

*19th Annual*  
**Hats, Hearts  
& Handbags**

**Thursday  
April 11, 2024**

VALLEY VIEW • ALACHUA

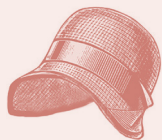
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# 19th Annual Hats, Hearts & Handbags



## Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 19th annual Hats, Hearts & Handbags benefiting Girls Place Inc. For 40 years, Girls Place Inc has been a home away from home for the young girls of our community. As our girls have grown, so has Girls Place. What started as a club for after school and summer camp has now blossomed into a safe place where the girls learn life long lessons such as academics and sports as well as social and emotional learning.

We hope you enjoy Hats, Hearts & Handbags. It's always amazing to see the creativity of our guests. We also hope that you will come visit Girls Place and see where the funds raised from the event are put to good use.

Michelle Florence, Co-Chair



## Hello everyone!

I expect that everyone will have a great time here! I would like you to know that everyone is welcome and we have a lot of fun planned for you.

Kynadi Dennis, Co-Chair

### Thank you to our past event chairs and keynote speakers.

April 23, 2004 – DeeDee Smith, Chair; Speaker: Dr. Donna Shalala, President, University of Miami (President Clinton's U.S. Secretary of Health & Human Services)

April 22, 2005 – Sally Lawrence, Chair; Speaker: Martha W. Bennett, Partner, Law firm of Holland & Knight (1st Woman President of American Bar Association)

March 17, 2006 – Dana Nemenyi, Chair; Speaker: Andrea Billups, People magazine reporter (former reporter for The Gainesville Sun)

April 13, 2007 – Grace Lambert, Chair; Speaker: Sadie Darnell, Alachua County Sheriff

April 25, 2008 – Gail Gruver, Chair; Speaker: Mary Wise, UF Women's Volleyball Coach

May 1, 2009 – DeeJay Hellrung, Chair; Speaker: Shelly Frazier Mickell, Local Author

April 23, 2010 – Leslie Florence, Chair; Speaker: Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., Florida State Surgeon General of the Florida Department of Health

April 8, 2011 – Kay Ayers, Chair; Speaker: Paige Beck, Co-Anchor of WCJB TV 20

March 9, 2012 – Sheila Crapo, Chair; Speaker: Katy Kalivoda, Owner of Casting Company in Boston (former Girls Place member)

April 12, 2013 – Carmen Braun, Chair; Speaker: Kia Painter, vice president of Human Resources for Cox Communications Southeast Region

April 11, 2014 - Michele duBois, Chair; Speaker: Dr. Naima Brown, interim vice president of student affairs at Santa Fe College

May 8, 2015 - Kristen Farrell, Chair; Speaker: Autumn Doughton, local author of young adult and new adult fiction

May 6, 2016 - Sheila Crapo, Chair; Speaker: Becky Burleigh, UF Women's Soccer Coach

May 5, 2017 - Sheila Jones, Chair; Speaker: Kim Barton, Alachua County Supervisor of Elections

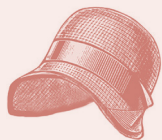
May 11, 2018 - Tara Counts, Chair; Speaker: Pam Soltis, Florida Museum of Natural History Distinguished Professor and Curator

May 10, 2019 - Sheila Crapo and Sheila Jones, Co-Chairs; Speaker: Brittany Lee, VP and Farm Manager of Florida Blue Farms, Inc.

May 19, 2022 - Leslie Florence and Carol Platt, Co-Chairs; Speaker: Jenny Rowland, UF Gymnastics Head Coach

May 4, 2023 - Michelle Florence and Tiffany Hester, Co-Chairs; Speaker: Linda McGurn, Attorney, Developer, Business Leader, and Philanthropist





# 19th Annual Hats, Hearts & Handbags



## Who We Are

Celebrating nearly 40 years of serving girls in Alachua County, Girls Place has evolved into a passageway from childhood to womanhood for many girls in the Gainesville community. The young women of today are learning to become tomorrow's future at Girls Place.

**Our Values:** At Girls Place, we believe that all girls should be inspired, challenged and nurtured to become their very best.

**Our Vision:** Girls Place girls become independent women who embrace diversity, express their ideas, rise above obstacles, enhance their communities, and lead those around them.

**Our Mission:** At Girls Place, we empower girls to grow courageous, strong and self sufficient. We inspire our girls to celebrate themselves—their minds, their hearts, and their physical well being.



