

**RECOGNITION
2008-09**

FOCUS



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Winegardner & Hammons, Inc.
HOTELS AND RESORTS

Focus is published for the associates at our properties who continually strive to exceed our customers' expectations. Thanks for your efforts and commitment.

WHI HONORS 2008 ASSOCIATES

Another award-winning year

WHI honored with Gallup® Great Workplace Award for third consecutive year

WHI has received the 2009 Gallup® Great Workplace Award, hailing it as one of the best-performing workplaces in the world. It is the third year in a row that WHI has been recognized for its extraordinary ability to create an engaged workplace culture.

"We're committed to our associates and know that, at the end of the day, each and every team member is responsible for our success," states **Kent Bruggeman**, WHI senior vice president of operations and HR. "WHI prides itself in growing associates and finding tomorrow's leadership in today's promising talent."

Companies eligible for the Great Workplace Award are those that participate in Gallup's annual Q12 associate survey. More than 1,000 associates from a company must respond to be considered. Applicants' results are then compared across a workplace research database composed of millions of work teams in more than 100 countries. A panel of workplace experts assesses the results to select the winners. WHI was one of just 23 winners for 2009.

"The hospitality industry has taken some tough hits in this economy, but our associates have pulled together and shown that hard work, dedication and teamwork can improve both the company's bottom line and workplace satisfaction," Bruggeman adds. "WHI believes in transparency with its associates. Associates are aware of the hurdles facing the hospitality industry. They know what is expected of them and appreciate that working for WHI is not just a job, it's a career."



No. 1 in GSS two years running

Marriott Pittsburgh-North has preserved its No. 1 GSS ranking among the 337 full-service Marriott Hotels and Resorts in North America. "I'm not sure if our entire team really understands the magnitude of this accomplishment," says GM **Ron Antonucci**. "Many properties in the Marriott brand are newer, fancier and in more romantic locations than Pittsburgh, Penn., but none of them are better at executing the basics than we have been over the past two years. Our hotel is clean, friendly and safe. We are the preferred employer not only in Cranberry Township but in the entire city of Pittsburgh."

Never in the history of Marriot has any hotel achieved a No. 1 GSS ranking two years in a row.



Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Eastgate Celebrates 25 years

When 25-year associates get together to reminisce about old times at **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Eastgate**, the hotel's newer associates learn one thing – a lot can happen in the hospitality business in 25 years. Friendships are formed, professional aspirations are achieved and the occasional guest experience is recalled with laughter at associate get-togethers. But there also are some major transformations that occur at a hotel and some noteworthy incidents that veteran associates recall often.

The following are some notable happenings that have generated buzz among associates over the years:

- One of the property's original restaurants was called Rudy V's where customers enjoyed tableside preparations of Steak Diane & Bananas Foster.
- The hotel's lounge was once a happening night club called L.A. Oliver's; the club was complete with two deejays and the clichéd line of patrons waiting to get in the doors on the weekend.
- The hotel once gave away a hearse as part of a Halloween bar promotion.
- George H.W. Bush gave an acceptance speech at the hotel after receiving a Fraternal Order of Police endorsement.
- Charlton Heston, Dolly Parton, Ann Murray, Alabama, Charlie Daniels, Willie Nelson, Tim McGraw and Faith Hill have all been guests at the hotel.
- The Cincinnati Bengals frequented the hotel for pre-game meals for one season in the 1980s.
- An undercover FBI agent once worked at the front desk for several days, monitoring two hotel guests suspected of being Russian spies trying to buy information from a local missile technology manufacturer that often used the hotel for its employees.

Happy anniversary, Holiday Inn-Eastgate. Congratulations on 25 exciting years.

Awards Roundup

Awards reflect commitment. It's a statement that associates hear and see often. It's a belief on which WHI has built its strong tradition of excellence. WHI is consistently recognized by its major franchise partners for hospitality excellence, as evidenced by the following compilation of 2008 honors:

Winegardner & Hammons, Inc.

- 2008 Gallup Great Workplace Award
- Marriott Partnership Circle Award
- Marriott Service Excellence Award
- Marriott Food & Beverage Excellence Award



Marriott Pittsburgh-North

- Leadership Excellence
- Sales Leadership
- Food & Beverage Excellence
- Customer Excellence Overall
- Customer Excellence Problem Experienced
- Customer Excellence Problem Resolution
- Spirit to Serve our Guests

Marriot Austin-North at Round Rock, Texas

- Spirit to Serve our Guests

Marriott Cleveland-East

- Spirit to Serve our Guests

Marriott Cincinnati-North

- Leadership Excellence
- Food & Beverage Excellence
- Customer Excellence Problem Resolution
- Overall Customer Satisfaction Best in Class (for Central Region)
- Sales Leadership

Marriott Columbus-Northwest, Ohio

- Leadership Excellence
- Sales Leadership

Marriott Suites on Sand Key, Clearwater Beach, Fla.

- Elite Recognition Excellence



Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis North

- Best Hotel Opening of the Year
- Food & Beverage Excellence



Embassy Suites Lexington, Ky.

- Top 10 Percent Total Quality Score

Embassy Suites Williamsburg, Va.

- National "Catch Me at My Best" awards (Cynthia Reid, Deloris Smith)



Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Eastgate

- Quality Excellence

Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Airport, Erlanger, Ky.

- Quality Excellence
- Torchbearer Award for Excellence
- Best of the Best in HR (Lorraine Sanz)

Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn

- Quality Excellence



Radisson Hotel Lansing, Mich.

- President's Award

'Excellent' ratings on annual METS evaluations achieved by record number of hotels

When a hotel is clean, safe and well-maintained, the associates responsible for METS (Maintenance, Energy Management, Telecommunications and Safety) often go unnoticed. Yet, it is these very important necessities that lay the groundwork for providing guests with first-class, safe and hassle-free experiences and providing associates with a safe and satisfying work environment.

In 2005, WHI began honoring hotels receiving "excellent" ratings on their METS Property-Performance Evaluations and METS Life-Safety Evaluations. Just three properties achieved "excellent" ratings on both METS evaluations in 2005. In 2008, WHI honored 11 hotels for attaining dual scores of 90 percent or higher.

METS Property-Performance Evaluation

In 2008, WHI issued a challenge to its managers – to go forward one step at a time in defining excellence 365 days a year by utilizing the METS tools of education, procedures, specifications, statistics and property evaluations. Managers were encouraged to commit to weekly property walks; to inspect what is expected. **Jerry Yates**, VP of product management, reports that the challenge was met, and the results were remarkable.

"Fifty-six percent of WHI hotels received 'excellent' ratings this past year on their Property-Performance Evaluations," Yates comments. "The more than 20 percent improvement over 2007 is evidence that METS is being fully integrated into the operation of every department. Delivering excellence is truly what METS is all about."

METS Life-Safety Evaluation

"When it comes to guest and associate safety, there is no room for compromise," says **Bob Sears**, director of life-safety. WHI sets the standard for hotel safety practices and continues to raise the bar. In fact, twenty properties achieved "excellent" ratings on their Life-Safety Evaluations in 2008.

Safety is a daily practice for every associate at a WHI-managed property. Life-safety training for associates begins with orientation and is reinforced regularly through the METS program and PULSE (People Utilizing Life/Safety and Energy) Committee. Sears adds: "With approximately 500 items of consideration for this evaluation, to achieve these extraordinary results associates must commit to living the WHI METS safety philosophy and work as a team."



Jerry Yates



Bob Sears

The following properties received "excellent" ratings on both the METS Property-Performance Evaluation and the METS Life-Safety Evaluation:

- Ohio University Inn, Athens
- Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Eastgate
- Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Airport
- Marriott Cincinnati-Airport
- Marriott Cincinnati-North
- Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Riverfront
- Marriott Columbus-Northwest
- Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport
- Radisson Hotel Lansing
- Marriott Pittsburgh-North
- Quality Suites San Luis Obispo

The following properties received "excellent" ratings on only the METS Property-Performance Evaluation:

- Marriott Chicago-Northwest
- Marriott Cleveland-East
- Marriott Hartford/Windsor Airport

The following properties received "excellent" ratings on only the METS Life-Safety Evaluation:

- Marriott Austin-North at Round Rock
- Marriott Birmingham
- DoubleTree Guest Suites Cincinnati
- Marriott Suites on Sand Key, Clearwater Beach
- Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn
- Homewood Suites Dayton Fairborn
- DoubleTree Hotel Dearborn
- Embassy Suites Lexington
- Embassy Suites Williamsburg



QUALITY ASSURANCE: Achieving 'excellent' ratings

A team effort

"In order to maintain an 'excellent' rating on QA reviews throughout the entire calendar year, a team effort is required," explains **Dennis Flannigan**, director of WHI's quality assurance department. During 2008, three WHI-managed hotels were able to reach that prestigious goal of being "excellent" throughout the year. Teamwork abounded at the following hotels in attaining the "excellent" level for 2008:

- Marriott Cincinnati-North
- Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Eastgate
- DoubleTree Guest Suites Cincinnati

In addition, two locations, **Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast** and **Marriott Pittsburgh-North**, are designated as "honorable mention" on the QA honor roll due to their consistently high results on QA reviews.

Keys to achieving excellence

Top performers at the high-achieving hotels were asked to share their keys to success. "Having everyone work together as a team and not letting issues go unresolved are keys," states **Jackie Horak**, bookkeeper at **Marriott Cincinnati-North**. Horak adds that having supervisors maintain their areas and encouraging communication among all departments, along with having good leadership in each department, allow for "excellent" results. "At times, even long-term associates need reminders and providing feedback on a timely basis helps maintain the high standards."

At **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Eastgate**, **Darla Louderback**, bookkeeper, reinforces Horak's opinion and advises, "The key to our success at Eastgate is daily and consistent follow up. Every day, I issue a QA Deficiency Log for any item that is not in keeping with WHI policy. It takes time to make and distribute copies, provide training and follow up with associates, but it is the best tool I have found to be successful. We also review any QA deficiencies at our weekly staff meetings to keep everyone informed. This allows every manager to keep up on problems or opportunities."

