

FOCUS



Winegardner & Hammons, Inc.
HOTELS AND RESORTS



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

The WHI Associate Pledge – a blueprint for success

The Associate Pledge is the nucleus of WHI's service model. It's the first thing taught at an associate's orientation class. It's the first impression a guest experiences when entering a WHI property. It's the lasting impression associates leave with each and every person with whom they do business.

While many of the beliefs of the Pledge have existed for nearly as long as WHI, the Associate Pledge creed that guides us today was born in 1996. The opening team at **Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast**, WHI's first experience at managing a Marriott property, was challenged to produce the service guidelines that would enable WHI to deliver the high level of customer service Marriott guests have come to expect.

"The Pledge is the embodiment of the Mission Statement and speaks directly to our President's Challenge of satisfying every guest every day," explains **Kent Bruggeman**, WHI senior vice president of operations and HR. "With this Pledge card, associates are armed with the formula for customer satisfaction. When interacting with WHI team members, guests can't help but respond positively."

WHI hotels consistently rank among the best in all brands. Just one year after wondering whether or not WHI had what it takes to operate at Marriott's high standards, the company received its first Partnership Circle Award, an award given to franchisees whose values and operating philosophies most closely mirror those of Marriott. WHI is the only franchisee with 11 consecutive Partnership Circle Awards.

"The Associate Pledge is a very simple vehicle for putting the Mission Statement of our company into practice," shares **Brian Perkins**, regional vice president. "The Pledge basics articulate the way we do business ... in any WHI hotel across the country. If the basics are executed, our success in all areas of the Mission Statement is enhanced."

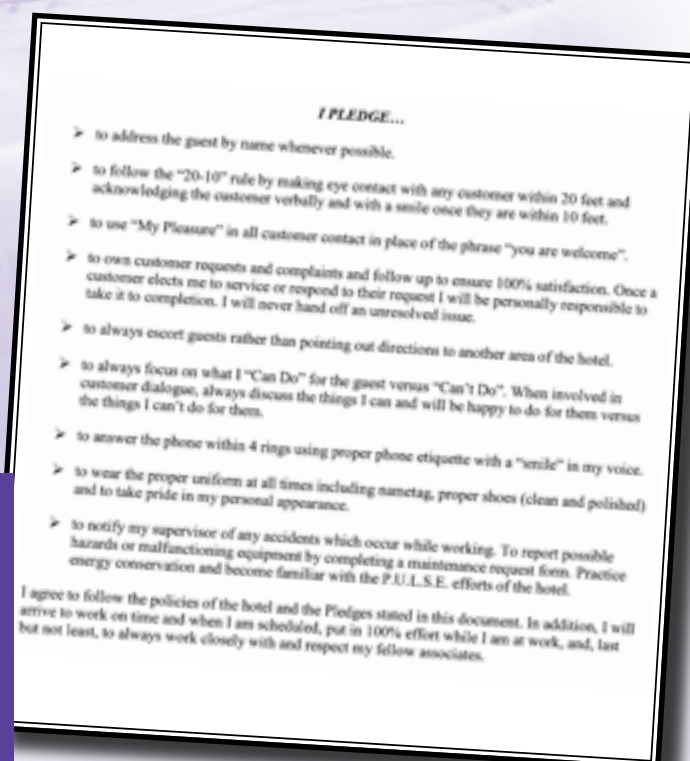
Jason Kreul, GM at **Marriott Cincinnati-North**, adds: "The most important part of the execution of the Pledge standards is in the person who holds the card. Hiring the right people is 95 percent of the service equation; the Pledge is the piece that takes us near 100 percent in our service levels to guests and each other. Consistent execution of the Pledge throughout the property will ensure that new associates follow the same guidelines to 'fit in.'"

Bruggeman explains that other companies have similar pledges, but the key to its success is in the execution by each and every associate at each and every property. "Our associates make our organization a model for how the hospitality industry, or any industry for that matter, should operate."

Read more about the Associate Pledge and what it means to fellow associates below and on Page 6.

"The Pledge is the embodiment of the Mission Statement and speaks directly to our President's Challenge of satisfying every guest every day."

– Kent Bruggeman



"To me it is a direct guideline on how we should treat our guests, using it as a minimum standard."

George McKee, maintenance technician, **Marriott Columbus-Airport, Ohio**



"The Pledge keeps me thinking about improvement in everything I do. It ensures I think like a leader and helps me be an example every day as I serve my co-workers and guests."

Victor Peralta, banquet server, **Marriott Austin-North at Round Rock, Texas**



"My mission is to maintain the highest product quality by ensuring I repair and keep up with my preventative maintenance. It is a nice feeling when a guest states how beautiful the hotel looks, and I know I am a part of that."

Hugo Lopez, maintenance technician, **Marriott Chicago-Northwest**



"I live the Pledge by focusing on what I can do rather than what I can't do."

Mandy Sutherin, guest service representative, **Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio**



Actions recognized by brand

The Doubletree brand recently recognized **Natalie Bullock**, F&B supervisor at **Doubletree Guest Suites Cincinnati** with the Spirit of Care award, the most prestigious team member award recognizing individuals who make a positive impact on guests. Bullock's award nomination included a guest letter that recounted the admirable actions she exhibited when a guest's child lost his much-loved blanket during a visit to a local theme park.



Natalie Bullock receives the Spirit of Care award for her admirable actions while assisting a guest.



After learning that the blanket had not been returned to lost and found, Bullock drove to the theme park to search for it. She located the blanket in the parking lot, took it home to wash it and delivered the blanket to the guest before bedtime. The guest writes: "I am finding it hard to put into words the admiration I have for Natalie. This was really an act of unprecedented kindness."



"I do a lot of traveling, and the Pledge describes everything I'm looking for when I stay at a hotel in regards to service. I want to make sure I give this service to guests that stay with us."