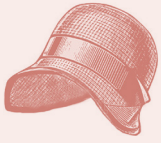
## Agenda

4:00 p.m.	Social Hour - Mingling, Beverages, Pandora's Box, Table Judging
5:00 p.m.	View Table Decorations
5:15 p.m.	Buffet Opens
5:30 p.m.	Program Begins
6:45 p.m.	Closing Remarks

## Keynote Speaker - Tori Penso

LinTori Penso led her team to officiate the 2023 Women's World Cup Final in Australia and New Zealand; the first from the U.S. to referee a FIFA World Cup final and the first Women's World Cup final referee from the Americas, man or woman. She has served US Soccer as a Referee for 23 years, starting at the young age of 14 years old. She currently serves on the FIFA Panel and has since 2021. In this role, Tori is a trailblazer for women officials, in the US, Concacaf and globally. As the first female referee to officiate an MLS match in two decades following legends like Kari Seitz, Sandy Hunt and Nancy Lay to becoming the first woman to referee a Men's World Cup Qualifier in Concacaf, she continues to set a new standard for officials within our region and globally. Tori has worked her way through the professional ranks in the US, having been selected to join PRO2, serving in the NPSL, USL, NWSL, and MLS leagues. She is currently the only female full-time Professional Referee with PRO (Professional Referee Organization) and you can catch her on the pitch working MLS matches regularly. Most recently, Tori has returned home from Saudi Arabia as the first female to work a professional match when she was selected for the Opening Match of the 2023 Men's FIFA Club World Cup this past December. Tori Penso is excited about the opportunities ahead as the game continues to demand more officials at all levels of the game - there is so much opportunity in officiating!





# 19th Annual Hats, Hearts & Handbags




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# Table Captains' Words of Wisdom



**Beverly Arrington**

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched; they must be felt with the heart."

~ Helen Keller



**Gia Arvin**

Never settle! Push for your goals & never let someone say you can't. Can't doesn't mean you can't, it means you haven't yet!



**Misty Barnett**

You control your mind and thoughts!



**Dante Buckley**

You make the call... to live a life worth sharing! Legacy is planting seeds in a garden you may never see.



**Nikki Cochran**

"People grow through experience if they meet life honestly and courageously. This is how character is built."

~ Eleanor Roosevelt



**Sheila Crapo**

"What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."

~ Jane Goodall



**Kynadi Dennis**

"When they go low, we go high."

~ Michelle Obama



**Michele duBois**

"Make sure you're very courageous: be strong, be extremely kind, and above all be humble."

~ Serena Williams



**Leslie Florence and Carol Platt**

"A friend is one of the best things you can be and the greatest things you can have."

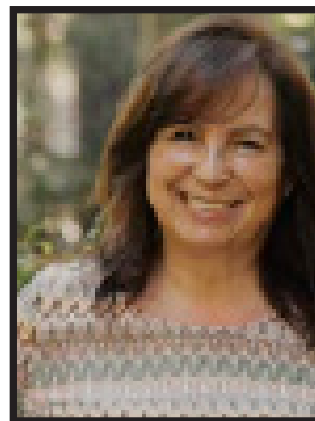
~ Sarah Valdez



**Michelle Florence**

"Try to be a rainbow in someone else's cloud."

~ Maya Angelou



**Debbie Frening**

Dream Big! Be humble and kind.



**Regan Garner**

Be who you are, not what everyone else wants you to be. Express yourself!

# Table Captains' Words of Wisdom



**Sissy Hart**

Life is like running. Don't worry about what the others are doing. Run at your own pace. Be YOU!



**DeeJay Hellrung**

Bug Bunny once said, "I don't ask questions, I just have fun!"



**Amy Howard**

Don't set yourself on fire to keep someone else warm.



**Sheila Jones**

What comes easy won't last long and what lasts long won't come easy.



**Leslie Ladendorf and Brittany Snipes**

"Today a reader, tomorrow a leader."  
~ Margaret Fuller



**Kylie Maris**

"Don't get so busy making a living that you forget to make a life."  
~ Dolly Parton



**Nicole Rappaport**

She said she could, so she did. We all have a fight song. There is a small inner voice that allows us to believe we are strong enough to make it through. Find your fight song.



**Chrissy Severance**

"In every human Beast, God has implanted a Principle, which we call Love of Freedom it is impatient of Oppression, and pants for Deliverance."  
~ Phillis Wheatley



**Kerri Stine**

"A huge part of being a feminist is giving other women the freedom to make choices you might not necessarily make yourself."  
~ Lena Dunham



**Jill Tinney and Kerry Ward**

Sometimes the strength within isn't a big flame for all to see. Sometime it's just a tiny spark that whispers ever so softly, "keep going, you got this."



