

Best Places to Work awards 'takes flight'

General Manager Christopher Monnot of the new Amazon Fulfillment Center in Lakeland spoke to the crowd of more than 800 about the new facility and the operations of Amazon at the CareerSource Polk Annual Meeting and Best Places to Work Awards at the Lakeland Center on Thursday, Aug. 28.

The event's theme was "Taking Flight" and Stacy Campbell-Domineck, the President & CEO at Polk Works, stressed the importance of the local business community in the success economic growth in Polk County.

"As we see our unemployment rate decrease and job opportunities increase, now more than ever it's vital for companies to focus on their employees in order to recruit and retain the best talent. I commend the local companies that applied for the Best Places to Work Awards and congratulate the winners as they are proving to the community and their staff that they value their employees. Becoming a Best Place to Work not only builds a stronger business community, but a stronger economy as well."

The program included a message from CareerSource Polk's Board Chair, Katrina Lunsford of Fifth Third Bank, the Immediate Past Chair, Lori Walsh of the W.S. Badcock Corporation and Area President David Williams of Wells Fargo, the event's title sponsor.

Clayton Hollis presented a \$25,000 grant to CareerSource Polk on behalf of the GiveWell Community Foundation in support of the organization's summer youth employment program that employed 275 youth this summer with over 125 employers across Polk providing valuable work experiences for ages 16-21.

The Annual Meeting also served to distribute the CareerSource Polk 2014 Annual Report by Campbell-Domineck and to recognize individuals and companies who have contributed significantly to the workforce development board's efforts in Polk County during the 2013-2014 program year.

Best Places to Work Awards

Since 2003, CareerPolk has recognized the Best Places to Work in Polk County through a competitive application process that honors employers who exemplify best practices in their workplace and who are committed to improving the quality of life for their employees.

Award-winning companies are the most innovative in the areas of motivating and retaining employees, training and development initiatives, and workplace practices which include a commitment to work/life issues. For more information about what makes these businesses a Best Place to Work, please visit <https://www.careersourcepolk.com/employers/2013-best-places-work-award-winners/>

Small Business: Clark/Nikdel/Powell, Community Southern Bank, CPS Investment Advisors, Lunz Prebor Fowler Architects, Madrid Engineering Group, Inc., Spherion Staffing

Medium Business Category: Center for Retina and Macular Disease, Citizens Bank and Trust, Florida Presbyterian Homes, Heacock Insurance Group, ITW ProAP, John J. Jerue Truck Broker, Inc., Kegel LLC, Lanier Upshaw, Inc., Rita Staffing

Large Business Category: ArrMaz, Bunch CareSolutions, Mizkan Americas, Inc., Polk County Clerk of Courts

Mega Business Category: Legoland Florida, Polk County Board of County Commissioners, The Sherwin-Williams Company, Walmart Logistics, W. S. Badcock Corporation

The Hammer Award was presented to Adil Khan, Lakeland Regional Health Systems. This award was named after one of the founding board members, Marvin Hammer. Created in 2001, this award honors a board member who has dedicated personal time and effort to CareerSource Polk's initiatives.

The Larry Miller Award was presented to David McCraw, Tampa Area Electrical JATC. This award was created in 2009 to recognize a board member who has demonstrated an overwhelming commitment to workforce development for our county through their engaged leadership, innovation, time, integrity and high moral and ethical standards. This award was named after Larry Miller, a board member who exemplified excellence, challenged the status quo and provided unwavering ethical guidance to our board.

The Workforce Champion Award was presented to Tom Phillips, Citrus Connection & Polk Transit. This award was created in 2007 to honor a Polk County employer, individual or organization for the efforts to support Polk County's workforce system. Recipients are recognized for their contribution to workforce

and economic development initiatives. The recipient of this award has demonstrated outstanding leadership in promoting or improving the quality and success of workforce services to Polk County employers and/or workers.