Rachelle Dawood, guest service representative, **Doubletree Hotel Dearborn, Mich.**

"The Service Pledge means so many things to me: heart, spirit and pride. I feel a great connection to all of the guests that walk into our hotel."

Cynthia Reid, guest service representative, **Embassy Suites Williamsburg, Va.**



"I encounter guests on a regular basis when I work in the lobby, and I feel that by following the Pledge, I ensure that each guest has the best experience possible."

Angie Craig, lobby attendant, **Holiday Inn & Suites Cincinnati-Eastgate**



The team at **Marriott Cincinnati-North** gathered for a dessert reception to celebrate its award-winning year. The hotel was honored with six awards from the Marriott brand: Spirit to Serve our Guests, Staff Service Excellence, Customer Excellence, Problem Experienced Excellence, Problem Resolution Excellence and Sales Leadership.

Queens of clean

New name tags, star pins and crowns were given to five room attendants at **Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast** who have earned "self inspect" status due to their excellent inspection scores and commitment to the Associate Pledge. Pictured left to right: **Celia Gonzalez, Maribel Villegas, Marisol Fuentes** (front), **Fatimata Dia** and **Anjelika Khamidova**



Comes out on top

Whitney Steiner, p.m. restaurant server/bartender at **Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio**, can be found enjoying the great outdoors when not at work. The avid rock climber recently placed first in the Miami Valley Adventure Summit's Intermediate Bouldering Competition.



Whitney Steiner

Steiner competed against 20 other females on a 14-foot wall. Bouldering is a style of rock climbing in which climbers use strength and smarts to navigate difficult boulder routes without a rope. "It is fun, yet difficult," Steiner explains. "And I like a challenge."



With 23 percent associate participation, **Embassy Suites Lexington, Ky.**, won the blood drive challenge between hotels in the area. Associates contributed 25 pints of the 82 pints collected. Pictured above, executive housekeeper **Elizabeth Richardson** and bartender **Art Lehmann** take their turns donating blood.

WHI's West Coast hideaway

WHI has a jewel on the West Coast, nestled in a historic town between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The only brand of its kind in the WHI family, **Quality Suites San Luis Obispo, Calif.**, offers visitors convenience to nearby beaches and wineries as well as rich history with original California missions a half-mile away in downtown San Luis Obispo.

"I'd venture to say that many associates don't know we have a Quality Suites in the rolling foothills of the Santa Lucia Mountain Range in California wine country," says **Dave Gordon**, VP-HR. "We've enjoyed partnering with this property since its inception in 1986."

Quality Suites has "grown up" in the WHI family, yet it remains an oft-forgotten member. "We're unique in our brand, and we're located in an unfamiliar town clear across the country from a majority of the WHI-managed properties," states part-owner and GM **George Newland**. "Quality Suites San Luis Obispo remains a bit of a mystery and a treasure on the WHI family tree."

The 138-suite hotel employs 50 associates and partners with many of the area's local attractions to offer package deals, providing guests with unforgettable getaways. The area's most famous landmark, Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, was built by settlers in 1772. The mission is still standing and today operates as a working parish church.



Brownie, jousting or cash cube, anyone?

Doubletree Hotel Dearborn, Mich., celebrated associate appreciation week with lots of fun, food and activities. Associates enjoyed an ice cream bar, cakes, pies, cookies and other goodies prepared by managers and supervisors. They then burned the calories by jousting, taking a cake walk and racing through an obstacle course.



Associates also played the Doubletree version of *Deal or No Deal*; winning teams won minutes in a cash cube loaded with \$250.

Pictured above: **Beverly Kaiser** and **Fred Young** race through the obstacle course.

Associates enjoy new events, old favorites

Pampering associates was on the agenda at **Embassy Suites Williamsburg, Va.**, as employees enjoyed catered meals, back massages and freshly made smoothies during associate appreciation week. The relaxing time didn't last long, however, as employees went head-to-head in miniature golf, bingo, Guitar Hero and Wii bowling. The week ended with an extra "payday" for all associates – lottery tickets and scratch-offs.



Rico Chinae, laundry attendant (left); **Kristie Lakatos**, room attendant; and **Jeremy Berlin**, GM, rock out on Wii.

GM Dave Sundermann, **Doubletree Guest Suites Cincinnati**, serves breakfast to employees in the break room.



Celebration of great foods

Nothing says "thank you" quite like food, and **Marriott Cleveland-East** did a lot of thanking during its associate appreciation week. The week kicked off with coffee and donuts, milk and cookies and ice cream treats. The associates enjoyed catered meals, as well as those prepared by the talented culinary team. Rain didn't dampen the festivities as the picnic with grilled hamburgers, hot dogs and nachos was moved indoors. The week concluded with a homemade pizza party.

Kaleb Steele, banquet houseman at **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Airport, Erlanger, Ky.**, works catering sales manager **Michlene Bennett** hard during set-up and break-down. Steele won the Win a Manager event, a popular event during associate appreciation week that offers on-the-clock associates a chance to have a manager perform their duties for an hour.



Appreciation ... Week

Celebrating outstanding staff

Associate appreciation week at **Marriott Hartford/Windsor Airport, Conn.**, is a time for everyone to kick back and have fun. Associates spent the week eating, playing, hanging out in the beautiful weather, cleaning cars, playing bingo and throwing a pie or two. "This week is an opportunity for the managers and supervisors to show our staff how much we appreciate their hard work and dedication to WHI and our Mission Statement," shares HR manager **JoAnn Masi**.



Pictured left and center: Front desk supervisor **Aaron Bedik** enjoys the pie provided by **Rachael Foxx**, guest service representative. Pictured right: **Allyson Capsolas**, guest service representative, and **Hezron Wallace**, in-room dining associate, make a mess throwing pies.