Across town at **DoubleTree Guest Suites Cincinnati**,



Dennis Flannigan



Robert Clark

bookkeeper **Robert Clark** indicates that "avoiding repeat exceptions is a significant factor to achieving high scores on QA reviews." Clark reviews his most recent QA twice a month, which keeps him familiar with the necessary daily requirements in addition to outlining a specific routine with timeframes. Procedures for which compliance has proved most difficult are regularly discussed at staff meetings at the DoubleTree. Clark adds, "I take notes the whole time I am being audited."

Success is a habit

All three 2008 "excellent" achievers were three of the six hotels that accomplished the same feat last year. "Success is obviously a habit for our top-performing hotels on QA reviews, as two of our three "honorable mention" hotels from 2007 also have repeated for 2008," Flannigan notes.

Marriott Pittsburgh-North and **Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast** are this year's QA honor roll listees for their effective implementation of WHI standards and procedures. Helpful hints from the honor roll members echo the sentiments of our "excellent" locations as **Brenda Wisniewski**, bookkeeper at **Marriott Pittsburgh-North**, states that good results on QA reviews "are a whole hotel effort."



David Lanterman

David Lanterman, general manager of **Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast**, cited the efforts of bookkeeper **Debbie Harding** as being one of the keys to the hotel's success on QA reviews. Lanterman states, "Debbie is a problem solver, not a problem identifier. She looks at each and every challenge and focuses on the solution. Debbie has tremendous success from the front desk to bookkeeping. Considering the current business climate, we can only have winners on our management team. Regardless of the challenge, Debbie remains flexible and simply gets the job done. She is a winner."

Congratulations to all five of our top-performing hotels on 2008 QA reviews!



Brenda Wisniewski



Debbie Harding

Best of the best ... again



Recognized at the InterContinental Hotel Group annual conference, **Lorraine Sanz** was named the 2008 Best of the Best Human Resources Director of the Year, an honor she also earned in 2005. Sanz has been a WHI associate for 12 years. She has been a stabilizing force on the management team at

Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Airport, Erlanger, Ky., and a motivational force for the hotel through both peak business periods and times of business decline. On any given day, Sanz can be found assisting other departments, whether it means bussing tables during a rush or assisting in laundry following a night when the hotel has picked up 150 rooms of distressed airline passengers.

Sanz is an asset to not only the hotel but to all of WHI, as echoed by chairman **Erik Kamford** in a congratulatory letter: "I am very proud of your accomplishments and certainly pleased to have you as a member of our team."

The 75 Percent Club

The importance of saving for the future takes on added importance during an economic downturn. Associates value the long-term benefits of participating in the 401(k) retirement plan. Many save up to 6 percent of their pay in the 401(k) plan to take full advantage of the employer's matching "free money."

As of January 1, 2009, nine hotels had participation rates of 75 percent or more among eligible associates.

- 88% Marriott Cleveland-East
- 88% Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Riverfront
- 82% Marriott Pittsburgh-North
- 81% Marriott Hartford/Windsor Airport
- 80% Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Eastgate
- 80% Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn
- 77% Marriott Columbus-Airport
- 77% Embassy Suites Williamsburg
- 75% Embassy Suites Lexington



*Associates eligible for the 401(k) retirement plan are at least 21 years old and must complete 500 hours of service within a period of six months. Plan participation begins on the January 1 or the July 1 date immediately following satisfaction of these conditions. © WHI 2009

Sales leaders for 2008

WHI annually recognizes and thanks its top-ranked sales leaders who have played a key role in building business at its hotels. The top performers in two sales categories are recognized with membership into the Platinum Club and the Gold Club. Listed in order of their annual year-end rankings for 2008, sales account managers were selected based on their percent achievement of personal annual goals, and catering and sales account managers were selected based on their hotel's highest revenues per square foot of meeting space. All have been in their positions for more than one year.

TOP-RANKING PLATINUM CLUB MEMBERS

SALES ACCOUNT MANAGERS

Tricia Caron, Marriott Hartford/Windsor Airport
Jeanne Hatcher, Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport
Julie Faver, Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport
Kristina Davis, Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn
Pat King, Marriott Columbus-Northwest



#1 Tricia Caron

CATERING & SALES ACCOUNT MANAGERS

Diane Kelley, DoubleTree Guest Suites Cincinnati
Debra DeVito, Marriott Suites on Sand Key, Clearwater Beach
Donna Siegel, Marriott Suites on Sand Key, Clearwater Beach
Renee Lutz, Marriott Pittsburgh-North
Karen Urso, Marriot Pittsburgh-North



#1 Dianne Kelley

GOLD CLUB MEMBERS

SALES ACCOUNT MANAGERS

Toni Heilman, Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast
Candace Masengale, Embassy Suites Williamsburg
Tracy Gaerke, Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Eastgate
Jackie Gillespie, Marriott Pittsburgh-North
Clifford Williams, Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Airport

CATERING & SALES ACCOUNT MANAGERS

Kate Venn, Radisson Hotel Lansing
Kelly Bryant, Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast
Wendy Blossom, Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport
Ruby Rios, Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport
Meghan Zlatic, Marriott Cincinnati-North
Megan Spiegla, Marriott Cincinnati-North

OTHER RECOGNITION

ROOKIES OF THE YEAR

WHI also is giving special recognition to four sales account managers who have been in their positions for less than one year and have shown significant achievement in that time.

Melinda Wallis, DoubleTree Hotel Dearborn
Melissa Hendrix, Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Airport
Colby Harvey, Marriott Hartford/Windsor Airport
Matt Pauley, Homewood Suites Dayton/Fairborn

GM & AGM PROMOTIONS

from within WHI

Jennifer Porter has assumed the responsibilities of GM at the **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Eastgate**. "Jennifer joined our team in 2006 as an AGM at the **Marriott Austin-North at Round Rock, Texas**," states **Dave Gordon**, VP-HR. "She was instrumental in producing guest service scores at the top of the brand in Austin."



Jennifer Porter (left) and Kelly Marquart

Porter's most recent position as AGM of the newly-opened **Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North** had her playing a key role in winning awards for Best New Opening and Food & Beverage Excellence for the hotel. "Jennifer produced outstanding results in all facets of the operation in both of her previous assignments," Gordon says.

Porter holds a bachelor's degree in business management from Kent State.

Kelly Marquart has been promoted to AGM at the **Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio**. "After serving as a management intern at the **Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast**, Kelly joined our team in 2007 as a management trainee," states **Dave Gordon**, VP-HR. "Kelly really got some great experience under her belt in her most recent role as guest service supervisor during the opening of the **Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North**. She led the hotel to a No. 4 rating in guest service satisfaction, and a No. 1 rating in arrival experience. Kelly also had a hand in helping the hotel achieve the Best New Opening Award from Marriott," Gordon continues.

Marquart graduated from Purdue University in 2007 with a degree in hospitality and tourism management.

PROMOTIONS

from within WHI

WHI provides opportunities for qualified individuals to advance within the company. *Focus* correspondents at the following properties reported these promotions that were announced since the publication of the last newsletter. Congratulations to all associates who are promoted due to their education, experience and dedication.

CULINARY

Christopher Pearson has been promoted to sous-chef at **Marriott Chicago-Northwest**. AOY at the hotel in 2007, Pearson caters to guests and is always willing to prepare special meals for dietary or medical needs. "Chris goes above and beyond to ensure guests who come to our restaurant enjoy their experiences with us," states **Marti Ramos-Plumeri**, HR manager. "He is a great member on our team."



Christopher Pearson



Megan Carter



Michael Berkowitz



Jamie Kirkman

DINING ROOM

Michael Berkowitz has been promoted to p.m. supervisor at **Marriott Cleveland-East's River City Grille**. A recent graduate of Akron University, Berkowitz has worked in the culinary department of the hotel since 2006. "During his two years at the hotel, Michael has demonstrated his leadership potential and commitment to the WHI Mission Statement and Service Pledge," says HR manager **Michael Bosch**.



Fran Stovicek



Dana Moorner



Rebecca Warfel



Laura Lambert

FRONTDESK

Fran Stovicek is a new guest service supervisor at **Ohio University Inn & Conference Center, Athens, Ohio**. She joined the hotel as a guest service representative in 2006 while attending Ohio University. Stovicek received a B.A. in hospitality in June 2008. "Fran's education, experience and focus on customer service have made her a great addition to the hotel's supervisory team," says **Beth Schelling**, HR manager.

Rebecca Warfel is a new guest service supervisor at **Marriott Chicago-Northwest**. Formerly a bookkeeping clerk, Warfel became familiar with the front desk systems and strove to expand her experience in the hospitality field. "Rebecca challenges herself to make a guest's experience flawless," says HR manager **Marti Ramos-Plumeri**. "She is open to change and has implemented great ideas that have helped with our overall guest satisfaction scores."

Adam St. Amour and **Megan Carter** have been promoted to guest service supervisors at **Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North**. Formerly a night auditor, St. Amour



Adam St. Amour



Kristen Paul

joined WHI for the preopening of the hotel. He states that WHI's Mission Statement is in line with that of a top-notch management company. He also notes that while working for multiple hotels in college, none came close to the "customer-centric ideal for which WHI hotels are known." St. Amour holds a bachelor's degree from Ball State University.

Megan Carter advances to guest service supervisor from the position of guest service representative at **Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North**. Carter states that she knew since her first position at a hotel that she wanted to make the hospitality business her career. "I am grateful for the opportunity to work at the Renaissance and to work for a company that believes in my

development as much as I do," Carter says. She holds a bachelor's degree in marketing from Anderson University.

Jamie Kirkman has been promoted to group reservations coordinator from the position of guest service representative at **Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North**. Kirkman holds a bachelor's degree from Indiana University. He states, "I'm excited to have the opportunity to further my leadership skills and have a strong impact on the success of the Renaissance."

Former at-your-service agent **Dana Moorner** advances to group rooms coordinator at **Marriott Birmingham, Ala.** Moorner is pursuing a bachelor's degree in business management and is often found using her lunch break to complete homework assignments. "Dana is a very dedicated associate as she juggles the responsibilities of having a full-time job with being a student, wife and mother of three," says **Karen Jacob**, HR director.

