ceremonies, each of these endeavors has significantly contributed to the growth and prosperity of our chamber.

Once again, we extend our deepest gratitude for your invaluable support. Your unwavering commitment and passion have truly made a difference, and we are confident that together, we will continue to reach greater heights in the coming years.

With gratitude and appreciation,

**BILL RIBBLE**  
BOARD CHAIR



**KATY ERRINGTON**  
PRESIDENT/CEO



# PURPOSE



“

To serve its membership through charitable, educational and/or business activities.

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To promote responsible economic, business and cultural growth and development in and around the Estero community.

”

“

To preserve and enhance quality of life through its beautification projects and other community-based activities.

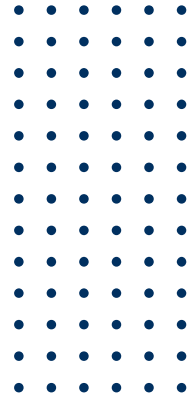
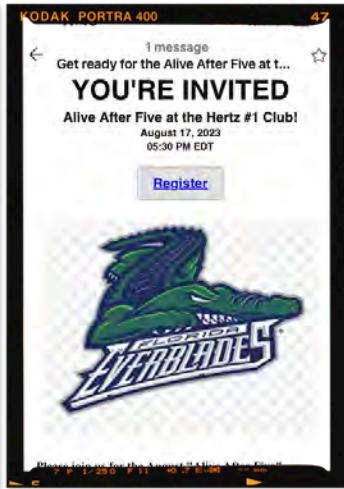
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“

To provide an inclusive community for equality-minded business owners and professionals to connect and collaborate.

”





# PROGRAMS





# 18 Estero Leaders

## Service Projects

- Donated to Food Pantry
- Served meals at Cafe of Life
- Volunteered for EsteroFest



The Greater Estero Chamber of Commerce's leadership program seeks to introduce a broad range of Southwest Florida participants to the Estero community, its unique history, and the key issues impacting the area.

Through behind-the-scenes tours and workshops with community partners and leaders, participants will develop lasting relationships, bolster their leadership skills and work collaboratively on a community project for the Greater Estero region.

## Program Sponsors



## Class of 2024

1. Cindy Cedeno: Fine Mark Bank
2. Christopher Smuts: London Bay Development
3. Lisa Williams: Nat. Christian Foundation S.FL/SWFL
4. Todd Griglin: Bonita Springs Utilities
5. Myrtle October: Threat to Thriving
6. Justin Fitzgerald: FGCU
7. Kevin Greenville: Village of Estero
8. Jessica Becket: Byrne Financial
9. Kristen Vanselow: FGCU
10. Kristy Holly Kemnic-Nicol: LMCU
11. Jim Ward: Village of Estero Council
12. Terry Beasley: Lee Health
13. Kristi-Leigh Lyon: Estero Speech & Language
14. Diana Genotti: Retired
15. Lisa K. Wilkes: Interfaith Charities of South L
16. Mathew David Myers: BKS Partners
17. Alyona Aleksandra Ushe: Arts Bonita
18. Donna Vannett: LMCU





# ACTIVITIES

# Estero Fest

2024



FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Alive after 5!

Holiday Party

GOLF Tournament





# ANNUAL EVENTS



2024



## ESTEROFEST

March 16, 2024

Estero Fest 2024 had the community buzzing from 1-9pm on Saturday, March 16! It was a ton of family fun and an excellent time for our community businesses to showcase their products and services. The weather was perfect, and the day was action-packed with a Kids Zone, Business Expo, Concerts, Food Trucks, Beer and Wine Garden, Lee County Sheriff's Office displays, Estero Fire Department displays, and several Village of Estero community leaders in attendance. The evening ended with a fantastic show by the Ben Allen Band! We could not have done the event without the support of our wonderful sponsors! A huge shoutout to George Zalucki, Gail Langner, and Cindy Cedeno of the Estero Fest Committee for organizing a fantastic event. The planning for Estero Fest 2025 has begun and the Committee knows it will be even bigger and better!



## GOLF Tournament

## GOLF TOURNAMENT

May 4, 2024

Together with the Estero Historical Society, the Chamber held a benefit Golf Tournament to raise operational funds for both non-profits. Over 100 golfers and volunteers participated!



## Holiday Party

## HOLIDAY PARTY

December 9, 2023

This elegant evening of community leaders and chamber members celebrated a year of progress and encouraged the business community through a fun evening of socializing. A toy drive for Estero Fire Rescue brought smiles to youth because of our generous members.