Work together, play together, win together

Teamwork was evident during the sports-themed week at **Marriott Austin-North at Round Rock, Texas**. Associates showed their competitive spirit during the relay obstacle course, bowling, miniature golf, beach volleyball and basketball. Each event was hosted by a different department, and each department succeeded in transforming the hotel into a sports arena. HR director **Mily Kennison** recalls the big-screen bowling, fantastic putt-putt props and lighting and beach volleyball complete with a Hawaiian outfit-clad referee. Kennison boldly warns the Cleveland Cavaliers of the undefeated Austin Marriott North basketball team.



Sales coordinator **Abby Melde** lines up a putt.



The management team at **Marriott Chicago-Northwest** spent the week serving associates treats and washing their cars. On the left, executive housekeeper **William Washington** serves up fresh fruit smoothies. On the right, laundry attendants **Nancy Chavez** (left) and **Maria Herrera** enjoy an afternoon snack of milk and cookies.

The **Homewood Suites Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio**, team enjoyed fun activities and delicious treats during associate appreciation week. One highlight of the week, Know Your Pledge-Lucky Lotto Day, rewarded associates for doing their jobs. Bookkeeper/HR manager **Gina Moore** explains, "If an associate was witnessed living the Pledge, or if an associate could recite one of the Pledge items and give an example, he or she was awarded a lottery ticket."



More Associate Appreciation Week articles continued on Page 7.

The 75 Percent Club

WHI offers eligible associates the valuable benefit of saving in the 401(k) retirement plan. Because of the "matching money," many associates continue to increase the percentage of their pay that they invest in the 401(k) plan. For every \$1 saved in the 401(k) plan up to 6 percent of pay, your employer adds another 50c.

As of July 1, 2009, six hotels had participation rates among eligible associates of 75 percent or more:

- 87%** **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Riverfront**
- 84%** **Marriott Cleveland-East**
- 83%** **Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn**
- 81%** **Marriott Hartford/Windsor Airport**
- 76%** **Marriott Pittsburgh-North**
- 75%** **Marriott Columbus-Airport**

WELCOME AGM

Colleen Wienke is the new assistant general manager at **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Riverfront, Covington, Ky.** Previously an intern and a.m. restaurant supervisor at **Marriott Cincinnati-North's RiverCity Grille**, she already has been instrumental in maintaining the hotel's No. 1 ranking among WHI hotels in the IHG system. Wienke holds a Bachelor of Science in hospitality and tourism management from Purdue University. She spent her last semester abroad studying international travel tourism and cuisine in Europe.



Colleen Wienke

PROMOTIONS

from within WHI

ACCOUNTING

Marquita Stewart has advanced to executive bookkeeper at **Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport-South**. The former guest service representative/night auditor demonstrated her customer service skills and flexibility in her dealings with group contacts and individuals regarding their invoices and payments. "Marquita was such a great asset at the desk. Her desk experience has been helpful in her training as she is able to see the process to completion," shares GM **Nancy Sorrells**. "We look forward to her growth in this new position."



Marquita Stewart

SALES

Desiree Jacobs has been promoted to catering sales account manager at **Marriott Suites on Sand Key, Clearwater Beach, Fla.** Upon graduation from Johnson & Wales in 2006, Jacobs was awarded an internship before moving into a permanent position at the hotel as sales coordinator.

"Desiree has done an outstanding job developing the wedding market - to the tune of 70+ bookings this year - as well as supporting the sales team with administrative duties," shares **Donna Bolich**, director of HR. "In her new role, she will continue to work on the wedding market as well as take on the group segment with the hotel."



Desiree Jacobs

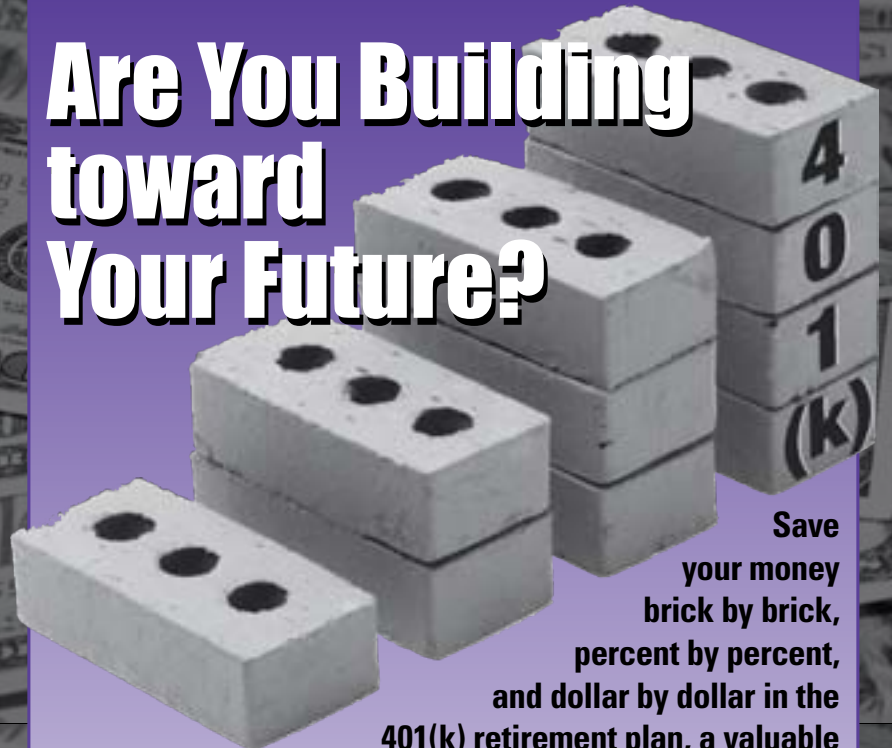
Debra DeVito is a new sales account manager at **Marriott Suites on Sand Key, Clearwater Beach, Fla.** DeVito started her career at Sand Key at the front desk and most recently held the position of catering sales account manager.

