

Introducing a new way to celebrate your Tiger spirit

One of the powerful reminders of the university's unique relationship with our hometown is found in the spirit and energy on display every Friday in the restaurants, shops, and offices in Hays, America. The Tiger Gear on Friday (TGOF) tradition is an ongoing celebration of the innovative, determined, and caring people that make Tiger Nation unique. It was established as Tiger Gold on Friday in 2014 and reintroduced in 2019 as Tiger Gear on Friday. The change was made to expand the number of ways the folks could demonstrate their Tiger pride.

TGOF has always been a highly visible and unifying movement in Hays. According to Downtown Hays Development Corporation Director Sara Bloom: "We see an incredible benefit of the TGOF program. Not only does it help highlight the opportunities, shops, and restaurants downtown to those on campus, it's a way for us to show FHSU faculty, staff, and students how truly valued they are. Hays thrives because of the impact Fort Hays State has on our community. Campus life brings new momentum and excitement to Hays. Being a TGOF partner lets us say thank you in a small way for that impact and the university's contribution to our quality of place."

On a Friday morning earlier this month, at a "Chamber Chat" event at a packed Professor's Classic Sandwich Shop & More in Hays, Hays Chamber President Sarah Wasinger and the university's TGOF Steering Committee Chair Scott Cason introduced a new TGOF engagement program that is now open to TGOF community partners. The TGOF Partner-of-the-Year contest will be an annual competition where TGOF Community Partners can win a tremendous prize package. Those prizes include a TGOF-sponsored Chamber Chat for their organization; up to 20 tickets and special recognition at a 2022 Tiger football game; a photoshoot with the university mascot, Victor E. Tiger; and an extensive TGOF prize package branded merchandise.

To earn TGOF Partner-of-the-Year honors, the winning community partner will document their efforts to promote Tiger Nation spirit in any combination of the following ways:

- Tiger spirit on display in social media postings (a minimum of four)
- Members of your group "getting caught" wearing Tiger gear in town by a TGOF Community Outreach Committee member
- Purchasing TGOF or FHSU branded apparel for your organization from the [Victor E. Apparel and Gift Company](#) shop at FHSU
- Sharing images of "Tigerized" work on home spaces on social media or via a [web form](#) on the [TGOF website](#)

This tremendous energy in the community doesn't exist by accident. It is the direct result of the energetic work of the TGOF Community Outreach Sub-Committee. Led by Brittney Squire, outreach services specialist at FHSU's Forsyth Library, the group works to expand the reach and impact of TGOF. Comprising that group are several FHSU staff members, a student government leader, and representatives from TGOF's four "Premier Partners" – The Chamber in Hays, The Downtown Hays Development Corporation, the Hays Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Grow Hays.

If your organization isn't a TGOF Community Partner yet, I encourage you to [sign up today](#). It costs nothing to join, and when you do, you'll get a welcome kit and recognition on FHSU's social media channels. Some of our partners offer Friday discounts for those who enter their

stores wearing Tiger gear. Other community organizations join as “Spirit Partners” and participate in Friday celebrations simply by wearing their Tiger gear, putting up posters in their spaces, and posting photos on social media.

Hays, America is a great town and a great college town because of the caring people who chose to live and work here.

For me, and I think for many of my FHSU colleagues who didn’t grow up in Hays, I believe we are here because we found the best balance of professional opportunity, fellowship, a shared calling to serve our community, and the infectious civic pride on display in the TGOF movement. We came here and stayed because we found our home in Hays, America.

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