

For Immediate Release

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S. Omega Simmons, Communications Manager, Turks & Caicos Hotel and Tourism Association and Owner/Director of SOS Media, was one of the recent graduates of the Young Leaders Forum. From left are CHTA's Acting CEO and Director General Vanessa Ladesma; CHTA People Development Initiative Chair Paul Collymore; and CHTA President Nicola Madden-Greig in Miami in December.

CHTA Announces Second Cohort for Young Leaders Forum

MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica (May 27, 2024) – The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) has selected an exceptional group of candidates for the second cohort of the Young Leaders Forum (YLF), Class of 2026. These distinguished individuals hail from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, The Bahamas, and Turks and Caicos.

The selection committee, comprising respected industry professionals including Sanovnik Destang, CHTA's President-Elect and Executive Director of Bay Gardens Resorts; Paul Collymore, CEO, The Landings Resort and Spa; Laudra Maurille-Willie, Assistant Human Resource Manager, The Landings Resort and Spa; Anice O'Neil, Commercial Director, Bay Gardens Resorts; and Vanessa Ledesma, CHTA's Acting CEO and Director General, rigorously assessed each candidate to ensure the highest caliber of participants.

The program's kick-off session follows Caribbean Travel Marketplace 42, held in Montego Bay, Jamaica last week. This session will bring together the classes of 2023 and 2026, along with executives from National Hotel and Tourism Associations, to share plans to empower and equip the Young Leaders Forum participants for success.

YLF Focus Areas

The YLF program aims to equip emerging leaders with the skills and knowledge to excel in a rapidly evolving industry landscape. Key areas of focus will include:

- **Emotional Intelligence:** Understanding and managing emotions to enhance personal and professional relationships, improve decision-making, and foster a positive work environment.
- **Leading a Merging Workforce:** Addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by a diverse workforce comprising Millennials, Gen X, Gen Y, and Boomers. Strategies for effective leadership across generational lines will be a primary focus.
- **Employee Experience Enhancement:** Recognizing a positive employee experience is fundamental to service excellence. This module will explore ways to enhance engagement, satisfaction and retention among team members.
- **Hospitality Forward:** Integrating technology within the industry. This segment covers advancements and innovations shaping the

future of hospitality, ensuring participants are at the forefront of technological adaptation.

- **AI and Leadership:** Exploring the role of artificial intelligence in leadership, from decision-making processes to enhancing customer interactions and operational efficiencies.
- **Process Optimization and Digitization:** Delving into methods for streamlining operations through digital solutions, increasing efficiency, and reducing costs.
- **Digitization and Our Teams:** Developing strategies to close team skill gaps through targeted training and development programs, ensuring all team members are proficient in the latest digital tools and technologies.

Mentorship Program

In addition to these focus areas, participants will be paired with iconic leaders from the industry through a structured mentorship program. This initiative will provide invaluable insights, guidance and support from seasoned professionals, fostering a culture of continuous learning and development.

These areas, with a strong emphasis on people and technology, are designed to prepare the young leaders for the dynamic and ever-changing nature of the hospitality industry. By combining theoretical knowledge with practical application and mentorship, CHTA is committed to shaping a resilient and innovative leadership pipeline.

Class of 2026

The class of 2026 includes:

- Ketrina Abraham, Account Executive, Barefoot Holidays, St. Lucia
- Stacey-Ann Albert, Human Resource and Operations Manager, Sailrock South Caicos, Turks and Caicos



- Matthew Barnett, Rooms Care Manager, Sea Breeze Beach House, Barbados
- Joy Bernard, Learning and Development Manager, Sandals Ochi, Jamaica
- Ashley Boxill-Rivers, Corporate Services & Marketing Manager, Barefoot Holidays, St. Lucia
- Layvern Daniel, Reservations Manager, Sailrock South Caicos, Turks and Caicos
- Pauline Francis, Marketing Manager, Bay Gardens Resorts, St. Lucia
- Rhea-Michelle Isaac, Social Media and Sales Specialist, Sea Spray Cruises, St. Lucia
- Knishnal James, Reservations Manager, Bay Gardens Resorts, St. Lucia
- Jewell Johnson, Reservations & Operations Manager, Caribbean World, Jamaica
- Erin Joseph, Rooms Division Manager, Bay Gardens Hotel & Inn, St. Lucia
- Emeka Le Riche, Learning & Development Manager, Sandals Regency La Toc Golf Resort & Spa, St. Lucia
- Juliette Laureore, Customer Service Supervisor, WINAIR, St. Maarten
- Deneka Linton, Reservations/Operations Supervisor, Caribbean World, Jamaica
- Tessalee Moore, Special Projects Manager, Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association, Barbados
- Aisha Murrell, Duty Manager, Bay Gardens Hotel, St. Lucia
- Lydia Padmore, Senior Rooms Care Supervisor, The Rockley/ Ocean Hotels, Barbados
- Tanisha Rahming, Human Resources Manager, Comfort Suites Paradise Island, The Bahamas
- Chad Rowe, Food and Beverage Manager, O2 Beach Club & Spa, Barbados
- Tamar Severin, Restaurant and Bar Manager, The Landings Resort and Spa, St. Lucia
- Kerishma St. Remy, Residences Manager/Executive Assistant to the CEO, The Landings Resort and Spa, St. Lucia

- Eugenia Thomas, Guest Services Officer, The Landings Resort and Spa, St. Lucia
- Jason Todd, Bar Supervisor, Jamaica Inn, Jamaica
- Nikita Warrington, Sales & Marketing Coordinator, Ocean Hotels Group, Barbados
- Shani Watson-Holder, Facilities Manager, Mango Bay Group, Barbados
- Yanika Yarde, Spa Concierge Specialist/Supervisor, The Landings Resort & Spa, St. Lucia
- Winsia West, Food & Beverage Supervisor, Blue Waters Resort & Spa, Antigua

In addition, three CHTA team members will join the YLF: Kjerstin Carlson, Communications and Marketing Associate; Tenielle Guppy, Member and Partner Development Associate; and Latonia Knowles, Member Services Associate.

“I’m so happy to be a part of a network of Caribbean professionals in an industry that’s driving our economies to the next level. The Young Leaders Forum is an amazing space to learn new skills to make the Caribbean tourism industry even stronger than it already is,” shared Class of 2026 participant Pauline Francis, Marketing Manager at Bay Gardens Resorts in St. Lucia.

YLF is a dynamic platform designed to engage and empower emerging leaders in the Caribbean hospitality and tourism industry. By offering networking opportunities, professional development resources, and mentorship programs, CHTA aims to facilitate the advancement of young professionals and foster their contributions to the industry.

For more information about the Young Leaders Forum and CHTA’s initiatives, 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 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.