"For the past four years, Debra has done a great job developing our repeat group business," shares **Donna Bolich**, director of HR. "In her new assignment, she will be responsible for our wholesale segment as well as group business." DeVito is pursuing a bachelor's degree in business administration from St. Petersburg College.



Debra DeVito

Are You Building toward Your Future?



Save your money brick by brick, percent by percent, and dollar by dollar in the 401(k) retirement plan, a valuable benefit that WHI offers associates*.

Continue to increase the percentage of your pay that you invest in the 401(k) plan.

Why? Because for every \$1 saved in the 401(k) plan up to 6 percent of your pay, your employer adds another 50c.

Ask your GM or HR manager if you're taking full advantage of your employer's "matching money." If not, find out how you can.



*Eligibility requirements: An associate must complete 500 hours of employment service within a period of six months and be at least 21 years old. Participation in the 401(k) plan begins on the January 1 or July 1 date immediately thereafter. © 2009

Steal. Capture. Win. Harnessing WHI's competitive advantage

The challenging economy has changed the way hoteliers do business. Hotels around the country are running leaner than ever. Individual travel and group corporate meetings, once a highly profitable business segment, are slowing, and alternative business segments command more attention as they represent untapped sales opportunities.

WHI's sales and marketing team has armed its frontline associates with new sales tools, as well as an umbrella theme that encapsulates WHI's sales strategy for 2009 – Steal. Capture. Win.

The premise is simple: STEAL market share while the competition is retrenching; CAPTURE all available business in a market; and WIN customers for life. **Mike Conway**, senior vice president of marketing, explains: "We are using this down economy to further differentiate our hotels from the competition and steal market share. As other hotels tighten their belts and reduce service amenities, WHI remains true to its Mission Statement; taking care of customers is, and forever will be, the heart of our business model."

"We're very empathetic to what our customers are going through, and we work with them to put together outstanding meetings and events programs for their organizations."

New customers, around-the-clock sales support

"We still aim to serve our traditional corporate traveler; however, we also have broadened our sales scope to include additional business segments, such as government, leisure and athletics," Conway states. Programs are in place to attract these non-traditional customers, and WHI's service-centric approach wins customers for life.

Each property also has adopted a 24/7 sales approach and aims to be the easiest hotel with which to do business. Designated associates are trained to handle sales inquiries when the sales office is closed. No matter what time of day or night, prospective customers can speak to a knowledgeable associate who will answer questions, record guest information and preferences and schedule a follow-up call ... all when the customer is in purchasing mode.

Sales tool box expands

Sales teams have more programs, a comprehensive revenue management strategy and increased online visibility to support sales efforts. This integrated approach ensures WHI hotels have competitive offerings, statistical data detailing each hotel's competitive landscape and an interactive marketing strategy that complements a hotel's online efforts.

Aimee Cotter, national director of revenue management for WHI, and her team of corporate revenue managers have been crunching numbers, supplying market forecasts to GMs and keeping ownership groups up to date on business trends. Cotter explains that accurately forecasting business has become a necessity for the company. "With the extremely unpredictable economy, we forecast our company portfolio on a weekly basis. Consistently monitoring our business levels allows us to proactively execute strategies to improve revenues. We're delivering instant, real-time statistics and reports to each hotel, providing day-by-day market segmentation plans and, most importantly, conducting weekly revenue strategy meetings with general managers."

Implementing a digital strategy is another facet of WHI's integrated sales approach. E-commerce manager **Brandon Harper** has engaged partners to make certain WHI's online efforts are complementary with that of each hotel, driving visitors to properties' Web sites.

"With many travelers making purchasing decisions and hotel comparisons online, digital strategy is of the utmost importance," Harper explains. "We are creating landing pages and constructing e-marketing campaigns surrounding our hallmark programs for 2009. We're also optimizing paid, organic and local search pathways to increase site traffic."

Web site traffic in July and August for WHI's Marriott and Hilton hotels increased by more than 30 percent in 2009 over 2008.

Out-of-the-box thinking, coupled with an integrated marketing approach, has been instrumental to the success thus far in WHI's Steal. Capture. Win. theme for 2009. Two-thirds of WHI's hotels are achieving at least 100 percent of their market share. "Our outstanding sales and marketing teams are stealing and capturing business; all associates, while remaining true to the Mission Statement and Associate Pledge, are winning customers for life," Conway adds.



Sales strategy in action

"Working with the WHI marketing team, we focused on an inbound link strategy to boost site traffic for **Ohio University Inn & Conference Center, Athens, Ohio**. With an ownership stake in the OU Inn, we encouraged Ohio University to remove all but our property's link from its site. The result was phenomenal. Site traffic from OU's Web site increased the inbound site visits from two last summer to 528 this summer."

Michael Miraglia, GM

"Even though CRM **Todd Garvin** is not physically at our hotel on a regular basis, he is 100 percent part of our team. We are in constant communication with each other to ensure we are capturing the right business at the right time and at the right price for the property. From restrictions to creating new packages to pushing the rates, we will continue to challenge each other to move closer to that ultimate goal of exceeding that top line!"

Jamie Walters, GM, Homewood Suites Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio

"CRM **Kenny Pierson** has had quantifiable impact for our associates, customers and owners. During a recent event, Kenny chose to be on-site to fully support our rooms control team. His commitment resulted in event week RevPAR index growth of 10 percent year-over-year. He worked diligently to ensure that all last-minute changes were correctly executed, even though it required him to stay until 1 a.m. on heavy change days."

