

**From:** WTS Central Florida <gina@wtscentralflorida.ccsend.com> on behalf of WTS Central Florida <wtscentralflorida@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 1, 2021 4:03 PM  
**Subject:** WTS Central Florida Newsletter - February 2021 Issue



### Central Florida Chapter Officers

Amy Windom, PE, President | Snehal Ambare, PE, Vice President | Ivannia Bok, Secretary | Lizette Martinez, PE, Treasurer | Christina Colón, PE, Immediate Past President

### Message from our President

A new year brings new activities. While we are thrilled that vaccinations are underway, we are using virtual and outdoor activities for a bit longer! Join us (virtually) on Thursday February 4th for our Open House to recognize our 2020 Emerging Professionals and to hear about our 2021 committees. We will have games and prizes. For more information, click on: [Open House](#).

A few teasers of upcoming activities are:  
-- **Swings for Scholarships** will be March 26th at the outdoor patio of Top Golf.  
-- **A Walk in Her Shoes** is back (onscreen) on April 29th.

Looking at 2021 so far, we continued the trifecta of good news in January.

1. Submitted our scholarship applications and awards nominations to WTS International for the next level. Click [WTSCFL YouTube](#) to check out our YouTube videos of these impressive chapter recipients!!!



2. Held our first program - thanks to SMPS Central Florida for partnering and planning the Brightline Update with Michael Cegelis and Katie Mitzner. Click [Brightline](#) for the story below.

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3. Provided our first professional development event for Florida Laws & Rules required for PE license continuing education- thanks Larry Hagen - [TrafficSafetyGuru.com](http://TrafficSafetyGuru.com)

Finally, as we start Black History Month, I encourage everyone to take time this month to learn something new about Black history or culture. If you would like to share with me at [WTSCentralFlorida@gmail.com](mailto:WTSCentralFlorida@gmail.com), I will summarize in our March newsletter! I am reading a book titled **Venti Fried Chicken** by Joshua Walker, who is co-founder of BOT (Black Orlando Tech).

*THANKS to our sponsors and their efforts for advancing women and advancing transportation. We value the continued support from our 2020 firms and welcome new 2021 sponsors. For more information click on [SPONSORSHIP](#).*

Hope to "see" you soon!



Amy Windom  
President, WTSCFL



JOIN US FOR OUR  
*Virtual*  
**2021**  
**OPEN HOUSE!**

**FEBRUARY 4 • 5:30PM**

**WTS**  
Advancing women  
Advancing transportation

**WTS Central Florida Virtual Open House!**  
When? February 4th, 5:30-6:15pm

Join the WTS Central Florida Chapter for a Virtual Open House on Thursday, February 4th between 5:30 pm and 6:15 pm - just enough time socialize after work and before dinner!

We will have games and prizes while learning about the WTSCFL committees. We will recognize the 2020 Emerging Professionals and announce the 2020 Mentor of the Year. We will provide a citrus cocktail and a citrus mocktail recipe for you to have on hand at home!

Participants can register here:  
[WTSCF 2021 Virtual Open House](#)

**WTS Central Florida Brightline Program**

# brightline®

**Michael Cegelis**  
**Katie Mitzner**  
SMPS Central Florida  
January 27, 2021



A Brightline Update was our first program of 2021 on January 27th. Thanks to SMPS Central Florida Chapter for asking us to partner for this event. WTSCFL had particularly interest since our last in-person program was our technical tour of the Orlando International Airport Intermodal Facility and Brightline railroad construction. This year, Michael Cegelis and Katie Mitzner provided the virtual update complete with time lapse for the box jack construction under Goldenrod and the fly through of the overall Phase 2 construction to Orlando. Other program topics were:

- Brightline is the only major privately held express passenger rail business in the US
- Phase 2 - 170 miles from West Palm Beach to Orlando International Airport will be completed in 2022 followed by safety testing and revenue service beginning in 2023
- Safety enhancements are being provided for at-grade crossings such as quad gates
- Future projects include new South Florida stations, Tampa extension, Miami-Dade Commuter Rial and the Las Vegas - Southern California.
- Additional information is available on the

You can visit the Brightline website: <https://www.gobrightline.com/> or follow Brightline on LinkedIn, Instagram or Twitter @GoBrightline.

