

#1

COMPLETE

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Page 1: Associate Member Candidate Information

Q1

First and Last Name

Pete Smith

Q2

Company Name

Smoky Mountain Resorts /Tour Tennessee

Q3

Company Address

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Q4

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pete@tourtennessee.com

Q5

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865-908-3015

Q6

SYTA Board of Director (Associate)

I am nominating myself for the position of Board of Director (Associate).

Q7

Yes

I am the current designated representative or primary contact of my organization.

Q8

Large - over 1000 employees

Please indicate your company size.

Q9

United States

Please indicate where your company does business.

Q10

Please describe your experience with the international travel industry.

I have been blessed to own and operate theaters with my family and in the tourism industry since 1998. I have also been a part of the lodging side of tourism since 2008 forming many partnerships during that time. From the lodging industry, I led the push to create a receptive operation in the Smoky Mountain area called Smoky Mountain Resorts Receptive. From that platform we created a coalition of the major tour and travel attractions in the area including Dollywood, Ripleys Aquarium, Titanic, Dolly Parton's Stampede, Collier Restaurant Group and others called Tour Smokies. Tour Smokies has now grown to the largest receptive operator in the State of Tennessee and is now called Tour Tennessee. Tour Tennessee has begun to market the entire state internationally.

Q11

Please indicate your company type and select all that apply.

Attraction,
CVB/DMO,
Hotels/Hostels,
Music Festival,
Receptive Operator,
Restaurant,
Theaters/Dinner/Ticket Broker,
Security,
Other

Page 2: Candidate Questions

Q12

Please describe your experience as a volunteer within or outside the travel community.

I have very much enjoyed being a Sunday School teacher for 15 years, and a Scoutmaster for 3 years. I have worked in a leadership role in a recovery program called Celebrate Recovery for 7 years. I have found a calling for prison ministry and have visited medium and minimum prisons with a men's ministry called Kairos. I have been a volunteer for the American Bus Association on the ABA Foundation since 2019.

Q13

Please describe your professional experience in the student travel industry.

Over a 25 year career in a largely family destination, I have been honored to host over 19,000 groups. Our Spring business in Pigeon Forge is primarily students. That means we ready ourselves for performance opportunities, procuring risers, shells, stages, music stands, Marley flooring, tumbling mats, workshops, setting up curriculum, and much more. On the theater side I have been in charge of dance competitions, national park tours, concerts, and educational seminars. Not to say that there isn't always something new to learn about student travel.

Q14

Please describe other professional or personal experience that would benefit you as a Board member.

As a father, I have enjoyed my children in dance, choir, scouts, baseball, and football. I have seen the parents' side of traveling students and the heartburn of not having them nearby. I also am the son of a School Nurse and a teacher. I know the pains of dealing with demanding parents and discipline. As a Scoutmaster I have been trained to take scouts camping for a week at a time.

Q15

Please describe why you would like to serve as a Board of Director (Associate).

I see the student travel market poised to explode in the coming years. The pandemic has decimated several businesses. I have witnessed individuals return to travel in earnest. Then we saw senior group travel return quicker than student travel mostly because of regulation and fear of liability. I think I can give some insight to how operators, parents, hoteliers, restaurants, and attractions interact in a very demanding environment. I would selfishly like to know more colleagues and businesses to be able to accommodate them better. I'd like to help kids learn.

Q16

What do you see as the challenges facing the student travel industry? What can SYTA do to meet those challenges?

Again, regulation is necessary but can be overbearing and a little like killing a fly with a sledgehammer. I think SYTA can act as voice of reason to those making the rules. I think SYTA can offer some relief to worried school principals, directors and teachers.

Q17

What initiatives are you passionate about that you would like to see further implemented in our industry?

Standardization is needed in student travel. As a receptive we have seen the gambit of rooming lists, deposit policies, codes of conduct, mask requirements. It is mind numbing not only for schools and youth programs but also the vendors and operators. SYTA could adopt some standards and practices to eliminate some of the confusion. Obviously not every business or school operates the same but we should also not throw up our hands as if to say "what are you gonna do."

Q18

Is there anything else you'd like to share with the Nominating Committee?

I love my God, my family, and my country. I love kids and I love the travel industry.