Operation Christmas Child coming

A grassroots groundswell of Polk County volunteers to help children in need worldwide begins with a celebration rally at 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 13 at Ardella Baptist Church, 709 W. Pipkin Road, Lakeland.

The event supports efforts to mobilize the Polk County community to unite with more than 100,000 year-round volunteers around the country who are working hard to pack and collect shoe boxes filled with toys, school supplies and basic hygiene items.

During National Collection Week, Nov. 17-24, these gift-filled shoe boxes will be received at some 4,000 drop-off sites operating nationwide, where volunteers will pass them on for delivery to children in more than 100 countries who are victims of war, poverty, disease and similar challenging situations.

The initiative is all part of Operation Christmas Child, the world's largest Christmas project of its kind. This year individuals of all ages — along with families, churches and groups — and countless others who have experienced the joy that comes from giving to those less fortunate, are aiming to help collect 12,500 gift-filled shoe boxes in the Polk County area.

For information, call 407-273-6112.

Amazon's new regional fulfillment center opens

More than 400 employees have reported to work at Amazon's new regional order fulfillment center in central Florida.

The Internet giant's first order shipped from its new Lakeland center on Wednesday. The CreativeWare 2-Tier Buffet Server went to a customer in New York.

The 1 million-square-foot warehouse is the company's first in Florida. Employees pick, pack and ship large items to customers.

A second warehouse will open soon in nearby Hillsborough County and will process smaller items, such as books and CDs.

— The Associated Press

Composer Howard Buss reaches for the stars

Lakeland composer Dr. Howard J. Buss' music has been attracting the attention of world-class



BUSS

performers for many years. His 150 published works have been performed in more than 50 countries, and many of

them have been recorded on CDs. Although musical stars are drawn to his music, Buss is also attracted to stars of the celestial kind.

About one quarter of his compositions were inspired by the beauty and majesty of the cosmos. In May a program about his music relating to outer space and space travel was featured at the Congress of Space Renaissance Italia at the Milan Polytechnic University in Italy.

Renowned Italian flutist, Elena Cecconi, interviewed him and performed his "Space Renaissance Suite."

The interview is on YouTube and can be viewed in the video "Howard Buss at the Congress of Space Renaissance ITALIA May 2014."

Buss' "Space Renaissance Suite" has been performed numerous times around the world in concerts as well as at Space Renaissance International gatherings, including the recent International Space Development Conference in Los Angeles.

Recently, internationally acclaimed artists have released three CDs featuring his compositions: "Spanish Memoirs: Howard J. Buss" is devoted exclusively to five of his works. Among the performers are trumpeter Diego Arias and percussionist Yu-Jung Chung. Buss' "Awakening" for solo harp is performed by Italian harpist, Paola Devoti, on the CD "Jewish Memories" (Bottega Discantica; Milan, Italy). A third CD, "Allume" (Albany Records), includes his "Seaside Reflections" for flute and harp, performed by Brian Luce and Carroll McLaughlin, both professors at the University of Arizona.

Howard J. Buss has received numerous awards and his commissioned works include original compositions as

well as arrangements. His music has been recorded on the Albany, Bottega Discantica (Italy), Crystall, Capstone, DUX (Poland), Equilibrium, HoneyRock, IBS Classical (Spain), PL Productions, Ravello, and C. Alan Publications labels. His works are performed by a wide range of musicians, including students, amateurs, and professionals.

Buss received his B.A. in Applied Music from West Chester University, M.M. in Performance and M.M. in Composition from Michigan State University, and D.M.A. in Composition from the University of Illinois. He is the founder and editor of Brixton Publications and Buss Publications which publishes contemporary concert music written by composers from around the U.S.

Buss taught private music lessons for more than 35 years to hundreds of students in Central Florida. He also served as a music instructor for local colleges and the Polk County School System. Buss and his wife, Judy, have been Lakeland residents since 1978.

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