HOUSEKEEPING

Laura Lambert advances to executive housekeeper at **Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast** from the position of assistant executive housekeeper at **Marriott Cincinnati-North**. A guest who recently held her wedding reception at the latter hotel felt compelled to send a letter, praising Lambert's dedication. She wrote: "This hotel has the best customer service I've ever experienced. We showed up unannounced on a Sunday afternoon ... Laura was so kind to stop what she was doing and give us a tour of the hotel. I knew if your hotel had other people working there that were anything like Laura, my wedding would be a success, and it was."

Kristen Paul has been promoted to assistant executive housekeeper at **Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast**. "Kristen excels at all points of our Mission Statement," says **Lisa Compton-Martin**, HR director. "Her interaction with the guests, as well as her commitment to associates and their training, has improved our GSS scores. She is using her skills to help effect change in the housekeeping department."

Keeping Focused on the Long Term Pays Off

Focus on the long-term benefits of your 401(k) retirement plan during market downturns and upswings.

By June 5, 2009, talk with your GM or HR manager about the role of the 401(k) retirement plan in your financial future.

Benefits of your 401(k) retirement plan include:

Employer's Matching Money

Your employer provides participating associates* with matching "free money" -- for every \$1 you save in the 401(k) plan, your employer adds another 50¢ up to 6 percent of your pay. Are you taking full advantage of your employer's money?

Valuable Tax Benefits

You invest pre-tax dollars in your 401(k) plan. Any investment gains compound free of taxes until withdrawal. Check to see if you are eligible for the Saver's Credit that reduces your federal income tax.

Convenience and Ease of Contribution

In today's tough economy, everyone knows the importance of saving. Automatic payroll deductions into your 401(k) plan assure that you save on a regular basis.



*Eligible employees. An associate must have completed 90 hours of employment within a 60-day period of hire and be at least 21 years old. Participation in the 401(k) plan begins on the January 1 or July 1 date immediately thereafter. © 2008



WHI Corporate Milestone Associates. Back row, from left: John Slaboch, Isaac Curtis, Kelly Burkett, Mark Vermilion, Karen Svec, Greg Horeth. Front row, from left: Marsha Nottingham, Debbie Hanks, Jerry Yates, Steve Duvelius.

Mission Statement and METS go hand-in-hand

Jerry Yates, VP of product management at WHI Corporate Office, was hired by WHI in 1978 to help control energy costs at the properties and began developing the METS program after noticing trends in property maintenance that resulted in increased energy costs. "The commitment to METS starts with company leadership and its success can be seen at any of our managed properties," Yates shares. "It's something that sets us apart from all other hotel management companies."



Jerry Yates

Bob Sears, director of life-safety, states, "Jerry's honesty, hard work and dedication to WHI and the company Mission Statement are an inspiration." Yates adds, "I'm proud of the company and associates with whom I've worked for the past 30 years."

Family brings 25-year associate home, to WHI

Marsha Nottingham, cash management at WHI Corporate Office, recalls what brought her back to Cincinnati 25 years ago. "My husband and I moved back to Cincinnati to be close to our families. I was interested in WHI and liked that it allowed my husband and I to commute together." Nottingham enjoys that her position offers variety in that each day can bring something new. Corporate accounting supervisor **Sandi Willinger** notes that Nottingham is very company-oriented and always up for a challenge. "Marsha handles the curveballs thrown her way. She's a dedicated associate and a team player."



Marsha Nottingham

Nottingham enjoys cross stitch, reading and watching college basketball. A fan of Hallmark ornaments, her collection nears 600. Nottingham has three children, the youngest of which is still in college at the University of Cincinnati. Her husband also celebrated 25 years with his company in 2008. The couple will celebrate its 33rd wedding anniversary in June.

Seasoned professional

Since taking over as maintenance supervisor at **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Airport, Erlanger, Ky.** in 1993, **Ed Backscheider** has achieved "excellent" ratings on the hotel's METS reviews. Joining the team in 1983, Backscheider has worked in many WHI-managed properties around the Cincinnati area. He attributes his successful career to the awesome training he received from the company.



Ed Backscheider

Platinum Club regular

Diane Kelley, sales and catering manager, attended a WHI property job fair 25 years ago and hasn't looked back. Kelley started as a banquet server and moved into a banquet manager position before settling in her current role at **DoubleTree Guest Suites Cincinnati**. She has been a Platinum Club member for outstanding sales performance seven years running. Kelley states that she likes the company's open communication and feels that at every point in her career her superiors and the corporate office have always been very approachable.



Diane Kelley

Puts guests' needs first

Pam Willoughby, sales coordinator, is celebrating 25 years with **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Eastgate**. She has been recognized as associate of the month multiple times and does her best to help out wherever she is needed to make sure guests are taken care of. Willoughby recalls one instance when guests visiting from the United Kingdom entered the sales office needing several pages of information typed. Although she was packed to leave for the day, Willoughby impressed the guests by staying late and typing their materials.



Pam Willoughby

Original hire

Banquet server **Betty McClain** has been with **Marriott Columbus-Airport, Ohio** since day one. The 20-year associate has twice been chosen associate of the month. "I've enjoyed the groups I have worked with through the years," McClain says. "I have always followed the basics to give the best service possible every time."



Betty McClain

Moved up the ladder

Fifteen-year associate **Phyllis Wayland** started at **Marriott Columbus-Airport, Ohio** as an a.m. dining room server. She advanced to bell captain before settling in as a.m. dining room supervisor 13 years ago. She has successfully built a regular base of customers and enjoys being able to grow relationships. The two-time supervisor of the quarter notes that she has a great staff who helps her to be successful. HR director **Brett Caron** adds, "Phyllis is the hotel cheerleader and prides herself in the relationships she has with peers and customers."



Phyllis Wayland

Develops professionally

Guest service manager **Vikki Wrede** has grown with WHI in her 15 years at **Marriott Suites on Sand Key, Clearwater Beach, Fla.** Wrede is actively involved in the industry's professional community as a certified hospitality supervisor, certified concierge, board member for Women in Tourism, board member and president of the Bay Area Concierge Association, and member of Les Clefs d' Or. Although busy maintaining professional relationships, Wrede still proudly focuses on guests.



Vikki Wrede

Communication is key

Sheryl Artin, laundry attendant at **Marriott Columbus-Northwest, Ohio**, understands the needs of all departments, which allows her to better service guests' needs. "I not only work on the rooms' linen, I also make sure that the banquet department has the linen it needs, and that takes communication," Artin says.



Sheryl Artin

2008 MILESTONE YEARS OF SERVICE

Ohio University Inn & Conference Center, Athens, Ohio			Marriott Chicago-Northwest			Marriott Cincinnati-North		
Beth Birchfield	a.m. dining room server	5	Miguel Hernandez	kitchen utility	5	Rebecca Cook	a.m. dining room server	5
Marriott Austin-North at Round Rock, Texas			Maria Herrera	laundry attendant	5	Jennifer Doerr	night auditor	5
Paula Conley	banquet server	5	Marta Martinez	room attendant	5	Tambra Helton	sales account manager	5
Racquel Harris	a.m. dining room server	5	Malgorzata Ostasz	a.m. dining room server	5	Maria Hernandez	laundry attendant	5
Leslie Keown	maintenance technician	5	Patrick Ullrich	bookkeeper	5	Robert Johnson	bellperson/van driver	5
Albert Mendoza	banquet bartender	5	Rebecca Warfel	guest service supervisor p.m.	5	Tamara Lott	sales secretary	5
Martha Rardin	bartender - lounge	5	Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Airport, Erlanger, Ky.			Allaina McCray	guest service representative	5
Danny Rice	maintenance technician	5	Edward Backscheider	maintenance technician	25	Meghan Zlatic	catering & sales account mgr.	5
Marriott Birmingham, Ala.			Timothy Edmondson	maintenance technician	15	Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast		
Shannon Hard	catering & sales account mgr.	5	Steve Black	cook	5	Mark Baur	laundry attendant	10
Stephen Kobia	bartender - lounge	5	Mary Colen	room attendant	5	Erica Wunnenberg	guest service representative	10
Lindsey Mason	catering & sales account mgr.	5	Connie Darpel	banquet server	5	Willie Boswell	laundry attendant	5
Denise Schneider	a.m. dining room server	5	Nora Diaz	room attendant	5	Darlene Eubanks	room attendant	5
WHI Corporate Office, Cincinnati			Nadya Zlatanova	room attendant	5	Justin Peterson	banquet set-up	5
John Slaboch	sr. vice president	30	Marriott Cincinnati-Airport, Hebron, Ky.			Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Riverfront, Covington, Ky.		
Jerry Yates	vice president	30	Dee Corbin	room attendant	5	Carissa Steffen	guest service supervisor a.m.	5
Isaac Curtis	national sales director	25	David Smith	general manager	5	Marriott Cleveland-East		
Marsha Nottingham	cash management	25	Ryan Wehrman	room attendant	5	Richard Duah	cook	5
Karen Svec	purchasing	20	Doubletree Guest Suites Cincinnati			Marriott Columbus-Airport, Ohio		
Sheri Glazier-Bessler	product management	15	Diane Kelley	catering & sales account mgr.	25	Betty McClain	banquet server	20
Kelly Burkett	general accounting	5	Donna Seeley	sales account manager	5	Phyllis Wayland	a.m. dining room supervisor	15
Steve Duvelius	product management	5	Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Eastgate			Dennis Gullick	maintenance technician	10
Debbie Hanks	general accounting	5	Roxanne Brusman	banquet server	25	Harold Larson	night auditor	10
Greg Horeth	regional vice president	5	Carol Keller	bartender - lounge	25	Harrison Page	banquet server	10
Mark Vermilion	product management	5	Karen Lindsey	executive housekeeper	25	Aamina Abdi	room attendant	5
Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North			Darla Louderback	bookkeeper	25	Gretchen Conlon	bartender - lounge	5
Paul O'Connor	general manager	10	Vina Marks	banquet server	25	Sanford Frazier	banquet server	5
Meredith Wilde	sous chef	5	Debbie Smith	catering & sales account mgr.	25	Dana Ritchey	banquet server	5
Justin Winkler	cook	5	Pam Willoughby	sales secretary	25	Faith Stauch	a.m. greeter/seater/cashier	5
			Joanie Bolling	banquet server	10			
			Joan Neff	banquet server	10			
			Nancy Neff	banquet server	10			
			Diane Schneider	room attendant	5			

Sales duo celebrates 10 years



Amy Stamper (left) and Emilie Hall

10 Amy Stamper, catering and sales account manager, and Emilie Hall, sales manager, are celebrating 10 years at Embassy Suites Lexington, Ky. Stamper has attained the Platinum Club honor five times. "I believe the one thing at which I excel is working with brides and their weddings," Stamper says. "I love doing weddings; getting to know the families and sharing such an important day with them is so gratifying. Seeing the satisfaction of a 'job well done' on the faces of the families makes my job the best."