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## Honorary Member Spotlight!

Racquel Asa,  
Chief Marketing Officer, Beep, Inc



WTS International provides two honorary memberships to each chapter to allow for recognition of key local contributors to the transportation industry, particularly those leaders contributing to access and equity for women. Our first 2021 honorary membership recipient is Racquel Asa.

For nearly 10 years, Racquel has been at the forefront of covering every major transportation development and initiative in Florida.

Prior to joining Beep, she worked as a Journalist and anchor for nearly 15 years at a number of television stations in New York and Florida. Most recently she was at WFTV in Orlando as the lead Transportation reporter for the area covering every major advancement and enhancement to the state's road infrastructure and growth in the autonomous vehicle industry. It was during her time at WFTV where she covered the launch and growth of Beep in September 2019 as the first vehicles launched in Lake Nona.

Racquel is an award-winning journalist, who has not only received the recognition of her peers but also of those in the transportation industry. In 2019, she was given the Citizen Transportation Advocate of the Year award by WTS Central Florida Chapter. In the same year, her name was entered into Congressional record during Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage month as the nation celebrated and highlighted the accomplishments by Asian Americans who have strengthened our nation.

Racquel is a passionate advocate for safer streets and using new innovative solutions to improve mobility.

She also provided her talent as a speaker for the **2020 Virtual Scholarship Ceremony** and as moderator for the **2019 A Walk in Her Shoes**. For these reasons, the WTSCFL Board voted for her to receive the honorary membership.

We caught up with Racquel and here is what she had to say:

### What has your career path looked like? How did you get to where you are today?

*I entered the Transportation field somewhat through an unconventional path. As a 15 year Journalist, nearly nine of which were in Orlando, I covered many transportation initiatives and developments from road to rail to autonomous vehicles. Having covered every major development in transportation, especially in the State of Florida, I wanted to be part of a company people told stories about. Joining Beep as the Chief Marketing Officer was an opportunity to be part of something bigger than myself. It combines two of my passions; telling the story of my company and being part of the transportation of the future.*

### What kinds of things are you doing during travel restrictions to stay connected?

*Replacing physical connections during this time has been a challenge for me who is very much a people person. Virtual events and meetings lack that level of interaction that cannot be replaced with meeting through a computer. With that said, creating engaging content and going "beyond the power point" has been critical for my role as someone who is responsible for communicating who we are as a company. Virtual school trips and virtual driverless shuttle rides are some examples of how I've tried to make the best with what you have.*

## Who has been a mentor in your career and what has been their biggest impact on you?

*My mom and dad have been my biggest influence on my life and my biggest cheerleaders. It's always easier to go against the grain when you know you have cheerleaders in your corner routing you along every step of the way. They taught me the work ethic and grit needed to survive and thrive in whatever task or challenge I took on.*

## What is an achievement that you've always been proud of?

*Receiving a Congressional honor during Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month in 2019 from U.S. Congressman Darren Soto was one of the biggest highlights of my career. It was an honor to be recognized by U.S. Soto for my work in fair and balanced coverage in the transportation sector and served as a validation that I was doing something right with my life and career.*

## What attracted you to join WTS?

*What is there not to like about WTS. I love the mission and vision of the organization and the programs it creates to foster an environment for attracting, sustaining and advancing women's careers in the transportation sector. Selfishly as a mom of a young daughter, I am proud to support organizations that foster the growth of young women looking for a better path in their career.*

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## Resilient Leadership

Article By WTSCFL Banquet Chair - Barbara Stiles  
VP, Business Planning WGI

Welcome to 2021. Upon opening my eyes on January 1, I was really hoping that someone had waved a magic wand and life had returned to pre-COVID ways. Of course, that didn't happen, and life hasn't changed much for me. I'm still wearing a mask, practicing social distancing, and participating in way too many Zoom meetings. This prolonged alternate reality has been exhausting for many people. Our colleagues are looking for resilient leadership, and you can be that leader for them.