David Lanterman, GM, Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast

"I depend on CRM **Mike Scott** for his insightful suggestions relating to the revenue management and strategy of my hotel. Mike is more like a member of my sales office than a corporate support person. He has been a significant contributor to the success my property has had in attaining its budgeted group occupancy and ADR. Mike is an integral part of the property sales team..."

Michael Cooney, GM, Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio

"As our industry has changed over this past year, it is so important to have a support system for maximizing our revenue opportunities. The CRMs are the backbone to our operation and challenge us to ensure we are aware of cues for revenue opportunities. We rely on the CRMs now more than ever due to the restructuring of our hotels; it is important to have individuals who are not within the hotel to present us with opportunities we may have overlooked."

Lisa Garner, GM, Marriott Columbus-Northwest, Ohio

"Right from the beginning, CRM **Kenny Pierson** assisted us with every component of setting up our reservations department, from the training and development of our group rooms coordinator and front desk supervisory team to supporting our sales team in every aspect of revenue management. In our weekly conference call and webinar sessions, we review multiple documents and make decisions together regarding the revenue management of the hotel. Kenny is an excellent trainer and takes every opportunity to make these webinars 'training energizers.' His hands-on approach ensures that we are on-task with any revenue stream challenges we face."

Paul O'Connor, GM, Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North

Opportunity knocks, sales team answers

The G20 Summit, a meeting of the top 20 countries that affect the global economy, is headed to Pittsburgh. Upon hearing the announcement, sales account managers **Jill Black** and **Jackie Gillespie** immediately went into "special events mode" to capitalize on the opportunities the event created for **Marriott Pittsburgh-North**.

"Jill and Jackie shifted gears in order to maximize revenues before, during and after the three-day conference," shares HR manager **Michael Schlutz**. "The anticipated room demand exceeded the market capacity, which allowed us to establish a special event rate, a three-day minimum stay requirement and a non-refundable advance purchase policy."

The sales duo also has been hard at work considering added value services, such as the availability of interpreters for foreign dignitaries booked at the hotel. Chef **Greg Barchetti** also is planning special room amenities, delivered to the rooms of the hotel's international guests. Schlutz adds, "We anticipate that the implementation of this strategy will generate \$100,000 in incremental room revenues and \$20,000 in food and beverage revenues during the week of the summit."



Jackie Gillespie (left) and Jill Black

Team racking up the wins

Hard work, persistence and dedication are a winning combination for any team. **Mark Calitri**, sales manager, and **Alex Blust**, GM, have been making plays to win new business for **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Riverfront, Covington, Ky**. Thanks to the team's efforts, the Holiday Inn on the river is the official host hotel of Xavier University and will be receiving 90 percent of the university's visiting team business.



Alex Blust (left) and Mark Calitri

Re-launch prompts sales blitz

Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Eastgate is now **Holiday Inn & Suites Cincinnati-Eastgate**, and **Debbie Smith**, catering manager, and the rest of the sales team took advantage of the opportunity to re-introduce the hotel to area businesses. They enlisted the help of the entire management team as they canvassed a several-mile radius, spreading the word of the hotel's renovation, which will be complete in December.

The sales blitz resulted in many new contacts that the sales team hopes it can convert to future business.



Debbie Smith

Seizing opportunities

WHI's business development office is unearthing opportunities to grow business by gaining the inside track on customer travel activity and marketplace happenings. "GROW (Generate Referrals & Repeat Opportunities for WHI hotels) and News You Can Use are two key initiatives our office has implemented to make sure we have our finger on the pulse of potential new business activity, be it through making the most out of our relationships with current customers or being a first responder to opportunities in the markets in which we operate," states Cindy Swift, national director of business development at WHI.

Making the most out of current customers

WHI's foot is in the door, and the business development office is using existing relationships with customers to explore future opportunities. Swift explains: "Through the GROW initiative, WHI utilizes group data from each property and calls contacts to thank them for their business on behalf of WHI, the owner/management company. We then enter into a conversation about upcoming travel needs to see if opportunities exist for any of our properties. Satisfied customers are a vital component to securing new business through this channel. A great job at one hotel can lead to opportunities at other WHI hotels."

Staying up to date on business news

Through customized RSS feeds from key business publications, WHI monitors industry news and market-specific business activity and e-mails News You Can Use to its properties. "We're using the latest technology to capitalize on opportunities not yet on the radar," Swift shares. "By monitoring business activities in our markets, we're able to pursue leads and gain a jump on the competition."

"GROW and News You Can Use are generating sales leads through unconventional means," she adds. "After all, the early bird catches the worm."

Teamwork and 24/7 sales approach

Amanda O'Dare, guest service representative, Gretchen Conlon, bartender, and Traci Dixon, sales and catering manager, recently joined forces to win some new business at **Marriott Columbus-Airport, Ohio**.



Traci Dixon (left) and Gretchen Conlon

A group, in town four times a year for meetings, was visiting the hotel bar and relayed to O'Dare the wonderful service received. "Amanda found out the group was staying at a competitor hotel across the street... She was able to get the meeting planner's name and phone number and relayed it to our sales and catering manager," states GM **Janet Rhodes**. "Traci was then able to meet with the meeting planner the next day and book the business. It was a great show of teamwork and a 24/7 sales approach."

Rolling out the red carpet

Alan Feuerman, sales manager, pulled out all of the stops to impress a potential client at **Marriott Cleveland-East**. The red carpet was rolled out from the entrance into the lobby, and a manager and associate from each department greeted the guests upon arrival. At the end of the red-carpet journey, the prospect was met by Brad Sellers, former Ohio State basketball star and current director of development for the city. HR manager **Michael Bosch** explains, "The main contact from the group is a huge Ohio State basketball fan."

Guest service representative **Maureen Hickey** recalls, "It was impressive to see Mr. Sellers speaking to the client, whose jaw had just dropped open in amazement."