Hall excels at interacting with customers. She brought a top account with her to the hotel and recently signed a contract for its ninth convention. One way she lives the WHI Mission Statement is by always treating customers with the utmost respect and courtesy to ensure 100 percent satisfaction.

Likes what he does

Maintenance tech **Dennis Gullick** enjoys coming to work every day and taking care of guests at **Marriott Columbus-Airport, Ohio**. "I have enjoyed having the opportunity to move up in the department," Gullick says. He has been named associate of the month twice in his tenure.



Dennis Gullick

Recognized by guests

Rafael Perez, banquet server at **Marriot Suites on Sand Key, Clearwater Beach, Fla.**, routinely goes the extra mile. One group of guests staying at the hotel sent a plaque to Perez's home address to thank him for his amazing work. Another VIP group, staying at the hotel for an extended period, recognized Perez for his outstanding work by awarding him a key, a symbol of his excellent customer service skills. Perez also has been recognized by the hotel and has been honored as associate of the month.



Rafael Perez

All-around asset

Denise Swihart, banquet server at **Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio**, has not only worked in all capacities of the banquet department, she also has assisted in other departments of the hotel. Over the past 10 years, Swihart has been named associate of the month seven times and associate of the year three times. Banquet manager **Steve Besen** shares: "Denise is very dependable; she is the backbone of the department. She knows what it takes to make both her guests and coworkers happy."



Denise Swihart

Turns the tables

Ten-year associate **Donna Walz**, a.m. supervisor of McKenna's at **Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio**, knows how to satisfy customers. Walz was faced with a challenging situation some years ago when an unhappy customer was very vocal about his dissatisfaction. She listened to his



Donna Walz

complaints and fixed the issues to his liking. Five years later, this customer still returns to see Walz at least three times a month. Walz's tip: "Treat everyone that comes through the doors the way you would want to be treated."

Award-winning service

Carissa Steffen, guest service supervisor at **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Riverfront, Covington, Ky.**, has proven to be a great asset with excellent customer service skills in her five years with WHI. Steffen recently was recognized by the Northern Kentucky Convention and Visitors Bureau with the "Bureau Hero" award for going above and beyond to ensure guest satisfaction.



Carissa Steffen

Makes difficult time easier

5 Five-year associate **Audra Davis**, guest service representative at **Marriott Hartford/Windsor Airport, Conn.**, has worked all over the hotel and is a former associate of the year. Davis recalls a recent situation in which a couple in town for a funeral had inadvertently made reservations at another property. Davis blocked rooms on the same floor for the couple and its extended family and canceled all of their existing reservations at nearby hotels. She also helped the family with sightseeing arrangements and dinner reservations, making the family's difficult time a little less overwhelming.



Audra Davis

Still serving at 2 a.m.

Kendra Higginbotham, group coordinator at **Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport-South**, says that she loves her job and embraces the challenges that she faces daily. One such challenge had her tracking down a

laptop charger for a guest at 2 a.m. "These challenges have helped me to grow not only as a person, they also have helped me to become a better and more engaged associate," says Higginbotham.



Kendra Higginbotham

'Slick' operator

Dee Corbin, room attendant, is efficient to the effect that we call her 'slick,'" states **Ruth Krohman**, executive housekeeper. "Dee gets it done and her speed is admired." Corbin strives for perfection and completes a mental checklist when preparing rooms. Guests have recognized Corbin for returning items left behind. Corbin states that one way she lives the Mission Statement is by not forgetting anything in the rooms.



Dee Corbin

Top server

Beth Birchfield, a.m. server at **Cutler's at Ohio University Inn & Conference Center, Athens, Ohio**, does her best to make sure customers are happy with her service. She adheres to the basics by always trying to up sell customers whenever possible. Birchfield is especially proud of receiving the Outstanding Server award for Athens County, an honor voted on by the OU Inn and other restaurants and hotels in Athens.



Beth Birchfield

Marriott Columbus-Northwest, Ohio		
Adelina Allen	banquet server	10
Sheryl Artin	laundry attendant	10
Visnja Banjanin	banquet server	10
Matthew Farrimond	cook	10
Tana Gilmore	bookkeeper	10
Kathleen Harris	banquet bartender	10
Shannon Staley-Theriaux	banquet manager	10
Maria Cardoso	room attendant	5
Michael Charlton	in-room dining associate	5
Almaz Mohamed	lobby/public-space attendant	5
Hiram Santiago	housekeeping utility	5

Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport-South		
Maria Arroyo	room attendant	5
Cynthia Barrera	reservationist	5
Kendra Higginbotham	group coordinator	5
Terry Hogg	maintenance supervisor	5
Javier Torres	banquet set-up	5
Arthur Valadez	cook	5

Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio		
Denise Swihart	banquet server	10
Donna Walz	a.m. dining room supervisor	10
Beverly Guillen	a.m. dining room server	5
Robert Tweddle	bartender - lounge	5

Doubletree Hotel Dearborn, Mich.		
Cathy Balazy	banquet server	20
Sandra Deanna	human resources manager	20
Robin Anderson	laundry attendant	10
Linda Benton	room attendant	10
Gerald Ponce	banquet server	10
Fred Young	kitchen utility	5
Mary Young	banquet server	5

Marriott Hartford/Windsor Airport, Conn.		
Michelle Calo	room service server	5
Johanna Cintron	room attendant	5
Audra Davis	guest service representative	5
Noel Gessay	banquet bartender	5
Miguel Gonzalez	bellperson/van driver	5
Karen Greene	a.m. dining room server	5
Enid Leon	laundry attendant	5
Maria Morales	inspectress	5
Theresa Quarrie-Gourlay	banquet server	5
Charles Travali	banquet server	5

Radisson Hotel Lansing, Mich.		
Annette Smith	lobby/public-space attendant	20
Clarissa Cooper	guest service supervisor a.m.	15
Gordana Radojic	banquet server	10
Duwayna Downey	a.m. dining room supervisor	5
Cara Carr	bartender - lounge	5
Daniel Hall	bookkeeper	5
Amin Nawai	kitchen utility	5

Embassy Suites Lexington, Ky.		
Emilie Hall	sales account manager	10
Amy Stamper	catering & sales account mgr.	10
Elizabeth Bailey	asst. executive housekeeper	5
Christine Bunton	comp. breakfast utility	5
Elgin Downey	comp. breakfast cook	5
Jiman Hilligas	banquet server	5
Caroline Kimathi	sales secretary	5
Delneesa Morgan	inspectress	5
Kristopher Rawlings	cook	5
Elizabeth Richardson	executive housekeeper	5
Thomas Shields	sous chef	5

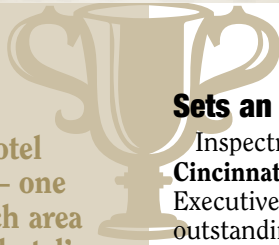
Quality Suites San Luis Obispo, Calif.		
Maria Barrientos	room attendant	20
Jon Schaff	maintenance supervisor	15
Natividad "J.R." Jaramillo Jr.	maintenance technician	5

Marriott Suites on Sand Key, Clearwater Beach, Fla.		
Victoria Wrede	guest service manager	15
Rafael Perez	banquet server	10
Brannon Wheeler	java services	5
Luisa Zamora	laundry attendant	5

Marriott Pittsburgh-North		
Rick Antestenis	asst. general manager	10
Ronald Antonucci	general manager	5
Sandra Beam	lobby/public-space attendant	5
Michael Caudill	maintenance technician	5
Victor Cruz	sales account manager	5
Robert Dennis	cook's helper	5
Clarence Ford	bartender - lounge	5
Dawn Greygor	p.m. dining room server	5
Kirk Hefren	maintenance technician	5
Janice Hogan	lobby/public-space attendant	5
Joseph Iacovone	banquet set-up	5
Ruth Jordan	asst. executive housekeeper	5
Kathleen Klingenberg	concierge	5
Sharon Mackiewicz	group revenue manager	5
Peiman Mehri	guest service representative	5
Ronda Minnich	reservationist	5
Jill Rockwell	sales account manager	5
Tammy Rooney	cook	5
Roselle Saxon	concierge	5
Michael Schlutz	human resources manager	5
Perry Sidwell	maintenance technician	5
Kimberly Sikora	sales secretary	5
Karen Urso	catering & sales account mgr.	5
Maureen Veverka	banquet server	5
Patricia Willgruber	asst. executive housekeeper	5
Brenda Wisniewski	bookkeeper	5
Shannon Zoelle	a.m. dining room server	5

Embassy Suites Williamsburg, Va.		
Michael Jones	maintenance technician	5

2008 ASSOCIATES OF THE YEAR

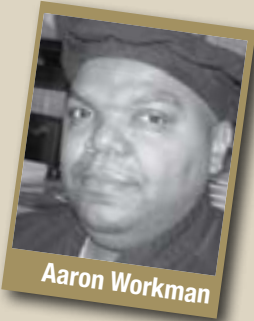


Champions embrace leadership

In keeping with the brand's CARE program, DoubleTree Hotel Dearborn, Mich., recognizes monthly two CARE Champions – one from rooms and one from food & beverage. The top from each area are then honored as the CARE Champions of the Year at the hotel's annual awards event.

Two-time honoree

Line cook and 23-year associate, **Aaron Workman** aims to please both customers and associates when preparing their meals. Workman's positive attitude and sense of teamwork are two reasons he was honored as Champion of the Year for the second straight year. "Aaron is a silent leader in the kitchen, assisting the executive chef in the training of new hires," states **Sandy Deanna**, HR manager. "He takes them under his wing and mentors them as they hone their culinary skills." Workman was humbled and speechless when he learned he had won the award again and states, "I feel a great sense of pride when someone comes back and thanks me for their meal. That really makes my day!"



