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The Youth Fair dispatches delegates on fact-finding missions

MIAMI, Fla. – Sept. 14, 2016 – Condo horticulture, back-yard garden techniques and social activism were among numerous ideas gleaned by Miami-Dade County Youth Fair & Exposition employees sent on fact finding missions across the United States and Canada over the summer to observe the way other fairs do things.

“Even while we have a highly successful county fair in Miami-Dade, our desire to excel demands that we always seek out other and better ways. Our employees were tasked with bringing back innovative and sustainable ideas that might fit into the nature of The Youth Fair and our youth and adult education programs,” said Robert Hohenstein, president and CEO.

In June, Carol Douglass and Ismael Ramos, who oversee The Youth Fair’s competitive exhibits department as director and manager respectively, visited the San Diego County Fair in Del Mar, Calif.

“Our focus was dedicated to the fair’s flower and garden show, which was beautiful and educational. We hope to mirror their work in our new garden exhibit, which is designed to display all things grown in the ground. It’s another way to showcase youth achievement at the Youth Fair,” Douglass said.

Sira Camilo, director of sales and business development, and her sales managers Ceciah Torres and Diana Nelson, headed to the New York State Fair in Syracuse. There, Camilo was impressed by the fair’s work to bring about social change by adopting a homeless family.

Camilo and her team then headed to the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) in Toronto in August, which Douglass also visited in the company of Rosa Madruga, director of operations, and Patty Dee, director of concessions. Dee was intrigued by how the fair adapted society’s lifestyles to its programming.

“The Canadian National Exhibition is truly an urban fair. Many of the Toronto guests, who arrived by public transportation, lived in condominiums. The CNE recognized the urban nature of the guests and exhibited vertical gardening and gave tips for horticulture designs for balconies in condominiums,” Dee said.

In addition, Dee said that Canada’s largest annual community event served as several hundred thousand square feet of retail shopping and vast food courts offering international food. Local musicians played on stages throughout the fairgrounds.

Other assignments included the Erie County Fair in Hamburg, N.Y., where Claudia Hernandez-Maltes, director of marketing and entertainment, and Julie Blanco, director of administration and compliance, were sent. Albert Montes, chief financial officer, attended the Minnesota State Fair.

The Miami-Dade County Youth Fair & Exposition (The Youth Fair) is the largest charity event in South Florida. The not-for-profit association is dedicated to promoting education and agriculture while showcasing and rewarding youth achievement and providing quality family entertainment, all without taxpayer dollars. The annual Youth Fair exhibits more than 58,000 student projects to more than 612,000 Youth Fair guests and awards more than \$460,000 annually in college scholarships, cash premiums and awards to students. To date, The Youth Fair has presented well over \$11 million to the Miami-Dade community. It was recognized in 2015 as the Leisure & Entertainment Services Firm of the Year by the Latin Builder's Association, the Non-Profit Organization of the Year by the South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and was the Diamond Award Winner for Outstanding Hospitality Entity by the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce. The Fair Exposition Center, which is the second largest convention center in Miami-Dade County, hosts an additional 70 community events each year. Visit fairexpo.com or call 305-223-7060.

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