

**Geoff Lawson**

Geoff is a 44 year veteran of the hospitality industry, and has spent the last 25 years of his career in the development and operation of conference centers. He is a member of the Dulles Chamber of Commerce, Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce, Visit Loudoun, Lansdowne Conservancy & Committee for Dulles (CFD). Geoff works extremely well at all levels of an organization and has a tremendous skill in building high performance teams.

Geoff resides in Leesburg, Virginia and is committed to the local community, particularly working with young adults education. He has been with The National since 2014, when new ownership took over the property.

**The National Conference Center**

Due to the history of the property and that it was a closed facility for Xerox use only, it did not have the market presence locally to be successful. The National transitioned to new ownership in 2014. The change brought in a new operating team, led by Geoff.

Geoff Lawson has put The National front and center in the local community by embracing his Board participation in Dulles Chamber, Loudoun Chamber and Visit Loudoun, while the entire management team has been involved with many community activities, including various leadership and mentoring activities at the local high school, providing part time employment for as many as 30 high school students and offering teacher discounts at The Black Olive, hosting every high school prom, hosting fund raisers and judging culinary programs. But the program that Geoff and the entire team is most proud is Project Search.

Project Search, a national high school transition program for students with intellectual delays, is a total workplace immersion program combining classroom instruction, career exploration, and relevant job-skills training through strategically designed internships. It includes long-term job coaching and continuous feedback from teachers and employers. The nine interns placed at The National learned time management, social interaction, and a variety of stockroom, culinary and housekeeping skills.

When Loudoun County Schools came to meet with Geoff at The National, along with his executive team, there was no question in his mind that this was a program he wanted to host at The National. The National placed nine interns in a variety of departments, including Culinary, Engineering, Housekeeping, Audio Visual, Grounds and Event Services.

This program not only helped the interns, but The National as well. The staff showed compassion and mentoring skills to these young future hospitality professionals. The National's team took time to help the interns understand and grasp the market and the conference center's customers as they look to become part of the next generation of meeting support professionals. Three of the nine Project Search participants now have jobs at The National in the Front of the House, Culinary and Events Departments.

The National also works with Riverside High School in Loudoun County, training youth in all hospitality functions. The Culinary Team judges the Riverside High's culinary competition and offers prizes to the winners.

In conclusion, these strategies have:

- Increased employment in the local market by 100%.
- Supported Loudoun County economics by contributing to the local tax economy. The National is the largest hospitality property in Loudoun County.
- Resulted in recognition from the local, state and national award program. (see below)
- Increased buyer awareness with local events, fundraisers and awards.