Resilience is defined as the ability of a person or organization to respond to and recover from a crisis or disruptive process. A resilient leader is someone who can sustain their energy level, cope with the disruption, and adapt. During a world-wide pandemic or any challenging time, it's important that we demonstrate resiliency for our colleagues. Here are some ways to develop your resilient leadership:

- The most resilient people are those with a strong support system. They feel supported and encouraged by the connections they form. This is an important element in achieving goals, dealing with hardships, and developing perspective. Be intentional about setting aside time to stay in touch with your connections.
- Attitude is an important factor in resiliency. Resilient people understand that difficult situations don't last forever. They make a conscious effort to look for the good in these situations. Make sure you enhance and prolong your positive moods and emotions. Make sure to savor the good things in your life. Take time to appreciate the small things throughout your day and practice gratitude.
- Great leaders are great learners. Embrace new perspectives and use them during times of change. Don't hold on to old behaviors, especially because they feel comfortable and familiar when nothing else is. Those behaviors may not work any longer and we should always be looking for better and more efficient ways to work.



- Emotional acceptance and being aware of our emotional triggers are key in developing resilience. Even though emotions are part of being human, we need to come up with strategies to deal with situations. Learn to control your reactions and be mindful when choosing your response.
- Resilient leaders show up and give their best. In order to do that consistently, you need to manage your physical energy. One way to increase your physical energy is exercise. It can be as simple as getting up to move every 90 minutes, having an outside walking meeting with someone, or taking the stairs. Another important component is a regular sleep schedule. Try to get between 7-8 hours each night.

Now that there are COVID-19 vaccines being distributed, there's light at the end of this tunnel. Things aren't going to change overnight, and they may never completely be the same as they were in 2019. Hopefully, we have all learned new and better ways to be successful during this pandemic. Developing your resilient leadership skills makes it easier for you to be adaptable and ready for whatever the future holds.

*This article was first published by SMPS in the Marketer QuickLook*

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## **Sponsorship**

### **2021 Sponsorship Opportunities**

We are thankful for the new and continued support. Because of the continued support of our 2020 sponsors we have extended their sponsorship through the end of 2021 and are offering NEW 2021 sponsors packages at a discounted rate - 25% Off.

We hope you will join the many firms who proudly serve as sponsors and support WTS Central Florida.

### **Meet Our 2021 Sponsors!**

#### **New 2021 Sponsors**

##### **Platinum**

Transystems (upgraded from Gold to Platinum Sponsor!)

##### **Silver**

AIM

##### **Bronze**

K&N Engineering

**Interested in Being a WTSCF Sponsor for 2021? Please use this form:**

**[WTS Central Florida 2021 Sponsorship Form](#)**

#### **Sponsorship Questions? Contact:**

Ivannia Bok and Brian Kirwan - Fundraising Co-Chair  
ivannia.bok@volkert.com || Direct Phone: 321-274-4766  
brian@KNEngineer.com || Direct Phone: 321-236-0423



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ENGINEERING

**Thank you for your continued support!**



## Book Club is Back!!

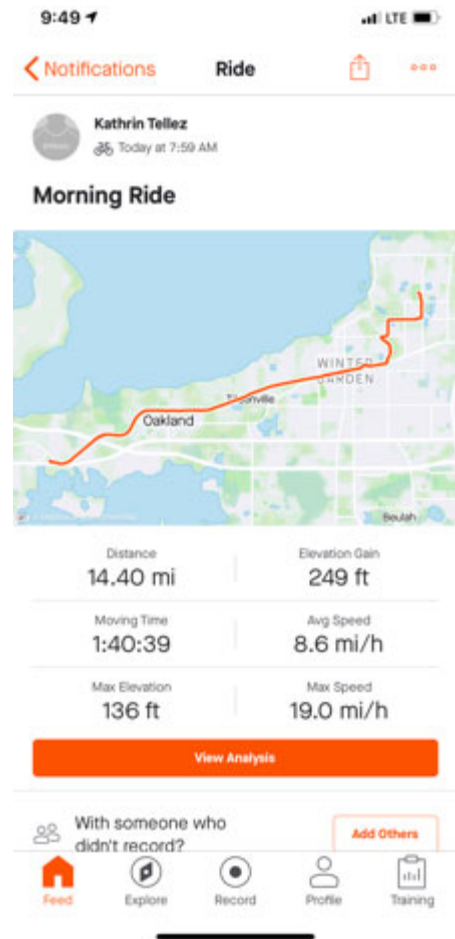
By popular demand, Book Club is coming to WTS CFL! As we gear-up for our first discussion in May, please take this [survey](#) to help us select our three books for the year. Some of them may be familiar to you from our Read to Succeed event last year. Survey will be open until March 1, 2021.