Meets needs, gains client

Matt Pauley, sales manager, spotted a potential long-term client for **Homewood Suites Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio**, in AT&T Mobility as it opened a vendor center in the area. Pauley and the entire Homewood team impressed the client from booking through check out, which resulted in the client's high recommendation for the facility to be a part of the AT&T Preferred Hotel Program.



Matt Pauley

The client writes, "Because of Matt's willingness to work with us on pricing and booking - he even found us rooms when the hotel was listed as 'sold out' - we have determined that the Homewood Suites Dayton-Fairborn will be our Hotel of Choice for all future travel bookings."

Personalized packages

Doubletree Guest Suites Cincinnati has a powerful sales tool in **Diane Kelley**. The sales and catering manager has been with WHI for more than 20 years, and she recognizes that with changing market conditions and trends come new sales approaches. To remain competitive, Kelley states that she has had to be more flexible and creative with packages.



Diane Kelley

"I am spending more time with each client, finding out what they really want, and then I customize a personalized package that works best for them," she explains. "The extra work we put in gives us a better chance of securing the account."

Locked out

Sales account managers **Pat King** and **Melodie Reed** were "locked out" during a sales blitz in July at the **Marriott Columbus-Northwest, Ohio** to focus on new business. "Our company's Mission Statement contains the principles that make us successful," states GM **Lisa Garner**. "In rolling with the changes, we used the unconventional approach of locking the sales team out of the office for six days. It gave our team the opportunity to have face time with the community and local businesses, tapping resources that might otherwise pass by."

Increased sales network

Earlier this year, HR director **Brett Caron** had a discussion with a local police officer who frequents **Marriott Columbus-Airport, Ohio**, as well as many other area business establishments as he makes his daily rounds. "The officer has a lot of contacts throughout the city, and I talked with him about referring business leads to the Columbus Airport Marriott," explains Caron.



Brett Caron

The officer came through a couple of months later with a lead on a weekend piece of business. Caron passed the lead on to sales account manager **Debbie Edmiston** who booked the body-building group, helping to fill the hotel on a summer weekend.

Annual competition draws crowds

Sandy Wise, room service, and **John Weber**, guest service representative, have turned Breyerfest, an annual event attracting visitors from all over the country to buy, trade and sell model horses at the Kentucky Horse Park, into an event at **Embassy Suites Lexington, Ky**.



Sandy Wise

Guests compete for the coveted People's Choice award, as well as a free overnight stay and other gift certificates, by decorating and representing their horses in their suite windows. "This year, Sandy and John stepped it up by handing out flyers promoting the competition to all guests," shares HR manager **Susan Klauenberg**. "More than 75 rooms participated this year, and the turnout for the announcement was unbelievable as guests filled the lower part of the atrium. Word is out that the contest is the reason to stay at Embassy - not to mention the service."

Meet and greet

Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North participated in CarmelFest, a Fourth of July celebration in which local businesses and organizations set up booths to meet with the residents of Carmel. "It was awesome to see so many people out in Carmel," says **Jonathan Kirchner**, Grille 39 manager. "We handed out promotional coupons for Grille 39 while Chef **Phil Kromer** made wonderful Bruschetta to entice them."

All hands were on deck from the operations and sales teams, and the hotel has had a great response for their efforts.

Cultivates long-term relationships

Emilie Hall, sales manager at **Embassy Suites Lexington, Ky**, is visiting clients, sending hand-written notes and entertaining top prospects and clients to build and solidify relationships at a more personal level. "It's back to the basics for me," she shares.



Emilie Hall

Hall uses the sales tools at hand, such as the Hilton Honors reward program, to encourage loyalty; however, she also has been keeping the hotel competitive by implementing additional incentive programs. "Emilie was able to sign a client to a two-year contract that incorporated a rebate program, applying rebates to the bill," shares **Susan Klauenberg**, HR manager.

Investing in potential clients

Kim Sherlock, sales director at **Marriott Cincinnati-North**, along with **Tom Enneking**, business development information specialist at WHI, devised a plan to attract the Home Depot group as it built a distribution plant in the area. The stumbling block - the group was Hilton Diamond Members and loyal to the Hilton properties.



Kim Sherlock

"Using an unconventional approach, Kim worked out a deal to upgrade some in the group to Marriott Platinum status," shares HR director **Elizabeth Hill**. "This \$1,500 investment has brought in \$185,000 to date." Satisfied with the accommodations, Home Depot has planned its quarterly meetings at the hotel as well.

24/7 sales strategy

Thanks to some training and out-of-the-box thinking, the front desk associates at **Marriott Cincinnati-Airport, Erlanger, Ky**, pulled in seven sales leads after 5 p.m., resulting in more than 30 room nights in just one month. "Front desk employees have been trained to recognize and handle sales inquiries to help generate revenue," shares **Todd Metzger**, guest service supervisor.



Todd Metzger

"The key to this program has been in teaching guest service representatives what to look for when the inquiry comes in, and then what information is most crucial to filling the potential customer's needs. We have always had the tools to wow our guests; now, more than ever, we have placed them in the hands of our front-line staff to attract new business."

Top clients wooed

Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North has been busy wooing top clients to ensure they remain loyal to the hotel. Fifteen customers were treated to Connor Prairie's "Symphony on the Prairie," featuring the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. GM **Paul O'Connor** recalls: "We gave our clients Renaissance picnic blankets so that they could sit and enjoy the music of Billy Joel while managers served them gourmet boxed dinners and beverages. We couldn't have asked for better weather or a better time."

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WHI Associate Pledge



Beth Tuttle, assistant banquet manager at **Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North**, owned a customer request after answering a call for a manager on duty shortly after midnight on a Friday night. She assisted the guest with a plumbing problem

and followed up with milk, cookies and a postcard apologizing for the inconvenience. The guest could not stop talking about his first-class treatment the following day.