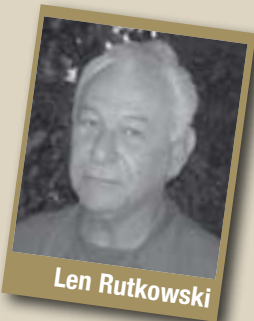
Aaron Workman

'Our house' philosophy in action

"**Len Rutkowski**, maintenance technician, is a leader and a huge asset to the maintenance supervisor, especially during management changes," Deanna states. "He has a calm demeanor and accepts any task that he is asked to do."

"I live the Mission Statement by embracing the "Our House Philosophy" of the METS program, and I try to instill the importance of that philosophy in the associates," Rutkowski explains. "I call them out when I see them banging into the woodwork with carts or not taking care of our equipment ... but in a nice way."

"Both Len and Aaron are committed Winegardner & Hammons associates who get great satisfaction from helping guests and co-workers alike," praises GM **Keith Shopnick**. "These two associates embrace the WHI culture and have become a valuable wealth of knowledge that we all rely on. They are the most deserving of the annual CARE Champion award, and I appreciate all that they do for us each and every day."



Len Rutkowski



Jenise Rivello, GM Michael Cooney and Bruce Fischer



Whole house is covered

As the supervisors and managers at the **Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio** were voting on the 2008 associate of the year, two associates emerged as winners ... one from the back of the house and one from the front of the house. **Michael Cooney**, GM, thought the tie outcome was very appropriate as two deserving associates were selected for excelling at the basics in their vastly different roles.

Jenise Rivello ensures guests receive first-class service in her position as bartender. She treats every guest with the kind of service that makes them want to return. Supervisor **Jonathan Anderson** states, "Jenise is one tough cookie. She stays very positive with both guests and associates on a daily basis. She turns her guests into regulars." Rivello credits her high customer satisfaction to her ability to just be herself.

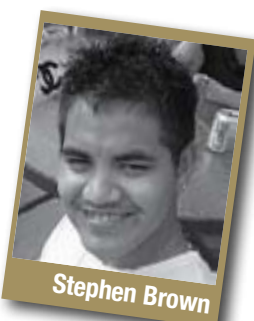
While Rivello excels at customer service, her fellow AOY, **Bruce Fischer**, kitchen utility, keeps things running smoothly behind the scenes. Chef **Marc Boroff** commends Fischer's work ethic and states that he is an asset to not only his department but the entire hotel. "Bruce will help out whenever and wherever needed, and, most importantly, he is dependable. Bruce will work split shifts and do whatever it takes to ensure the kitchen has the proper coverage," Boroff states. Fischer states that he lives the WHI Mission Statement by helping where he is needed and always remaining calm. "You cannot let things overwhelm you," he says.

MVP of the team

Stephen Brown, front desk associate at the **Homewood Suites Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio**, connects with guests on a personal level and truly makes a difference in their lives. "In all of my travels and properties at which I have been in the last 17 years, Stephen is the best associate I have ever come across with the natural ability to deal with people," states **Gina Moore**, HR manager/bookkeeper.

In-house for several months, a family with three children was living at the hotel at the start of the new school year. Brown took it upon himself to make sure the youngest, an avid football fan, had the opportunity to play on the Fairborn football team. He took a letter detailing the family's situation to council and obtained approval for the child to play. Brown then attended the games to cheer the boy on. Needless to say, they are all huge fans of Brown and have been back twice to visit since their stay.

"Stephen also has been a key driver in organizing two fundraisers for a fellow team member who has been diagnosed with cancer," Moore continues. "He lives the WHI Mission Statement everyday and is a true asset to our company and our guests." Brown is attending Sinclair University and majoring in business administration.



Stephen Brown

Sets an example

Inspectress **Fatemeh Zanjania** joined the team at **Marriott Cincinnati-North** in 2001 and has yet to miss a day of work. Executive housekeeper **Tammy Clements** calls Zanjania an outstanding associate who is well respected. "Fatemeh cares about other associates and is the No. 1 contributing factor in offering a clean, well-maintained product for our guests. She often takes on the supervisory role when dealing with guests and associates when her manager is not available," Clements states.



Fatemeh Zanjania

Team player, shining star

Vincent Meekins, maintenance technician at **Embassy Suites Williamsburg, Va.**, has been spotted cleaning a guest room, assisting in the laundry room, helping a guest retrieve items from his car and lending a hand when a guest has car trouble. This AOY is a team player who steps in wherever he is needed, and he does it with a smile. "Vincent has provided a great deal of support to my department and his hard work is appreciated," comments **Jennifer Pierce**, executive housekeeper. Meekins began working summers as a bellman at the hotel in 2001. He came on board full-time as a maintenance technician in 2005. Maintenance supervisor **Michael Sawtchenko** says, "Vincent has great rapport with the guests and has been a great addition to the team."



Vincent Meekins

Recognized by guests, associates

Recipient of both Shining Star nominations and guests' praises, **Paula Connor**, room attendant at **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Eastgate**, is a dedicated worker with a good attitude and a ready smile. Executive housekeeper **Karen Lindsey** says, "Over the 11 years Paula has been with the hotel, she has always been an example to other associates. She is a leader in the department and can always be depended on to do a good job." It also was noted that Connor played a key role in preparing for the hotel's METS inspection that received an "excellent" rating.



Paula Connor

Serves up satisfaction

Excelling at the basics is something bartender **Courtney Collins** has down pat as she serves customers at the **Marriott Columbus-Northwest**. Collins was a key player in raising overall guest satisfaction in the hotel's lounge to No. 11 for the entire Marriott brand in 2008. "Courtney knows our repeat guests and always responds positively to them to ensure that they return," says GM **Lisa Garner**. "She acts on knowledge by being a self-motivated player. She works efficiently and is a leader in her department."



Courtney Collins



Israel Perez



Carl Hardin



Connie Berthold

At your service

Israel Perez, banquet server at the **Marriott Birmingham, Ala.**, received the associate of the year honor for the hotel in 2008. **Justin Melville**, banquet manager, says, "Israel's positive attitude and collective demeanor make him a major asset to the F&B team." Perez states that he loves to serve, and he makes himself available to banquets, room service, the River City Grille, and wherever else he might be needed. "Do whatever you can do the best that you can do it, and you will be successful," he shares.

Track record of success

Connie Berthold, room attendant at **Marriott Cincinnati-Airport, Hebron, Ky.**, is no stranger to winning awards. She has been recognized by the hotel, the Marriott brand and the local convention & visitors bureau throughout her nearly 10 years with the hotel. Berthold handles several things at a time and maintains a great level of productivity. AGM **Akshay Bahl** announces, "Connie takes every aspect of her job to heart and treats the hotel as if it were her own home." **Ruth Krohman**, executive housekeeper, describes Berthold as a hard worker and an anchor in the housekeeping department. She exceeds expectations by "jumping in wherever she is needed. Connie is a team player and does whatever is asked of her," Krohman continues.

Berthold states, "I live the WHI Mission Statement by paying attention to detail regarding product quality." Her secret: "It's all about the bathrooms."

Living the Associate Pledge

"**Carl Hardin**, commercial technician, is an ideal role model that any hotel or company should nurture," states **Mike Huddleston**, maintenance supervisor at **Embassy Suites Lexington, Ky.** "No matter what tasks are assigned, Carl takes each seriously and completes the task above the set standards." Hardin plays a key role in the hotel's METS, Life-Safety and Hilton inspections. His duties include maintaining the hotel's commercial areas; however, he also can be found lending a hand to other associates. "Carl's dedication, loyalty and positivity are infectious throughout the department and the hotel," says **Susan Kluenenberg**, HR manager.

2008 ASSOCIATES OF THE YEAR

Knows her way around the house

Lisa Randle, laundry attendant, is a familiar face in many departments throughout **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Airport, Erlanger, Ky.** If she's not in the laundry department, one might find her cleaning rooms, assisting in the lobby, or even serving a banquet in the evening. Randle not only lends a helping hand to other departments within the hotel, she also travels to other WHI properties in Greater Cincinnati when they're in need of assistance. "Lisa champions the laundry room and makes sure everyone's needs are met," states **Linda Hill**, executive housekeeper. "If room attendants need sheets or the banquet has a need for 300 linen napkins, she consistently makes it happen. Lisa is viewed as a go-to associate by both her peers and her manager."

"What can we NOT say about Lisa?" GM **Greg Hurst** asks in regards to the 12-year, multi-skilled AOY. "Lisa is truly reliable, day-in and day-out, and she's a real asset to the hotel and housekeeping team."

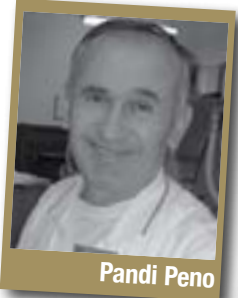


Lisa Randle

Invaluable team members

Efficient, hard-working, dependable and honest are some adjectives that can be used to describe laundry attendant **Pandi Peno**, the back-of-the-house AOY at **Marriott Suites on Sand Key, Clearwater Beach, Fla.** The former high school principal and math and physics professor takes pride in his work and always goes the extra mile. "It's hard to find talent and passion that is consistent among someone on a daily basis. That's what truly makes Pandi unique," states GM **Philippe Eversdijk**. "I learned that the good things in life do not just come to you, and neither are they given," Peno shares. "They are earned through hard work, persistence and dedication, as well as looking at the big picture instead of hanging on to the little things."

Yvette Levan, banquet bartender and front-of-the-house AOY at **Marriott Suites on Sand Key, Clearwater Beach, Fla.**, receives kudos for always taking the initiative. "No one ever needs to follow behind Yvette or tell her what to do," shares **Dan Faiola**, banquet manager. "She truly is an asset to the hotel and exudes a positive attitude everywhere she goes." Eversdijk comments that Levan has a knack for creating unique and great experiences for guests. The GM also adds, "Yvette is a terrific coworker and has an amazing ability to tell it like it is." Levan reveals, "I anticipate the guests' needs and fulfill them to the best of my ability."



