

Evan Olsen



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Entry details

Entry Name: Florida Tech Holiday Party

Institution Name: Florida Tech

Entry Completed By (*name and position*): Evan Olsen - Director

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Introduction:

The Florida Tech Annual Staff and Faculty Holiday Party was held in the converted Panther Dining Hall on December 16, 2025 to a crowd of over 600.

Essay:

Who doesn't love mac-n-cheese? How about a huge paella pan with mountains of the gooey gold with brisket burnt ends, sauteed shrimp and other delectable toppings? Everyone, that's who! The menu was rounded out by a dual carving station with Cajun roasted turkey and pit ham, a beautiful grazing station and enough dessert to make Willy Wonka jealous.

Introduction:

This year's theme was derived from a singular idea and question. Gingerbread houses are awesome, what if you could walk through it?

Essay:

The L3Harris Student Design Center at Florida Tech is typically home to projects for graduate students, items being prepared for space travel or grant funded research projects. However, during the months of October and

November, a house was being erected.....of gingerbread. Hundred of gingerbread panels, jumbo candy pieces made of pool noodles and upcycled containers, along with a family portrait (our President and first lady) and diploma hanging above the fireplace adorned the massive structure. Decor for the event followed the gingerbread and candy theme with funky linens, centerpieces and photo backdrops.

Introduction:

The little touches go a long way in creating a uniquely new experience for an annual event. It can be difficult to wow the same audience year over year.

Essay:

Here's how we turned a dining hall into a whimsical wonderland. 200+ feet of pipe and drape, a full size Santa and reindeer, four foot gingerbread people, 50 pounds of Florida snow (fluffy, sparkling cotton) and enough special linen to cover a football field! Bright greens, red and golds brightened the room and seating options included hi tops, booths, rounds with chairs. The salad bar area was turned into the cocktail area serving Florida Tech branded beer, wines and champagne.

Introduction:


Sustainability was at the forefront when planning and executing this event.

Essay:

Sustainability considerations included upcycling used containers, pool noodles, and old fabrics to create over 400 pieces of jumbo candy. The gingerbread house was made of reclaimed wood and deconstructed intentionally to recycle the wood a third time, creating a bar front to be used at other events.

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Attachment name Event video
https://nam11.safelinks...