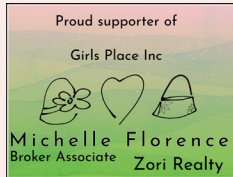
**Lynda Whitaker and Pat Maisenbacher**  
Girls Can Do and Be Anything!

# Essay Contest Winners

The annual Essay Contest was sponsored by Merrill Lynch, Michelle Florence, and Girls Place Board of Directors and the topic was chosen by Tori Penso. Girls Place girls were asked identify short-term and long-term goals and how will they achieve them.

Congratulations to this year's winners!

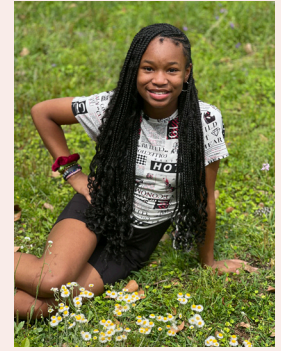
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## Girls Place Board of Directors

## Event Emcee

**Nathan  
Whitaker,**  
Author &  
Super Bowl  
Champion



## Planning Committee

Michelle Florence  
Jillian Ariet  
Christi Arrington  
Misty Barnett  
Sheila Crapo  
Michele duBois  
Kristen Farrell

Leslie Florence  
DeeJay Hellrung  
Sheila Jones  
Carol Platt  
Kerry Ward  
Amy Whitaker

*Thank You for Hosting  
Our Committee Meetings!*

DeeJay Hellrung & SouthState Bank

## Table Judges



Kristin Privett  
Co-Owner,  
Footstone  
Photography



Paige Beck  
WCJB News Anchor



Becky Lancer  
Art Teacher

## Founding Director

Renae Clements was hired as the first Executive Director at Girls Place in 1985 and served in that role until her retirement in 2013. She developed the organization and helped shape the lives of countless girls in our community.



# When you're ready to make a difference, we're ready to help

We are proud to support Girls Place.



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**Michelle Florence**  
Broker Associate      **Zori Realty**

Today is a great example of a phrase I use often when coaching or advising: If you don't ask then the answer is always 'no.'

I am one of the first US Youth Soccer kids and have played recreationally ever since. My husband is also an avid lover of the sport. When we're not working Real Estate, you will likely find us cheering on our favorite soccer teams just as loud as if we were cheering on our favorite Gator athletes.

When it came time to choose a Keynote Speaker for this years' Hats, Hearts, and Handbags event one name kept hopping around in my head. Tori Penso. She sets the flow of each match she refs with such ease and efficiency. She leads the game and keeps it from chaos. Tori would also be a great example to the girls in regards to setting goals and following through based on her accomplishments.

It would be a long shot of an ask. I had one recent connection that I thought may be able to help with that ask, but I wasn't confident that I could. With the encouragement of two awesome Girls Place Inc. women, Christi Arrington and Jillian Ariet, I did it. A few weeks later, we got confirmation she agreed to be the Keynote so long as her schedule permitted. To say I was ecstatic would be an understatement!

Thank you to Joe Hancock at Moxie Media for making that connection. Thank you to our 19th Annual HHH committee for everything you do to support this event and Girls Place Inc. and supporting me as Chair. Thank you all for not letting me settle for 'no.'

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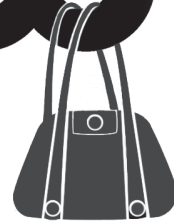
*Florida*  
*Blue*

The Florida Blue logo consists of two blue icons. The first is a cross with a white circle in the center containing a stylized human figure with arms raised. The second is a shield with a white border containing a white caduceus (a staff with two snakes entwined around it).

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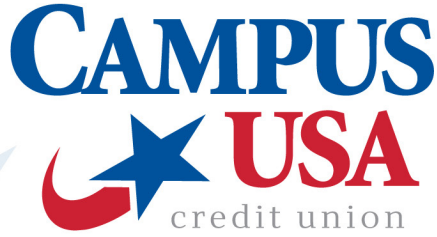


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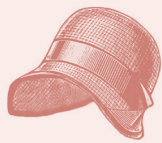


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# 19th Annual Hats, Hearts & Handbags

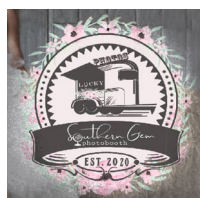


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