Pandi Peno



Yvette Levan

Guests in good hands

Nina Smith, at-your-service specialist at **Marriott Austin-North at Round Rock, Texas**, strives to personalize guests' experiences by treating everyone with genuine appreciation. "Nina's outstanding dedication to service of our guests, balanced with her commitment to her fellow associates, made her an excellent choice for associate of the year," states **Mindi Munch**, guest services manager. "Her warm personality and attention to detail are an inspiration to us all."

"We have a large number of repeat guests," Smith says. "It's very rewarding to get to know them, remember their names and their stories, and attend to them as if they were guests in my home."



Nina Smith



Celsa Gonzales



Tanika Britten

All in a day's work

"**Tanika Britten**, room attendant, is always willing to do whatever needs to be done," shares **Kacey Knose**, executive housekeeper at **DoubleTree Guest Suites Cincinnati**. "She will work in other areas of her department, and she always checks to see if anyone else needs help before she leaves for the day." Britten has worked for the hotel for more than six years. Britten shares: "I satisfy guests by greeting them with a warm and friendly smile and by making sure they feel like our hotel is a second place to call home. I also make sure each guest leaves happy, so that they look forward to returning again in the future."

Can-do attitude

Laundry attendant **Celsa Gonzales** is a dedicated employee with a can-do attitude 365 days a year. "She has never called off, never been late and never said 'no' to covering a shift," recalls **Angela Huber**, executive housekeeper at **Marriott Austin-North at Round Rock, Texas**. "Celsa's main job duty is laundry, but she has done anything and everything to take care of the hotel. The shifts run smoothly when she works." Ensuring the dryer linen traps are cleaned and keeping the floors clean and dry are two practices Gonzales heeds to provide a clean, safe and well-maintained environment.



Kathleen Schenk



Sharon Nieft



Nancy Chavez



Marie Grosse

Positive impact, positive results

"**Kathleen Schenk**, guest service representative, stands out as 'best of the best' as she handles any issues sent her way," explains **Joann Masi**, HR director at **Marriott Hartford/Windsor Airport, Conn.** "She trains all new front desk staff and makes sure all associates understand their roles in providing outstanding customer service." Schenk was selected as AOY due to the positive impact she has had on the success of the hotel. She was instrumental in influencing the positive push in GSS scores year-over-year.

'Mom' of banquet department

Charter associate **Sharon Nieft**, banquet server, is referred to as "mom" by the banquet department and rest of the staff at **Marriott Chicago-Northwest**. "She has a contagious laugh and never hesitates to say hello to everyone she encounters," says **Marti Ramos-Plumeri**, HR manager. "Every function that Sharon works, she ensures that everything is perfect and makes our guests feel valued. Guests are always commenting on how great Sharon's service is and how they will return time and again because she is exceptional."

Service with a smile

"**Nancy Chavez**, laundry attendant, demonstrates daily that she enjoys working for WHI and has not missed a day of work since she was hired in the summer of 2006," says **Marti Ramos-Plumeri**, HR manager at **Marriott Chicago-Northwest**. "She has a positive outlook on life and makes the housekeeping department a great place to work." Chavez helps other associates to do their jobs by ensuring needed supplies are always on-hand. "Nancy keeps the department clean and organized, even through the crazy times. And she does it with a smile on her face," Ramos-Plumeri shares.

Learns the details

Promoted to guest services after just four months on the job, **Marie Grosse**, front desk associate at **Marriott Pittsburgh-North**, was selected as the hotel's 2008 front-of-the-house AOY. A WHI associate since 2005, Grosse satisfies customers by treating them as if they were family. "I ensure all guest preferences are met prior to arrival and greet all guests by name as they approach the desk," she shares.

Winning is familiar territory

During his tenure at the **Marriott Pittsburgh-North**, maintenance technician **Mike Caudill** has won associate of the month every year since 2003. The five-time winner was chosen as the property's back-of-the-house AOY for 2008. "I try not to see myself as just a maintenance tech but rather a salesman for the entire hotel," says Caudill. "I do more! Basic No. 19 stays with me from the time I enter the parking lot until the time I leave the building."

New, but no rookie

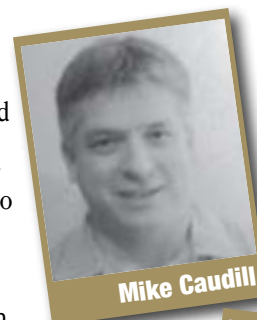
"Maintenance technician **Jimmy Hare's** demeanor and desire to seek out friendly conversations with guests and fellow associates have made him one of the most recognized figures at **Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North**," states **Bryan Miller**, maintenance supervisor. "Although the hotel environment is new to him, he is in no way a rookie at demonstrating the skills necessary to provide the 'home away from home' experience." Hare delights kids at check-in with candy. He assists guests with luggage and has, on occasion, assisted guests with car trouble. Hare also acts as an unofficial member of the sales team by recommending Grille 39 to friends and acquaintances in the community. "Associates know that when Jimmy is working on their shifts, he will do his best to resolve issues and do so with a smile," Miller adds. "Thanks in part to Jimmy, our hotel has been recognized as a friendly, warm and inviting place to stay and dine."

Silent achiever

Susanna Kocharyan, room attendant, was named 2008 associate of the year in rooms at the **Marriott Cleveland-East**. Kocharyan's outstanding work speaks for itself. "Susanna is our fastest and most reliable housekeeper," says **Michael Bosch**, HR manager. Executive housekeeper **Steve Wendland** adds, "Susanna's rooms are always perfectly made with no errors. She is quiet, but she always has a smile on her face."

Exemplifies teamwork

Marriott Cleveland-East banquet guests enjoy top-notch service and perfectly presented food thanks to food & beverage associate of the year **Ellen Fullum**. The banquet server exemplifies teamwork by assisting fellow associates throughout her shift by providing extra supplies or a helping hand. "Ellen ensures the quality of her team members' work and acts as a role model by always raising the bar in her work," says **Michael Bosch**, HR manager. "She is always smiling and is loved by all guests attending functions."



Mike Caudill



Susanna Kocharyan



Jimmy Hare



Ellen Fullum

2008 ASSOCIATES OF THE YEAR

Continued from Pages 6 & 7



Andrea Lower



Helen Baker



Eddie Olvera



Paul Davidson

Go-to associate

Andrea Lower, p.m. dining room server, is a true professional, delivering the highest standards of service to each and every guest at Cutler's Restaurant at **Ohio University Inn & Conference Center, Athens, Ohio**. "Andrea greets every guest with a warm, friendly smile, making them feel welcome and comfortable," says **Felicia McNichols**, Cutler's p.m. supervisor. "She is the hotel's go-to associate, always available to cover a shift."

"Andrea strives to live the pledge by always focusing on what she can do for the guest and by always owning guest requests and complaints," shares GM **Michael Miraglia**. "She arrives to work with a positive attitude and works well with all of her coworkers."

Consistency is key

"**Helen Baker**, lobby/public-space attendant at **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Riverfront, Covington, Ky.**, never falters from her high standards of cleanliness and is always willing to help wherever needed," says **Deedra Kellerman**, HR director. "She is always so pleasant to everyone she comes into contact with and if she ever had a bad day, you would never be able to tell." The AOY is known for her consistent performance and constant example as to what everyone in the hospitality industry should be doing. Baker shares that she satisfies guests by keeping the public space nice and clean and by making it a point to speak to every guest she passes. And if someone looks lost, she states, "I help them find their way."

Knows way around kitchen

"**Eddie Olvera**, cook at **Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport-South**, started as a dishwasher in 2002 and has made his rounds in the kitchen and proven to be flexible and reliable in every position," says **Benito Gavrio**, executive chef. "Eddie is a great associate and a valuable part of the culinary team." GM **Nancy Sorrells** adds, "Eddie has been an inspiration to many on our team. Barely able to speak English when he joined us, Eddie now helps with translation. Always positive and willing to help, he has helped our hotel to finish 12th in the nation in ESS for 2008."

Epitome of customer service

"**Paul Davidson**, bellperson, answers every request with a 'yes' and is considered the go-to guy in every department," says **Brandon Overby**, transportation supervisor at **Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport-South**. Davidson took responsibility for replenishing the gift shop daily, just one of the many extra duties he has taken on at the hotel. He goes out of his way for both customers and associates and was a unanimous choice for front-of-the-house AOY. "Paul is the type of person who will stay as late as you need him and then turn around and come back the next day as early as you need him," shares GM **Nancy Sorrells**. "He has a hospitality 'heart of gold' and it shows."

Keeps guests coming back

"Maintenance technician **Matt Meeker** embodies the spirit to serve in Basic 19: I do more," says **Lisa Compton-Martin**, HR director at **Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast**. "He takes a leadership role in his department to ensure the METS program is followed." Meeker heads up snow removal for the property in the winter months by not only making sure the sidewalks are clear but also by clearing ice and snow off of guests' cars. "Matt once took a guest's car to a repair shop and brought it back for the guest so he would not miss his meeting," Compton-Martin recalls. "Numerous guests comment on Matt's service and let us know that they come back because of the extra care and service they receive from him."

Mentor for others

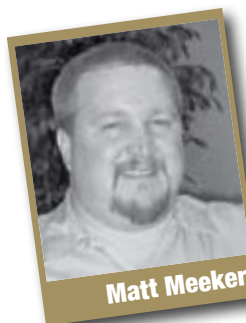
Ana Toper, guest service representative and associate of the year for the **Radisson Hotel Lansing, Mich.**, joined the hotel in 2006 and serves as a mentor for the front office. "Ana is focused on giving excellent customer service to each and every guest," shares **Beth Hoschner**, front office supervisor. "A source of motivation for many associates, she is a team player and dedicated to the overall success of the hotel."

Serves up satisfaction

A team member since 2005, banquet server and AOY **Bryon Dorer** is a dedicated employee who is well respected by his peers. "Bryon has a can-do attitude and gives 100 percent effort to achieve total guest satisfaction," states **Moses Kalumbu**, banquet manager at **Radisson Hotel Lansing, Mich.** "He is an asset to both our department and the entire hotel."

