



Economic Club of Tampa  
**MAYORAL  
INAUGURAL  
BALL 2023**



**2023 Mayoral Inaugural Ball Hosted by Economic Club of Tampa**

## **Business Leaders Giving Back**

### **Members of Economic Club of Tampa Mentor Low Income Students; Group to Host Third Mayoral Inaugural Ball to Raise More Funds for College Scholarships**

Contact: Kevin Bakewell (813) 334-2700

[kevin@bakewellpr.com](mailto:kevin@bakewellpr.com)

TAMPA, Florida – March 27, 2023 – Membership in the Economic Club of Tampa (ECOT) is more than weekly luncheons followed by speaker presentations. Much more. This dynamic forum for community leaders has at its mission's core preparing and building up the next generation. And every four years, with the election of the city's new mayor, they put their money where their mouth is, hosting the Mayoral Inaugural Ball which since its inception has raised more than \$400,000 used by Hillsborough Education Foundation (HEF) to purchase state-matched Florida Prepaid College Scholarships for low-income students.

Benefiting from this innovative partnership are some of the nearly 325 students per year who are achieving academic success through hard work and active participation in HEF's Take Stock in Children mentoring program. And with a graduation rate of 100% among participants, the program - supported by the mentorship component - is clearly a success.

“As successful businesspeople and community leaders, our members understand the importance of identifying and assisting upcoming young leaders,” said Sharon Marino, Co-Chair, ECOT 2023 Mayoral Inaugural Ball Committee. “But we also recognize that many young adults may not have the means to further their education.”

“As a not-for-profit club, all net proceeds from our events are used for the express purpose of developing the next generation of leaders,” said Dr. Sebastian “Buster” Castellano, Co-Chair, ECOT 2023 Mayoral Inaugural Ball Committee. “The Mayoral Inaugural Ball provides critical funding to purchase scholarships for hundreds of low-income students.”

“These dedicated funds, along with the time devoted from ECOT members who are mentors, are making a difference in students' lives today and for years to come,” said Hillsborough Education Foundation CEO Kim Jowell. “Having business leaders invest in their academic and personal success is not only transformational for students—it helps strengthen the future of our community.”

“Ensuring that our young people have access to quality education and resources to be successful is the most important thing we can do for society,” said HEF Mentor and ECOT Treasurer Dave Schur. “I'm currently working with my fourth mentee and the talent that we have in Hillsborough is truly phenomenal. They are consistently hard-working and aspirational. That's why the opportunity to further HEF's mission by raising funds with the Mayoral Ball is so personal to me.”

Hillsborough Education Foundation has more than 1,200 alumni who have completed the program and Suraj Ramrakhyani is one of them. The 2015 Steinbrenner High Salutatorian was the first in his family to attend college. He is now a consultant with McKinsey & Company and became a mentor for the program this year.

“Receiving this scholarship gave me the confidence and reassurance I needed to aim high and having the emotional support of a mentor kept those high aspirations on track. Knowing first-hand the impact this amazing program has, inspired me to give back. I hope to provide a similar level of guidance and support that my mentor provided for me almost 10 years ago. The community’s support for this program is appreciated so much by those of us on the receiving end.”

The 2023 Mayoral Inaugural Ball will be held on Friday, May 5 at the JW Marriott Tampa Water Street beginning with a reception at 6:00 pm followed by dinner, the Mayor's acceptance speech, dessert and dancing.

Major supporters of the 2023 Mayoral Inaugural Ball include University Sponsor, Tampa Bay Lightning Foundation; Cap and Gown Sponsor, Mosaic; and Dean's List Sponsors, Centennial Bank and Equity Management.

For more information, tickets and sponsorship information, visit <https://educationfoundation.com/mayoralball2023/>.

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