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CHTA Opens Applications for the Young Leaders Forum: Shaping Tomorrow's Hospitality Innovators

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (April 25, 2024) – The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is now accepting applications for the next session of its transformative Young Leaders Forum (YLF). The program, developed by former CHTA President and Barbados hotelier Affonso-Dass, focuses on developing the next generation of the Caribbean hospitality industry and empowering the region's emerging leaders.

The CHTA invites supervisors and professionals aged 25 to 40 looking to enhance their leadership skills under the guidance of industry experts and who have a passion for tourism and hospitality to apply for the Young Leaders class of 2024-2026. To be eligible, candidates must be employed by a CHTA member organization and obtain approval from their workplace to participate in the two-year program. Applications can be submitted on the [CHTA website](#) until **April 29, 2024**.

Under the guidance of Paul Collymore, Chair of the People Development Initiative and President of the Saint Lucia Hospitality and Tourism Association, along with the support of



CHTA President-Elect Sanovnik Destang of St. Lucia, who also chairs CHTA's Technology Task Force, the YLF has been instrumental in shaping the professional growth of its participants. Notable past guest speakers, including Jamaica's hoteliers Adam Stewart and Josef Forstmayr, as well as Tourism Corporation Bonaire CEO Miles Mercera, have offered invaluable insights and inspiration.

The YLF adopts a comprehensive approach to professional development, providing mentorship, training, exchange programs, and networking opportunities. It fosters a continued spirit of ambassadorship to CHTA and the wider Caribbean hospitality industry, instilling pride and dedication among participants.

Mikael Doumeng, Digital Marketing Manager of Bolongo Bay Beach Resort in the U.S. Virgin Islands, expressed gratitude for the program, stating, "Through my Young Leaders Forum Mentorship, I've transformed challenges into opportunities, enhancing my professional development and elevating guest experiences at the hotel at the same time. My mentor's encouragement and expertise have not only helped motivate my journey but also deepened my understanding of the industry."

The forum has also served as a crucial platform for networking, enabling participants to establish meaningful connections within the industry. Several YLF graduates have taken on active roles on CHTA committees, demonstrating their commitment to advancing the association's goals.

Yatsuri Marshall, recently promoted to General Manager of Bay Gardens Marina Haven, highlighted the program's role in her development, noting, "The CHTA Young Leaders Forum was a pivotal step in my professional development, offering a unique blend of networking, learning, and industry insight. Engaging with peers and leaders, I gained and contributed valuable perspectives, which sharpened my skills and helped shape my career trajectory. This forum is an essential catalyst for growth and impact in our industry."

CHTA congratulates the recent graduates of the program for their remarkable commitment and dedication:

- Alona Greenidge, Regional Executive Assistant, Delta Petroleum Caribbean Limited (St. Lucia)
- Anice O'Neil, Commercial Director, Bay Gardens Resorts (St. Lucia)
- Carey Turnquest, Operations Projector Manager, Lyford Cay Club, (The Bahamas)
- Gia Saunders, Executive Director Process Improvement, Atlantis (The Bahamas)
- Issia Thelwell, Director of Leisure Sales, Half Moon (Jamaica)
- Jamal Griffith, Sales and Marketing Consultant, Nautilus Ocean Suites and Maxwell Del Mar Hotel and Managing Director, Chattel Kitchen Bar House (Barbados)
- Judith Guerrier, Destinations Sales Manager, The Ritz-Carlton, Turks and Caicos



- Kamille Huggins, Membership Development Officer, St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce (St. Lucia)
- Karen King, General Manager, Villa Renaissance (Turks and Caicos)
- Khalil Keddo, Hotel Manager, Beaches Negril (Jamaica)
- Laudra Maurille-Willie, Assistant Human Resource Manager, The Landings Resort & Spa (St. Lucia)
- Llana Ewing, Executive Housekeeper, Grace Bay Resorts (Turks and Caicos)
- Lea Rojas, Events Coordinator and Office Manager, Sint Maarten Hospitality and Trade Association
- Lesley Taylor, Director of Revenue, Comfort Suites Paradise Island (The Bahamas)
- Merricka Dyer, Hotel Sales Manager, Grand Palladium Jamaica and Lady Hamilton Resort and Spa (Jamaica)
- Mikael Doumeng, Digital Marketing Manager, Bolongo Bay Beach Resort (U.S. Virgin Islands)
- Namene James Rodgers, HR DEI Specialist, Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (Antigua)
- Nicol Alexander, Guest relations, Bel Jou Hotel (St. Lucia)
- Nicola Roberts, Director of Travel Connections By Robernic (Jamaica)
- Snjezana Andrews, CEO/Owner, Clearwater Capital (The A-Team) (Turks and Caicos)
- S. Omega Simmons, Communications Manager, Turks & Caicos Hotel and Tourism Association and Owner/Director, SOS Media
- Tanya Williams, Revenue Manager at The Somerset on Grace Bay (Turks & Caicos)
- Yatsuri Marshall, General Manager, Bay Gardens Marina Haven (St. Lucia)

“The Young Leaders Forum serves as a cornerstone in developing the next generation of hospitality professionals. These emerging leaders are the future, embodying the promise of a dynamic and thriving industry. At CHTA, our mission goes beyond career preparation; we aim to cultivate leaders eager to take on volunteer roles, enriching our industry and local communities alike,” remarked Vanessa Ledesma, Acting CEO and Director General of CHTA.

For more information on how CHTA is shaping the future of Caribbean hospitality, visit www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com.

About the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is the Caribbean’s leading association representing the interests of national hotel and tourism associations. For more than 60 years, CHTA has been the backbone of the Caribbean hospitality industry. Working with some 1,000 hotel and allied members, and 32 National Hotel Associations, CHTA is shaping the Caribbean’s future and helping members to grow their businesses. Whether helping to navigate critical issues in sales and marketing, sustainability, legislative issues, emerging technologies, climate



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change, data and intelligence or, looking for avenues and ideas to better market and manage businesses, CHTA is helping members on issues which matter most.

For further information, visit www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com.

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