Cleaning queen

Linda Porter, lobby attendant, keeps the lobby and public areas gleaming at **Marriott Columbus-Airport, Ohio**. According to HR director **Brett Caron**, Porter goes through more pants than any other associate because she is not afraid to get down on hands and knees to dust woodwork or spot clean walls. "Linda is very detail oriented and treats the lobby like it's her home," Caron shares. **Thila Narayanan**, executive housekeeper says: "Linda has earned the nickname 'cleaning queen.' She takes extra initiative to clean and keep everything organized in all areas. She multitasks and can work as housekeeping utility, laundry attendant, turndown attendant or room attendant." "Linda is a wonderful representation of our team," adds GM **Janet Rhodes**. "She truly cares about the property, her fellow associates, and our guests."



Matt Meeker



Ana Toper



Bryon Dorer



Linda Porter

AWARDS

Best place to work

Marriott Birmingham, Ala. was named 2008 Best Place to Work by the *Birmingham Business Journal*. Selections for the best place to work recipients were based on employee feedback obtained through anonymous surveys.

Ninety of the area's finest employers were present at the awards luncheon in downtown Birmingham. The hotel received top honors as a medium-sized employer, employing between 50 and 150 associates. GM **Andy Seal** accepted the award on behalf of the hotel but was quick to give the honors back to the management team "whose commitment to our Service Pledge and Mission Statement have developed a culture in which associates feel engaged and enjoy their work."



Associates at Marriott Birmingham

Bureau Hero

Carissa Steffen, guest service supervisor at **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Riverfront, Covington, Ky.**, recently received Northern Kentucky Convention & Visitors



Carissa Steffen

Bureau's Bureau Hero award. A guest staying at the hotel with a tour group from Tennessee was sampling Cincinnati's signature foods when she fell ill. After delivering the guest her requested drink and ice, Steffen cleaned the carpet and bathroom. "Carissa is very deserving of the award for stepping up to the plate and keeping the guest as comfortable as possible when others might have moved the guest to another room and waited for housekeeping to deal with the mess," shares HR director **Deedra Kellerman**. The guest, impressed with Steffen's professionalism and kindness, wrote a letter to the hotel recalling her outstanding service. She also thanked the hotel for having such wonderful employees.

Smith is known for remembering the little things that keep guests coming back year after year, while Reid has made it her business to learn as much about the area as possible so that when a guest asks for information, she has the answer. Dill also notes that Reid and Smith work hard to satisfy guests each and every day, not just during the summer months of the Hilton promotion.



Greg Hurst

Familiar honor

Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Airport, Erlanger, Ky. was honored with Holiday Inn Worldwide's Quality Excellence Award for 2008. This award marks the 16th award the hotel has received from InterContinental Hotel Group in the 17 years it has been opened. GM **Greg Hurst** accepted the award at the brand's annual conference in Los Angeles, Calif.

President's Award recipient

Jeanne Hatcher, sales account manager at **Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport-South**, was honored with the President's Award by the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex Chapter. "Jeanne took on many challenges, some of which we thought were little things, and most turned out to be extensive," recalls chapter president **Heather Fogg**. "I was able to rely on her to get the little things done that have had a very big impact on the chapter."



Jeanne Hatcher (left) and Heather Fogg

Some of Hatcher's accomplishments included researching and finalizing online payment capabilities, distributing membership directories and collecting donation items for the chapter's Chinese auction. Fogg also noted that Hatcher was a familiar face at every meeting. "Jeanne was a solid rock on whom I relied heavily this year, and she never let me down."

Associates 'caught' by comment cards

Front desk supervisor **Cynthia Reid** and room attendant **Deloris Smith** were named national winners of "Catch Me at My Best," Hilton Hotels' national guest comment card program. The **Embassy Suites Williamsburg, Va.** associates were the top card getters for the hotel and were competing against top honorees at other Hilton Hotels across the country. "These two were our top card getters because they take service to the next level," shares **Brenna Dill**, HR manager. "They are examples of true hospitality, and they know that with every interaction they leave an impression on our guests."

Return guests often seek out Reid and Smith, knowing that each will have what they need.



Cynthia Reid (left) and Deloris Smith

Shining stars

The Indiana Hotel & Lodging Association (IHLA) recognizes Stars of the Industry, employees and managers who best represent the service and spirit of the lodging industry. **Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North** nominated **Justin Winkler**, line cook, for associate of the year, and



Paul O'Connor (left) and Justin Winkler



Beth Tuttle

Beth Tuttle, assistant banquet manager, for manager of the year. "They perform that extra service that distinguishes them from other industry professionals," states **Erin Hayek**, HR director. "Beth is the most guest-centric manager on our team and will stop at nothing to make all banquet events perfect for the client. Bride Jennifer Nair recently wrote a letter detailing her

2008 SUPERVISORS OF THE YEAR

Supervisors of the Year (SOY) are selected annually at many WHI-managed properties. They are the “best of the best” and selected for their dedication to demonstrating leadership, providing maximum customer satisfaction and increasing revenue.

Top scores, excellence achieved

Matt Oliver, maintenance supervisor and SOY at **Marriott Cincinnati-North**, is all about results. Oliver’s department leads the hotel in achievement of top 10 percent GSS rankings for “Everything in Working Order” and “Overall Maintenance,” and his Q12 scores are consistently the highest in the hotel. Oliver has delivered “excellent” rankings in METS, Life-Safety, and Marriott QA three years in a row.

“Matt achieves these results by possessing the right attitude of never accepting his current results and never being overconfident in his performance,” states **Jason Kreul**, GM. “He keeps his finger on the pulse of all of his result areas, all the time.”



Matt Oliver

Events ambassador

Shannon Staley-Therault, banquet manager and SOY, is always looking for opportunities to increase revenues while improving guests’ experiences at **Marriott Columbus-Northwest**.

“Shannon’s magnetic personality makes her clients feel like they are at home,” says **Amanda Ritchey**, HR manager. “Guests instantly know that she has their best interests in mind.” Staley-Therault



S. Staley-Therault

strives to improve events for both clients and attendees, all the while driving traffic to the hotel’s restaurant.

“I encourage my staff to constantly deliver quality service,” Staley-Therault explains. “Every day, we do things to make our areas neat and clean; this impacts how we feel and, therefore, how we treat the guests.”

Mission Statement on display

What were once drab walls in the laundry area at **Marriott Birmingham, Ala.**, are now artful displays of WHI’s Mission Statement, thanks to the creativity of assistant executive housekeeper **Blanca Callejas**. “Blanca has brought new life into the housekeeping department,” says **Karen Jacob**, HR manager. “Her special touches are appreciated by both associates and guests.” A recent guest left her bunny rabbit behind; a stuffed animal to which the small child was extremely attached. The child’s parents were overjoyed when Callejas immediately located and shipped the bunny, complete with a personal note.

These thoughtful gestures are not limited to guests. Callejas celebrates the birthday of every associate in her department. “Working side by side with her guest room attendants, Blanca has gained their trust and loyalty,” Jacob adds.

Moves the needle

The books are current at **Embassy Suites Lexington, Ky.** with bookkeeper **Teresa Bush** on the job. The SOY lives the Pledge and WHI Mission Statement and has impressed the hotel’s management team with her accountability and capacity to “move the needle.”

“Teresa has taken the accounts



Blanca Callejas



Teresa Bush



Sue Kunz



Jason Poulakis

receivables from nine pages, 25 percent current, to one page and 99 percent current,” observes HR manager **Susan Klauenberg**. “She has set up systems that help her to continue to strive towards 100 percent current outstanding.”

Bush sites that teamwork and a great upper management team are needed to make a difference. She also notes that one of her secrets of success when dealing with guests with overdue bills is to “simply talk to them with a smile in my voice, and treat them with the respect they deserve at all times.”

Rises to the challenge, exceeds expectations

Sue Kunz, guest service manager, boosts guest satisfaction as she keeps both arrival and departure experiences at **Marriott Austin-North at Round Rock, Texas** ranked in the top 10 of Marriott’s 337 properties in North America. GM **Kyle Covington** attributes Kunz’s all-around high marks to her intense drive to be successful and achieve results.

“The front desk is typically the first point of contact for the guest, and first impressions are lasting,” Kunz explains. “Labor is the one area within our control so it is something to be constantly studied and perfected, maximizing our productivity without sacrificing our guests’ satisfaction.”



Shaun Vincenti



Kevin Streu



Debbie Harding



Anthony Peluso

It’s all about leadership

Shaun Vincenti, front desk supervisor at **Marriott Pittsburgh-North**, leads his team by example. HR manager **Michael Schlutz** says, “Shaun’s goal, and that of his team, is to not only be proficient in creating a memorable first impression, but also to build relationships, one guest at a time.”

Vincenti’s achievements are remarkable: the hotel is ranked No. 2 for both guest arrival and departure experience out of 337 Marriott Hotels & Resorts in North America; the front desk team received a perfect 100 on its 2008 METS evaluation; Vincenti received high marks, 4.93/5.0, on the associate opinion survey evaluating management skills; and he maintains the top productivity index out of the entire company and one of the best departmental profits in WHI. “Shaun’s experience, commitment to quality, concern for his associates and ability to execute the priorities of the WHI Mission Statement have made him our SOY for 2008,” Schlutz says.

Consummate team player

PM River City Grill supervisor **Kevin Streu** is a hands-on manager and runs the **Marriott Chicago-Northwest** restaurant as if it were his own business. “Kevin has shown great leadership at our property and F&B knowledge beyond his job responsibilities,” states GM **Lance Misner**. “In addition to working on a task force at another hotel this summer, Kevin also was asked to fill the AGM role at our hotel for a few weeks. He stepped into both roles without missing a beat.”

The 2008 SOY also can be found in the kitchen, jumping on the line to get the food out in a rush, or at the front desk assisting on a busy day. Misner adds, “Kevin is conscientious and diligent in performing his job.”

Gets it done

“**Debbie Harding**, executive bookkeeper and supervisor of the year at **Cincinnati Marriott-Northeast**, was chosen for her outstanding leadership and customer service skills,” says **Lisa Compton-Martin**, HR director. “She has not only achieved results in the bookkeeping area, she also is a leader and a mentor for the guest services team.” Harding handles guest inquiries and billing issues with professionalism, and her leadership has helped to improve the hotel’s QA score. Called upon to assist other WHI-managed properties from time to time, Harding is recognized as a team player and asset to the entire company.

