

# there's MORE THAN ONE WAY TO SCORE



Linda with her client Christine, owner of Tutor Doctor

There are many families living in our neighborhood which makes me comfortable stating, with some certainty, that many of you have coached a T-Ball team, brought snacks to the soccer field, and shouted encouragement to the home football team. While there are many elements to focus on when playing a sport, one aspect that is always front and center is the score.

Apart from those youthful games, there are other ways to score our success both individually and as a community. Did you know that Sarasota County is home to 16,200 entrepreneurs and small businesses? According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, of those 16,200 companies, 96% have less than 50 employees and 61% have fewer than three employees. Small businesses clearly are the foundation and engine of our area's economic success.

One of the organizations that supports and empowers the business community is *SCORE*, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and the nation's largest network of volunteer, expert business mentors who help small businesses get off the ground, grow and achieve their goals. The Manasota Chapter, serving Sarasota and Manatee counties, has about 90 mentors and subject matter experts who partner with those seeking to launch a new business or to expand and grow an existing business. Mentors are former executives in various fields such as finance, marketing, human resources, IT and law. The positions these folks have held and the skills they are willing to share are incredibly impressive.

And perhaps the biggest selling point of seeking support from *SCORE* is that all assistance is free of charge! That's right. All the expertise of those volunteering as mentors is available at no cost.

By now you are probably wondering what types of businesses have been assisted right here in Sarasota. They run the gamut from a woman who created a nonprofit to advocate for STEM to a producer of documentaries to a young man wanting to launch a mobile food truck to a woman starting a landscaping business.

I joined *SCORE* about a year ago and am now working with four different women who are in the process of or have launched businesses to sell clothing online, offer home décor in a brick and mortar store, help the harried homeowner declutter and organize their space and provide in-person tutoring from kindergarten to senior year. In fact, this last business, Tutor Doctor, is locally owned by Christine Kraft. She may already be familiar to you as she sponsored the Easter Egg Hunt and has worked with some students at the elementary school.

I enjoy helping my clients figure out how to convert their passion and skills into a real business — one that provides services, employment, and revenue to our community. If you are interested in becoming a mentor or have a business idea that you need help developing, please contact the local chapter of *SCORE* at <https://manasota.score.org>. We are ready for you to score!