“I feel that the Pledge is a great tool to always remember to put the guest first.”

Karrie Walraven, cook, **Holiday Inn & Suites Cincinnati-Eastgate**



Marisol Fuentes, room attendant at **Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast**, focused on what she could do rather than what she couldn't do when a thorough hotel search didn't locate a young guest's Game Boy. Instead of returning empty handed, Fuentes brought the little boy a stuffed animal. The gesture was much appreciated by both the boy and his mother.

“The Associate Pledge is a great tool to use at work because it shows our professionalism. Guests recognize our attention to detail and it helps us focus on what really matters.”

Ali Heck, guest service representative, **Marriott Columbus-Airport, Ohio**



Christine Mitchell, banquet manager at **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Airport, Erlanger, Ky.**, was focusing on what she could do when she located an engraved class ring at the bottom of a filing cabinet. She and her husband, Brent, scoured the Internet trying to find the owner. They located the owner who was touched that Mitchell had gone to the trouble of returning this small family heirloom that had been passed down to him by his father.

“The Service Pledge I follow makes my mission 100 percent customer satisfaction. I have even implemented this Pledge in my personal life and it has made my world a nice place to live.”

Sylvia Cordero, a.m. server, **Marriott Chicago-Northwest**



Cindy Alles, guest service supervisor at **Doubletree Guest Suites Cincinnati**, was focused on what she could do when she intervened after overhearing a guest's dilemma with his rental car. With a dead battery, an interview in one hour and a rental car company's promise

to send assistance in two hours, Alles arranged for a couple of associates to jump-start the guest's rental car. The guest was extremely grateful to have made the interview ... and he landed the job.

“Following the Pledge is just doing your job.”

Bruce Fischer, kitchen utility, **Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio**



“The WHI Pledge simply means following the ‘Golden Rule.’ I just treat others as I would like to be treated.”

Jenise Rivello, bartender, **Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio**



When **Carol Herbstreit**, guest service representative at **Marriott Cincinnati-Airport, Erlanger, Ky.**, was approached by a guest in search of a sewing kit, she didn't simply pass along the needle and thread so that he could secure his loose button. Herbstreit owned his request by not only securing the loose button herself, but also reinforcing the other two buttons. The guest was impressed to have his jacket repaired in just minutes.

the loose button herself, but also reinforcing the other two buttons. The guest was impressed to have his jacket repaired in just minutes.

“The Pledge is a way of life. It ensures that we are taking care of each guest to a great standard of guest satisfaction.”

Linda Cherry, housekeeping associate, **Doubletree Guest Suites Cincinnati**



Grace Peterson, guest service representative at **Marriott Cincinnati-Airport, Erlanger, Ky.**, owned a request and followed up to ensure 100 percent satisfaction when a guest recently alerted the staff that he was feeling ill. Peterson inquired on the need for medical attention and brought him some bottled water to prevent dehydration. Not only did Peterson follow up a couple of hours later, she also delivered the guest some chicken noodle soup, crackers and a Pepsi from the kitchen.

some bottled water to prevent dehydration. Not only did Peterson follow up a couple of hours later, she also delivered the guest some chicken noodle soup, crackers and a Pepsi from the kitchen.

“The Pledge is more than a guideline; it is a way of life for me inside and outside of the hotel. When I greet someone, guest or employee, I always smile. I believe that a genuine and enthusiastic hello can change anyone's outlook for the rest of the day.”

Terri Mae Campbell, guest service representative, **Marriott Columbus-Northwest, Ohio**



Melody Mira, guest service representative at **Marriott Cincinnati-North**, focused on what she could do when a guest's taxi failed to show to take him to the airport. Mira pulled her car around and drove the guest 40 minutes to the airport so that he would not miss his flight.



Debi Dodge, lobby attendant at **Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North**, focused on what she could do when a guest, in town for a baseball tournament, mentioned the crowded hotel laundry room as parents from several baseball teams washed uniforms for the

following day's games. Dodge took the guest's son's uniform home, washed it and returned it to the guest that same night. The guest praised Dodge's actions ... and her stain removal skills.

“I feel empowered at my job to make sure the guest is satisfied with their stay. Whether it's giving the guest a movie or talking to their kids, I always make sure they feel welcomed and appreciated.”

Rick Terry, maintenance technician, **Doubletree Guest Suites Cincinnati**



Peggy Lee, room attendant at **Ohio University Inn & Conference Center, Athens, Ohio**, addresses guests by name, learns preferences and follows through on guest requests. Lee formed a special bond with extended stay guests in town from Brazil. She presented one guest with a snow globe upon

his departure after learning he had never before seen snow. In a letter of thanks to the hotel for a wonderful experience, the guest invited Lee to fly to Brazil and stay with his family.

“For me, the Associate Service Pledge means doing everything possible to ensure 100 percent satisfaction. It means going above and beyond to make sure every guest feels special.”

Ana Topor, guest service representative, **Radison Hotel Lansing, Mich.**



“Guests want to be in a friendly atmosphere and feel that the associates are helpful; no matter what the task is, the job has to get done. We need to wow each guest and the Pledge keeps us on track.”

Juan Villegas, maintenance technician, **Doubletree Hotel Dearborn, Mich.**



Every day at 4 p.m., all associates at **Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North** gather for a Pledge rally led by AGM **Kenny Didier**. The p.m. staff (left) and the housekeeping department show off their Pledge cards.



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Promoting loyalty



Left to right: Josh Tanczer, room service server; Andrea Kroll, server; Roslyn Fryman, server; and Rob Champness, RCG manager

Rob Champness, a.m. dining room supervisor at RiverCity Grille at **Marriott Cincinnati-Airport, Erlanger, Ky.**, developed a frequent diner promotion to drive revenue to the restaurant and create increased customer loyalty. A business card with the RCG logo was created in-house, and an incentive program was launched to create a fun competition for the staff to see which server could sign up the most frequent diners.