## Let's Ride!!

This past Saturday the WTSCFL Membership Committee had an unconventional meeting - we biked the West Orange Trail. Our ride was between the Killarney and Chapin stations - 14.4 miles round trip. As we rode, we discussed we should have a WTS meet-up each month to get out and ride about a 10-mile segment of various trails in Central Florida. We are looking at Cady Way - Orlando Fashion Square to Lake Baldwin as our next ride on Saturday February 27 at 8 am - please email WTSCentralFlorida@gmail.com if you want to join the ride!



Masked riders (left to right) Kathrin Tellez, Stacey Russell & Amy Windom



## Save the Date

- Swings for Scholarships - March 26
- A Walk in Her Shoes - April 29

## Kudos & Announcements

- Congratulations to **Brian Kirwan, PE** for starting a new position as **Principal** at **K&N Engineering, LLC**
- Congratulations to **Dr. Laine Powell** for being appointed to the **Board of Trustees at the Florida Polytechnic University**
- Congratulations to **Snehal Ambare** for being promoted to **Associate Vice President** at **HNTB Corporation**
- Congratulations to **Ivannia Bok** on obtaining her **Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification** from the **Project Management Institute (PMI)**



- Congratulations to **Dr. Lily Elefteriadou** for receiving the **American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) S.S. Steinberg Award** for extraordinary contributions to transportation education



WTS Central Florida welcomes the following new members...  
**Racquel Asa**

**Want to join the Board? Ask us how!**

## Job Opportunities

If your organization has an employment opportunity, we would be happy to post!

Click [here](#) to advertise an available position in the next newsletter.

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## Covid-19 Resources

As COVID-19 has brought lifestyle and business changes, the WTS Central Florida Chapter continues to prioritize the health and safety of our members and offer the following resources:

### Coping and Mental Health Resources:

- Check with your health insurance provider for available phone or online resources
- Visit the Disaster Distress Helpline (<https://www.samhsa.gov/disaster-preparedness>), call 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUs to 66746
- Visit Florida Health website for list of additional resources: <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/mental-health/>

### Business and Economic Assistance Resources:

- Florida Small Business Development Center at the University of Central Florida: <https://sbdcorlando.com/coronavirus/>
- Orlando Employers Resource Center: <https://business.orlando.org//coronavirus-business-resource-center/>
- Small Business Administration Paycheck Protection Program: [https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/paycheck-protection-program?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/paycheck-protection-program?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)
- Orange County Social Services and Resident Needs - Individual and Family Assistance <http://www.ocfl.net/EconomicDevelopment/OrangeCARES/SocialServicesandResidentNeeds.aspx>
- Orange County Small Business Grant Program: <http://www.ocfl.net/EconomicDevelopment/OrangeCARES/SmallBusinessGrantProgram.aspx#.XvG69m5FyZA>

We will continue to monitor the situation and keep our WTS community informed. As more information becomes available, we will update. Stay safe!

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## Contact Us:

Email: [WTSCentralFlorida@gmail.com](mailto:WTSCentralFlorida@gmail.com)

## OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Join WTS International today and begin to enjoy the benefits of membership. By joining, you will become one of more than 8,500 members--both women and men--participating in professional activities, networking opportunities, and unparalleled access to industry and government leaders.

<https://www.wtsinternational.org/about-wts/member-types/>

Sincerely,

Jessica Dean ([Jacobs](#))  
*Newsletter Co-Chair*

Abigail Osei-Asamoah ([CDM Smith Inc.](#))  
*Newsletter Co-Chair*

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OUR MAILING LIST

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