#2

COMPLETE

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Page 1: Associate Member Candidate Information

Q1

First and Last Name

Keith Stiff

Q2

Company Name

Universal Orlando

Q3

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Q4

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Q5

Phone

13214364160

Q6

SYTA Board of Director (Associate)

I am nominating myself for the position of Board of Director (Associate).

Q7

Yes

I am the current designated representative or primary contact of my organization.

Q8

Large - over 1000 employees

Please indicate your company size.

Q9

North America

Please indicate where your company does business.

Q10

Please describe your experience with the international travel industry.

Universal Orlando defines the Youth Group Market as the domestic US, Puerto Rico, and Canada. While this is the case, my team and I have worked with clients from Australia, UK, Mexico and South America. Some of these groups have worked through Orlando based Receptive Tour Operators, however most of the business comes from Tour Operators that are based in their home country. As a result of my position at Universal Orlando, I frequently attend meetings with my peers that focus on the international market. In these meetings, I am able to gain insight into their markets, the economy and important travel trends that may be occurring.

Q11

Attraction

Please indicate your company type and select all that apply.

Page 2: Candidate Questions

Q12

Please describe your experience as a volunteer within or outside the travel community.

Universal Orlando has a public high school on its property. The students split their day between the classroom and working in the parks. Each student is partnered with a mentor and I have had the privilege to volunteer my time and energy to this program on multiple occasions. I was with my most recent mentee for his Junior and Senior year and he graduated in 2020. He and I would meet a minimum of once per week, attended various school functions and periodically visit him at his work location. The main goal was to support and guide him through his high school years while working at Universal Orlando. He is now in the Army Reserves and a full-time security officer at Universal Orlando and we talk frequently.

Universal Orlando has a very robust volunteer program called Club 52. This program encourages team members to volunteer a minimum of 52 hours within the calendar year. Those who successfully do this are given the opportunity to provide a charitable donation of anywhere from \$500-\$750 to the non-profit of their choice. While I strive to reach 52 hours each year, I have been able to do this on one occasion. This was accomplished by coaching my daughter's soccer team and volunteering at food banks and Give Kids the World.

I volunteer annually in some capacity with DECA. I believe so much in what they do to build future leaders and entrepreneurs that I make it a point to be involved. Typically, this is judging students' projects and/or their response to a given challenge.

Finally, my family and I are active in our local church. For the past 2 years, I have volunteered to be an on-line Sunday morning service host, once per month. I have also worked on the Events Committee to plan Easter, Spring and Fall Festivals and served on the School Board Committee and Personnel Committee at our church. I am currently the Chairman of the Personnel Committee.

Q13

Please describe your professional experience in the student travel industry.

I have been on the Universal Orlando Youth Sales team for over 15 years, but my professional experience in the student travel industry really began in 1994 when I joined the opening team at Nauticus, The National Maritime Center in Norfolk, VA. Once opened we were a hit with the local elementary and middle school market and groups visited in large numbers. I was the Operations Manager and had to work closely with sales to ensure a positive experience from arrivals to departures.

I joined Universal Orlando in 1996. In 1998, I became the Manager of Admissions and once again found myself working closely with the Youth Group Sales team and their clients to ensure a positive arrival and entry into our parks. Once I joined the Youth Sales team, my eyes were opened to the diversity of the industry, the economic impact of the student market, the positive impact on students as well as the potential opportunity for growth. I have grown my career from a Group Sales Manager to the Senior Manager of Sales, working with and leading a group of 12. During this time, I have worked with many Tour Operators and Event Producers and I believe I have made many solid personal and professional connections within the industry.

Q14

Please describe other professional or personal experience that would benefit you as a Board member.

I was recently nominated to be part of the inaugural class of Emerging Travel Leaders for US Travel Association. As such, I was able to attend Destination Capital Hill where we met with elected officials and discussed the importance of travel. I also attended the US Travel Association Board Meeting. I found it very interesting learning about the key topics that USTA is focused on and how they work to influence policy to support the travel industry. Gaining this level of insight and knowledge has broaden my knowledge and perspective and could help if I were elected to the board.

I believe that my experience on the committees at my church (School Committee and Personnel Committee) will be of benefit to me. Our church has a K-12 school and I have been on two 3-year rotations for the School Committee. I have also been on the Personnel Committee twice, each time for 3 years. I am currently the Chairman for the Personnel Committee.