Associates’ choice

Chef **Anthony Peluso** was voted the supervisor of the year by the associates at **Ohio University Inn & Conference Center, Athens, Ohio**. “Anthony played an integral part in the upgrade of Cutler’s, the hotel’s restaurant,” says HR manager **Beth Schelling**. “The restaurant was already well known in Athens, but now has the reputation of being the best steakhouse in Southeast Ohio.” Peluso credits **Bill Kiliminik** and **Brian Perkins** at **Marriott Cincinnati-North**, where he was a sous-chef in 2004, for teaching him how to manage and how to keep food cost in line.

GM **Michael Miraglia** adds, “Anthony is a great chef; he is very cost conscious without letting it limit his creativity or that of his staff. He is consistently one of the best financial managers in the hotel, understanding how his department impacts hotel performance. He takes pride in his work and is great at recognizing his staff for their accomplishments. I look forward to more success in the future with Anthony.”

experience: “Beth was always right there when we needed something. All the vendors were especially pleased and enjoyed working with her. When I mentioned to Beth that my husband and I hadn’t gotten a chance to eat our cake, she had four pieces delivered to our honeymoon suite.”

Phil Kromer, executive chef, explains that Winkler is not your average line cook. “Justin will work any shift and fill any role in the kitchen, restaurant or banquets. He is a multi-functional team player in the food and beverage department, and he motivates the team by always striving for excellence. Mediocrity and sufficiency are not concepts that Justin works by. He is surely going places in this company,” Kromer continues.

IHLA judges named Winkler the Star of the Industry associate of the year recipient. He will advance to the hotel & lodging association national competition.

Opens with a bang



Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North opened to much fanfare in May 2008 and was named 2008 Best Hotel Opening of the Year by Marriott International. WHI invited several dignitaries along with the staff to participate in the opening-day celebration. Behind the scenes, WHI’s seasoned professionals traveled from other properties to train and prepare the Renaissance staff. The teamwork and pre-opening preparation paid off.

The hotel also was recognized with the Award of Excellence for Commercial/Industrial Design from the Indiana Concrete Masonry Association for its building design and use of brick, concrete and stone in the structure.

Continued on Page 10

YEARS-OF-SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

Wows client 'shopping around'

While on "marble duty," **Donna Seeley**, sales account manager at **DoubleTree Guest Suites Cincinnati**, encountered a woman requesting a tour. Seeley gave her the grand tour and then invited the customer to join her for dinner. "The next day, the client called to tell Donna that out of all of the hospitality she experienced, Donna's service went above and beyond anything she has seen during her 'shopping around,'" says **Kier Muchnicki**, HR manager. "She couldn't believe how approachable and accessible everyone was, and she didn't have to leave a message."



Donna Seeley

Lends a helping hand

Maria Arroyo, room attendant and five-year associate at **Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport-South**, takes pride in being a dependable worker who is always willing and ready to help guests. She has been recognized for returning lost items to guests and for attending to guests' rooms on short notice. Arroyo recalls a recent situation in which she excelled at delivering the basics by cleaning a guest room promptly after learning he was to hold a business meeting in it.



Maria Arroyo

Performance recognized

Javier Torres, banquet server, has been serving up satisfaction at **Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport-South** since 2003. "In the time I have been working with WHI, I have seen the appreciation for the job that I am doing from my managers and my supervisors," Torres states. He has been nominated for employee of the month twice and employee of the year once.



Javier Torres

Growing with WHI

Justin Peterson, banquet houseman at **Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast**, has grown in his five years with WHI and has been honored as associate of the month at the hotel. Peterson recently assisted a guest whom had lost her luggage. He made sure she had what she needed while assisting to locate her bags. "Justin lived up to our Mission Statement by making sure he followed through to help the guest," recalls **Lisa Compton-Martin**, HR manager. "His excellent delivery of the basics and our Mission Statement have earned him additional responsibilities."



Justin Peterson

Trusted trainer

Aamina Abdi, room attendant, joined **Marriott Columbus-Airport, Ohio** in 2003 and has been selected as the hotel's associate of the year twice in that time. Abdi's skills have positioned her to be a trusted trainer of new associates in housekeeping. She acknowledges that she takes pride in the little things, such as a simple note of gratitude left behind by a guest for a job well done.



Aamina Abdi

Great memory, great service

Gretchen Conlon, bartender at **Marriott Columbus-Airport, Ohio**, has built a great rapport with guests and prides herself on knowing what guests want before they ask. The two-time associate of the month is a familiar face to guests, as she strives to go above and beyond to take care of their needs. Conlon recently was top seller in a sales competition at the hotel.



Gretchen Conlon

Underscores training

At-your-service agent **Cynthia Barrera**, five-year associate, not only trains new employees on proper phone etiquette at **Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport-South**, she also calls on her training regularly when interacting with guests. She draws on the basics to serve guests by acting on opportunities and going the extra mile. Barrera often refers to the Service Recovery Model and has saved the day on numerous occasions by locating guests' lost items and delivering them wherever needed.



Cynthia Barrera

Recognized often

Richard Duah, cook at **Marriott Cleveland-East**, celebrates five years with WHI. During his tenure at the hotel, Duah has been honored as associate of the month in 2006, 2007 and 2008. His hard work and dedication also earned him the hotel's top honor of associate of the year in 2007.



Richard Duah

Adapts to changing roles

Laundry attendant, **Luisa Zamora**, celebrates five years with **Marriott Suites on Sandy Key, Clearwater Beach, Fla.** Zamora started at the hotel

as a lobby attendant where she aimed to personalize guests' stays by making them feel as much at home as possible. "It is always my pleasure to use a great attitude in everything I do, whether it be in the back of the house or the front of the house," shares Zamora.



Luisa Zamora

Focuses on guests' needs

Brannon Wheeler, Java Café clerk at **Marriott Suites on Sandy Key, Clearwater Beach, Fla.**, anticipates the needs of guests and associates and shows genuine appreciation in every interaction. "During Hurricane Charlie, we had a few European guests that were terrified with the unfamiliarity of hurricanes," Wheeler recalls. "I comforted the guests, reassuring them that the hotel would be able to make the accommodations needed to keep them safe." Wheeler has been voted associate of the month multiple times.



Brannon Wheeler

Caters to regulars

Beverly Guillen, a.m. dining room server, has been recognized time and again for her great service in the five years she has been with **Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio**. "Bev caters to a group of five regulars that returns to the hotel every week," shares HR manager **Jacque Evrard**. "I had the pleasure to speak with the group and asked them why they continue to return. They simply said that it's all because of Bev; she takes care of them." Supervisor **Donna Walz** calls Guillen her rock and a great person with whom to work. "When I'm not here, I know Bev will handle anything that comes her way," Walz shares.



Beverly Guillen

AWARDS

Continued from Page 8

Personalized service recognized

Nikki Miller, concierge at **Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North**, has been awarded the ROSE Award (Recognition of Service Excellence) by the Indianapolis Convention & Visitors Association. Recognized from the get go for her extraordinary talent for hospitality, Miller was honored as the hotel's very first associate of the month. "Nikki can remember faces with names, preferred drinks, spouses' names, hometowns, preferred newspapers and leisure hobbies without breaking a sweat," says HR director **Erin Hayek**.



Nikki Miller

A guest recently commented in a survey: "Nikki was a fantastic hostess and she has one of the best personalities I have ever encountered. She engaged with every guest that came in and treated everyone with the highest level of respect. Through all of my travels, she is the best concierge I've ever seen in any hotel I've ever stayed. She is the best ... I will be back to the Renaissance Hotel because of her."

Star associates, star treatment



Pictured (from left): Maria Lanza, Ana Ayala, Chris Pearson, and Sharon Neif

The American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) Stars of the Industry program was created more than 40 years ago to recognize outstanding accomplishments in the lodging industry. There were four **Marriott Chicago-Northwest** associates nominated this year: **Marie Lanza**, at-your-service agent; **Christopher Pearson**, sous-chef; **Sharon Nieft**, banquet server; and **Ana Ayala**, room attendant. "This awards program is a great way to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of our best associates," says **Marti Ramos-Plumeri**, HR manager.

The award nominees were driven by limousine to the awards banquet, escorted by a handful of managers and served a five-course lunch. Upon returning to the property, each was presented with a certificate and either roses or a chocolate-covered cigar.

FOCUS CORRESPONDENT RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Champions achievements

Sandy Deanna, HR director at **DoubleTree Hotel Dearborn, Mich.**, has been awarded the 2008 Focus Correspondent Award of Excellence for exceeding expectations and providing quality materials in a timely manner. Hard work and constant awareness of activities and associates at a property are essential to being a *Focus* correspondent. Correspondents are solely responsible for making sure their properties and associates are recognized for outstanding achievements.

The Focus Correspondent Recognition Program recognizes the outstanding effort put forth by these hotel ambassadors. Deanna was selected from among 14 other qualifying correspondents.

"Sandy is an excellent writer, providing good quotes, solid examples and specifics that relate to the company's mission statement and priorities," recalls **Pat Moellers**, former *Focus* editor. "Sandy knows 'her people' and always seems proud to have them represented in *Focus*. Over the years, she's consistently been responsive to our requests for additional information or better photos."



Sandy Deanna

Other finalists:

Donna Bolich, Marriott Suites on Sand Key, Clearwater Beach, Fla.
Michael Bosch, Marriott Cleveland-East
Aric Briggie, Marriott Dallas/Ft. Worth Airport-South
Brett Caron, Marriott Columbus-Airport, Ohio
Brenna Dill, Embassy Suites Williamsburg, Va.
Elizabeth Hill, Marriott Cincinnati-North
JoAnn Masi, Marriott Hartford/Windsor Airport, Conn.
Gina Moore, Homewood Suites by Hilton Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio
Kier Muchnicki, DoubleTree Guest Suites Cincinnati
Mary Orlando, Radisson Hotel Lansing, Mich.
Amy Rahe, Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Eastgate
Jude Reser, Marriott Cincinnati-Airport, Hebron, Ky.
Lorraine Sanz, Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Airport, Erlanger, Ky.
Mike Schlutz, Marriott Pittsburgh-North

FOCUS

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