## AWARDS DINNER

June 2, 2023

The 25th Annual Awards Dinner and Leadership Estero Graduation was celebrated by 150 attendees and featured Dr. Aysegul Timur, the President of FGCU.

# MEMBER EVENTS

14



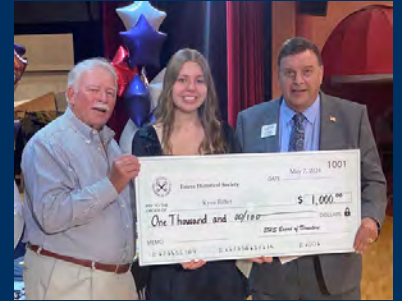
Ribbon  
Cuttings

9



Luncheons

1



Scholarship  
Presentation

2

Alive  
after 5!

2



Coffee &  
Conversation

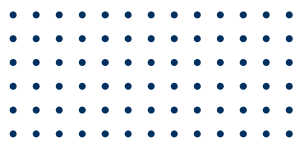
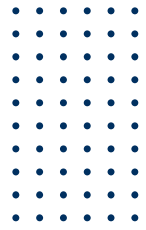
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COCONUT POINT<sup>®</sup>  
A SIMON MALL

Merchant  
Breakfast

The Chamber was represented by Board Members at community events, including Veterans Day Celebration, Light Up Estero, Coconut Point Tree Lighting, Lee Health Coconut Point's 5th Anniversary, and conducted a toy drive at our Food for Thought featuring Joe Ryan.



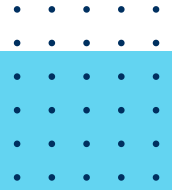


# MEMBERSHIP & FINANCES





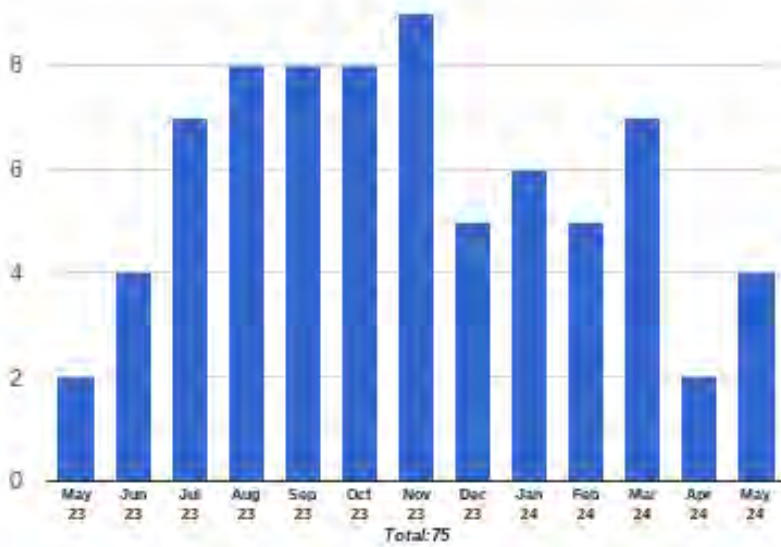
# MEMBERSHIP



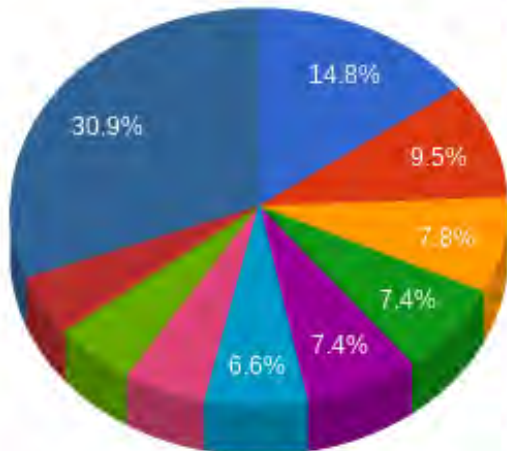
## Expanding Our Impact

Membership increased from 203 in June of 2023 to **226** in May 2024, up 11%!