I feel that my 2 years as a Board Member on the Girl Scouts of Citrus Council will be of benefit to me. This is one of the largest councils in the US, made up of 15,000 girls and 7,000 volunteer adults from six Central Florida counties. Our mission was to guide the various councils to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who would make the world a better place.

Q15

Please describe why you would like to serve as a Board of Director (Associate).

After serving on the board for the past year, I want to do more to impact student travel and support/guide our membership and the SYTA staff. I feel that we have just scratched the surface on the DEI & Sustainability front and there is so much more to do, and I want to be part of that. I also want to be part of shaping the future of SYTA as we come out of the pandemic and continue to grow our membership and influence on student travel.

I am a firm believer that travel changes lives. Not only does it change lives, it opens one's eyes up to other cultures and other possibilities. To have the greatest impact the ideal time for travel is when someone is young and, if done correctly, they will never forget it and it could possibly become a catalyst to their future. I want to have a greater role and contribute more to an organization that understands the importance that travel plays in developing students and is also willing to help those that lack resources to travel

Q16

What do you see as the challenges facing the student travel industry? What can SYTA do to meet those challenges?

I believe that the main challenges are international travel (in bound and out bound), bus driver availability, lack of workforce at attractions/hotels/restaurants, and lingering Covid concerns.

SYTA needs to have a voice at the table and be a resource for its membership when these issues arise. SYTA should continue to engage its membership with virtual sessions, social media posts, strong content through Teach and Travel, membership email communication and conversations with key partners. Letting your membership base know that you are aware and working for them is key.

SYTA should also continue to look at other travel industry associations to understand their challenges and how they are addressing them.

Q17

What initiatives are you passionate about that you would like to see further implemented in our industry?

I am passionate about inclusion and would like to see a more diverse, equitable and inclusive Student Travel industry.

I am also passionate about being part of an organization that is a leader in Student Travel and positively impacts its membership and works hard to be a trusted voice for all things Youth Travel related.

Q18

Is there anything else you'd like to share with the Nominating Committee?

I am excited to have this opportunity to be nominated for the Board of Directors. After one year as an at-large member of the board, I feel there is so much more to do and so much that I want to be a part of. I've thoroughly enjoyed my time on the board and look forward to making it a 3-year run where I can use my experience, resources and knowledge to help SYTA reach its goals and objectives and support all SYTA members and staff.

#4

COMPLETE

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Page 1: Associate Member Candidate Information

Q1

First and Last Name

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Q2

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Q3

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New Zealand

Q4

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Q5

Phone

+64 9 426 8037

Q6

SYTA Board of Director (Associate)

I am nominating myself for the position of Board of Director (Associate).

Q7

Yes

I am the current designated representative or primary contact of my organization.

Q8

Small - under 100 employees

Please indicate your company size.

Q9

Internationally

Please indicate where your company does business.

Q10

Please describe your experience with the international travel industry.

I have been involved in the Travel industry since I entered the workforce, I can honestly say that it is my one true passion. For the first 11 years of my travel career, I worked as a commercial pilot watching from the side-lines as my parents grew their company. It was always going to be when, not if I joined the family business, so I was excited to join, Tour Time, 20 years ago. I am pleased to say our family business has been operating for 29 years and in September 2022 we will celebrate 30yrs of business.

When I joined the family business my father gave me a set of bus keys and said "go and learn the business from the ground up". I have worked my way from being a coach driver and tour guide, through to operations, sales, business & product development and now today I am the CEO of Tour Time Group. Over the years I have worked tirelessly to transform my family business from being an inbound and coach tour operator in New Zealand, to owning and operating inbound & outbound offices in New Zealand, Australia, USA & Argentina. Tour Time works exclusively in the group touring market, and specializes in tours for Educational, Music, Sports, Special interest and Faith Travel for youth and adult groups.

Whilst we started out as a coach operator, we quickly diversified and today Tour Time are the only TAANZ financially bonded and licensed inbound (receptive) and outbound specialist group tour operator in NZ, Australia and Argentina. Through our USA office we solely look after our own inbound tours and also work as a white label receptive tour operator in NZ, AUS & ARG for several USA based companies. Our growth is a source of much pride for me as I truly believe that our family operate a business, we can all be proud of and I look forward to my own children being involved.

Q11

Receptive Operator

Please indicate your company type and select all that apply.

Page 2: Candidate Questions

Q12

Please describe your experience as a volunteer within or outside the travel community.

I have been a coach of High School Hockey, a business mentor for travel companies that are starting up, I am on the board for the KBB Music Festival, and have recently been asked to be on the board for Condor7's and North Harbour Baseball.

Q13

Please describe your professional experience in the student travel industry.

Tour Time has been working in student travel for 29 years. However the achievement I most proud of in the Student Travel industry is the creation of the School Travel Collective Inc (STC), of which Tour Time are the founding member and I am the Vice Chair Person, and whose purpose is to help reset and provide confidence in the school travel sectors financial stability, through the cornerstone of TAANZ financial bonding. STC was developed to ensure the protection of schools and their communities funds and setting higher standards of health & safety and duty of care practices within the School and Youth travel sector down-under. After COVID rocked our country and we closed our borders for two years, the School Travel Collective was developed to answer the two primary concerns of parents (and schools) "Is my child safe? Are my funds safe?".

The overriding objective of STC is to ensure schools can have trust and confidence in all aspects of school group and youth travel for the future when working with STC member companies. Whilst the concept was in the works for three years, it was cemented in the wake of the issues that happened across the sector in NZ/AUS in 2020, with schools losing funds and only receiving minimal credits when using companies that were not TAANZ financially bonded and licensed during COVID-19. This was a direct result of the travel industry in NZ/AUS being unregulated, meaning that businesses were able to operate in a manner that could not support the mass cancellations that eventuated. The financial losses suffered by schools who worked with companies that were not TAANZ financially bonded had left the whole sector at risk of reputational damage, which we are pleased to say encouraged people to work more collaboratively towards providing a solution.

Throughout the development of STC, I have worked with multiple Government departments, travel associations, companies and boards of trustees to co-create the School Travel Collective constitution, rules and assist with the redesign of the Ministry of Education guidelines for education outside the classroom in New Zealand. Through my industry contacts STC has now received full endorsement from the NZ Government, Ministry of Education, Education Outdoors NZ, Tourism New Zealand, School Sport NZ, School Trustees & Governors Association and many other associations across New Zealand. I have also grown our membership from the original three founding companies to now having 5 full members and three further companies applying to become TAANZ Financially Bonded so they can join STC. It has truly become a collective. The result of which means that we have managed to self-regulate the school/youth travel sector in New Zealand to ensure clients are not caught out again as they were during COVID when working with companies that are not TAANZ Financially Bonded.

Q14

Please describe other professional or personal experience that would benefit you as a Board member.

Having started out in the travel industry as commercial pilot and then tour coach driver and working my way through my family business, I can see all aspects of the industry through the eyes of being on the ground as a coach driver, tour manager, product developer, itinerary planner, sales manager, across multiple markets. This has given me a deeper understanding of every aspect of the industry so I can see the bigger picture of how small changes can have a huge impact if not clearly considered and understood. I feel that I know our industry from the ground up, which helps me understand impact on a global scale.

Q15

Please describe why you would like to serve as a Board of Director (Associate).

I would like to be involved on the Board of Directors of SYTA to help drive change within the industry on a global scale. I believe myself to be a passionate, ethical and involved member of the Tourism Industry and feel my knowledge, experience and passion would make me an excellent member of your board.

Q16

What do you see as the challenges facing the student travel industry? What can SYTA do to meet those challenges?

We need to help rebuild consumer confidence in travel post COVID-19, whilst also raising awareness & standards of Health & safety, duty of care across the sector. SYTA could work collectively with its members to help redefine travel and help its members to answer the two questions that all parents/schools ask "Is my child safe? Are my funds safe?".

This could be done through SYTA setting global best practice minimum standards for all members whilst educating the market around these standards. By doing this SYTA would be positioned as the association for all youth travel operators to be members of as SYTA has set the benchmark of the newly rebuilt and redefined youth travel sector.

Q17

What initiatives are you passionate about that you would like to see further implemented in our industry?

Helping to reduce the Environmental impacts of travel on climate change & lowering carbon emissions whilst educating and creating awareness for travelers – care for the land, sea and nature, treading lightly and leaving no trace.

Helping to make travel accessible to everyone across all socio-economic demographics.

Helping to raise the standards of health & safety, duty of care for students travelling around the world.

Q18

Is there anything else you'd like to share with the Nominating Committee?

I am incredibly passionate about the travel industry and would welcome the opportunity to be part of SYTA as we help redefine youth travel and grow all member businesses across the globe collectively.