### New Members by Month



### Business Category



- 36 Health Care
- 23 Non-Profit Organizations
- 19 Finance and Insurance
- 18 Construction Equipment and Contracting
- 18 Restaurants, Food and Beverages
- 16 Business and Professional Services
- 13 Arts, Culture and Entertainment
- 13 Real Estate, Moving and Storage
- 12 Family, Community and Social Services
- 75 Other





# FINANCES

In 2022, the Estero Chamber of Commerce engaged Grasmeyer Business Consulting, a local CPA firm, to conduct an informal review of their internal bookkeeping files. This review led to several accounting adjustments and the preparation of a compilation report. Additionally, Grasmeyer Business Consulting handled the preparation of the 2022 Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax.

Moving into 2023, the Chamber's accounting team recommended transitioning to the QuickBooks online platform to streamline their financial processes. Consequently, the internal bookkeeping was also transitioned to Grasmeyer Business Consulting. Beyond preparing the 2023 Form 990, the consulting firm played a pivotal role in assisting with the budgeting process and accounting for special events.



## Income Report

The financial activities of the Estero Chamber of Commerce in 2023 saw a gross income of \$164,685.05, sourced from various streams:

1. Event Income: \$46,496.68
2. Membership Dues: \$55,441.17
3. Sponsorship Income: \$54,500.00
4. Other Income: \$ 8,271.72

Sponsorship Income was the largest contributor, representing 34% of the total gross income.

# FINANCES



## Expense Report

For the fiscal year 2023, the Estero Chamber of Commerce incurred operational and administrative expenses across various categories. Some of the significant expenses are as follows:

1. Event Expenses: \$33,141.32
2. Marketing Expenses: \$13,075.87
3. Gross Wages: \$36,520.78
4. Rent Expense: \$30,494.23
5. WEB/IT Expense: \$9,867.46

Total amount of Expenses for the year is \$153,256.26.

The largest expense categories for the year were (1) Gross Wages (\$36,520.78), this is despite the fact that the President, Katy Errington, waived her salary at the start of her term and received only a gross salary of \$13,900.00 during the year, (2) Event Expenses (\$33,141.32) and (3) Rent Expense (\$30,494.23). These figures reflect the Chamber's commitment to maintaining a dedicated workforce, securing appropriate facilities, and hosting successful events. Marketing and Web/IT expenses also represent significant investments, highlighting the Chamber's efforts to enhance its visibility and digital presence.

The Estero Chamber of Commerce managed its expenses prudently while investing in key areas that support its mission and operations. The detailed breakdown of expenses demonstrates a balanced approach to managing operational costs, personnel expenses, and event-related expenditures, ensuring the Chamber's ongoing effectiveness and community engagement.

## Conclusion

Despite substantial expenses, the Estero Chamber of Commerce ended the year with a net income of \$11,428.79, demonstrating prudent financial management and a balanced approach to operational costs, personnel expenses, and event-related expenditures. The detailed breakdown of our income and expenses highlights our strategic focus on maintaining operational efficiency and community involvement. We remain committed to our goals and look forward to continuing our work in the community with the same dedication and prudence in the coming years.

# GOALS & INITIATIVES

## REDUCE OVERHEAD

A major focus of the administration of the Chamber this past year has been maximizing value out of all our expenses. This includes an almost all volunteer work-force, with even the President waiving most of her salary.



### Reduced Rent



Moved to a smaller suite that still meets our needs.

### New Bank & Accounting



Streamlined accounting with new bank.

### Reassigned Work Tasks



A sudden vacancy allowed us to reassign tasks to vendors.

### New Member Levels



New pricing and perks of member levels to simplify and provide value.

### DIY Events

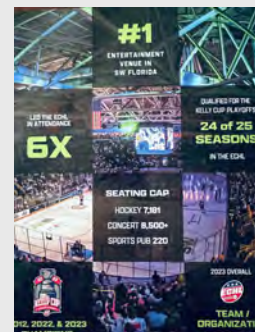


Our committees operated fundraising events without paying an event company.

## INCREASE COOPERATION



The Chamber shared responsibility with other organizations to put on events this year in an effort to share both the workload and benefits to both agencies. In addition, the shared experiences strengthen relationships for future endeavors. The Golf Tournament was co-sponsored by the Estero Historical Society and the Rotary Club of Estero co-sponsored a joint meeting with a featured speaker.



# COMMUNICATIONS

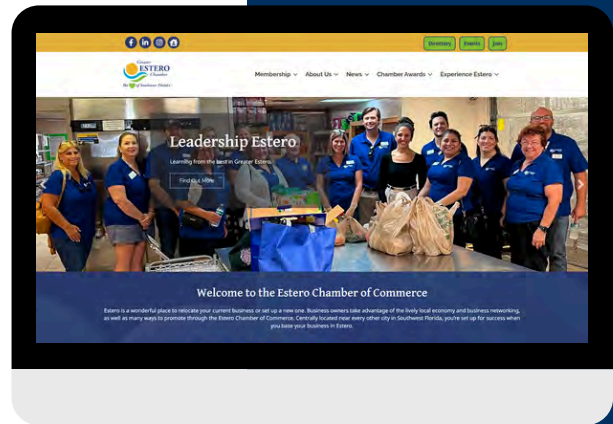
## Website Refresh October 2023

Papyrus worked with Chambermaster staff to redesign and remake the Chamber website. A new template, navigation, and new content made the site easier to use, more engaging upon first visit, and capable of staying current with events as they unfold.

The new site design allowed us to create custom pages for major events, sponsorship grids and more.

The website received 11K visitors in the past year. The home page was visited most, followed by the EsteroFest event pages, the main event listing page, the golf tournament page, and other events.

The website gains over 60% of traffic from Organic Search, which means users find it easily using search engines.



**11,094 USERS**  
**14,995 VISITS**



## Email Communications

In September we began weekly emails to leadership to keep them up-to-date. Monthly member emails were expanded to weekly updates in Spring 2024.

## Open Rate

39% of recipients open the email we send them.



## Social Media

Our followings on four major social media platforms grows steadily as we post every business day.





# TESTIMONIALS

## ● ESTERO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

It was a joy to collaborate with the Greater Estero Chamber of Commerce for a recent golf tournament fundraiser. It is such a pleasure to have a working synergy in the Estero community.

- Gail Langner - EHS Board President

## ● ROTARY CLUB OF ESTERO

The Rotary Club of Estero and The Greater Estero Chamber of Commerce collaboration was a wonderful event. Both organizations got to learn more about each other. Thank you for the opportunity!

- Carmelita Singn-Mayor, Rotary Club President



# FUTURE PLANS

Having stabilized the infrastructure of the organization, and established roles for business activities, the goals of the Chamber for the 2024-2025 year involve both a continuation of existing services as well as implementation of new projects.



## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Many organizations and structures exist for dealing with the physical and economic repercussions of disasters in our area. But Hurricane Ian showed us that one underserved need of the community involves the mental health and spiritual damage done by the sudden loss of home, work, and community support systems.

When an entire area is subject to great need, it stresses the existing support systems such as mental health providers, faith-based organizations, and traditions and activities that support the spirit of a community.

Along with several other organizations, including but not limited to Lee Health and the National Christian Foundation of South Florida, SWFL Office, the Chamber is developing a resource guide online for residents and businesses needing assistance in what to do after the storm, coping with and overcoming the mental and spiritual challenge.

## OTHER PLANS INCLUDE:

### Membership Growth



Welcome more members and Impact Partners to the organization.

### New Networking Opportunities



New mixer events at times and locations convenient to members.

### Enhanced Event Promotions



Earlier event promotion to increase awareness and participation.

### Maximize Opportunities



Increase member use of existing tools like job listings and directory profiles.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sharon Van Rite



Thank you for your years of service to the Chamber.

Bill Ribble



Thank you for serving as the Board Chair.

## Board of Directors

Bill Ribble, Chair  
Joe Ryan, Vice Chair  
Pam McCabe, Secretary  
Sharon Van Rite, Treasurer  
Jim Mendolera  
James Ward  
Joni Pavich  
Blake Chapman  
Jordan Azis  
Cindy Cedeno  
Bob Pritt  
Cliff Brand

Katy Errington, President

## Valued Vendors and Partners

We wish a special thank you to our valued vendors and partners who have taken on valuable and important roles for the Chamber in the last year.

- Grasmeyer Business Consulting
- The Phone Nanny
- Papyrus Document & Design
- Fifth-Third Bank
- Embassy Suites
- Shadow Wood Country Club
- Spring Run Golf Club



## In the Press

Esterolife Magazine's feature article in August 2023 spotlighted the Chamber. Esterolife Magazine has also covered EsteroFest, Light Up Estero.



 9990 Coconut Road, Suite 337, Estero, FL 34135

 +239-390-1137

 [info@esterochamber.org](mailto:info@esterochamber.org)

 [www.EsteroChamber.org](http://www.EsteroChamber.org)