"It's a great way to remind our customers that we're here, we're offering great food and we appreciate their business," states Champness.

First impressions count

Alexandra Zupp, guest service agent and night auditor at **Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast**, understands the importance of donning a sales cap when the sales team is gone for the day. After giving Alexandra Zupp the grand tour of the hotel to the potential clients, Zupp identified their business and frequency in town. "Alexandra's positive first impression set the tone for a lucrative business relationship between the company and the hotel, and it was an example of a strong 24/7 sales mentality at Marriott Northeast," shares front desk supervisor Megan Gallimore.



Showing appreciation

More than 75 key employees turned out for a client appreciation party hosted by **Marriott Birmingham, Ala.**, for its newest VIP group, Education Corporation of America. "To date, the ECA has booked more than 1200 room nights and spent \$85,000 in food and beverage revenue, and this party was our way of thanking them for their business," states HR director Karen Jacob.

ECA leadership was impressed with the warm reception, the hotel's commitment to customer service and to learn the hotel employs a number of students and alumni of Virginia College, a branch of ECA. Below, sales account manager John Staub poses with two employees of ECA.



Continued from Page 3



Sales coordinator Caroline Kimathi (pictured left), could hardly wait for an ice cream treat during associate appreciation week at **Embassy Suites Lexington, Ky.** The hotel also celebrated its 10th anniversary with a birthday bash for associates. All enjoyed the cook-off, dinner and a movie, water balloon toss, car wash and grill out.

Summer of firsts



Supervisors take a break at the employee car wash.

Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North celebrated its first associate appreciation week and its one-year anniversary with great food, massages, prizes, a car wash and a family-friendly picnic. The water balloon toss (turned fight), volleyball tournament and kids obstacle course were hits. "What an awesome way to celebrate our hotel," shares GM Paul O'Connor. "The weather was amazing and so many people came out with their families to celebrate and have a good time."

Associates at **Marriott Cincinnati-North** look forward to the annual raffling off of managers during associate appreciation week. Maintenance technician Stephen Nkansah (left) was the lucky winner of GM Jason Kreul. "Jason did a wonderful job cleaning the grounds and answering radio calls with Stephen for the day," recalls HR director Elizabeth Hill.



Last man sitting

Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport-South treated associates to food, games, prizes and a manager car wash during associate appreciation week. From made-to-order omelets and fajita dinners to special desserts, associates enjoyed daily treats.



Pictured above left, associates fight for a seat during **Marriott Musical Chairs**. Pictured above right, Oscar Nieto, guest service representative, holds up his prize for being the last man sitting.



Supervisors create eclectic menu

Supervisors showed off their creativity and culinary talents as they hosted a variety of meals and snacks during associate appreciation week at **Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio**. The week ended with a Pledge rally and a pizza and wing competition. The management team served homemade pizza and chicken wings, and associates judged the contest. Guest service supervisor Jonathan Anderson's roast beef pizza and GM Michael Cooney's wings with a secret hot sauce took the top honors.

Room attendant Danette Hoover received a \$100 gift card at the Pledge rally by staying real; associates caught practicing the Holiday Inn brand promise of "Stay Real" were eligible to win.



Left to right: Jacquelyn Evrard, Danette Hoover and Michael Cooney

Getting out of the house



Associates at **Marriott Suites on Sand Key, Clearwater Beach, Fla.**, didn't have to go far for a relaxing associate appreciation week. Staff ditched the cafeteria and hitched a ride on the Jolley Trolley to have lunch at the beautiful Sand Key Park where Chef Jason Orchard whipped up some culinary magic on the grill," states director of HR Donna Bolich. "The relaxation continued all week with massages, treats and games."



Room attendants at **Marriott Cincinnati-Airport, Hebron, Ky.**, chilled out with some Kona Ice while the supervisory team washed more than 40 of the associates' cars.

Employees give thanks

Holiday Inn & Suites Cincinnati-Eastgate treated employees to daily activities and prizes during associate appreciation week. Daily snack and beverage carts, breakfast and luncheon specials, a pizza party and bingo were highlights of the fun-filled week. "The week was received warmly by all staff ... many associates commented on how fortunate they were to work for a company that continued to recognize and appreciate its staff, despite slow business," shares HR director Amy Rahe. The week ended on a sweet note with a visit from the Good Humor Ice Cream truck.

Associates at **Marriott Birmingham, Ala.**, clowned around with Sparkles (right) at a carnival-themed event during associate appreciation week. Other activities included indoor bowling, a caricature artist, impromptu contests and door prizes. On right, LaToya Diamond, guest service representative, wears her balloon art.



Sing-off, trike races and corn hole

Competitive spirits were awakened at **Marriott Cincinnati-Northeast** as associates competed in a Karaoke sing-off, tricycle races and corn hole. The associates also had a chance to unwind while sipping "mocktails" at the traditional poolside picnic.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Associates at WHI properties are active contributors to the communities in which they live and work. Focus correspondents at the following properties reported news of groups of associates and individual employees who contribute time and effort to help others.

Teamwork on the job site

The CARE Committee at **Doubletree Hotel Dearborn, Mich.**, teamed up with Habitat for Humanity in Monroe County, Mich., over two weekends in June to build three houses in 12 days. The team tackled roofing, siding and window installation in 10-hour shifts. **Jennifer Medina**, guest service representative and CARE Committee president, reported that the team got a kick out of learning new skills and had the muscle aches to prove it. "We did a lot of laughing. Putting up the walls was exciting, too. There is nothing there and then it looks like a house," Medina shares.



Jennifer Medina (left) and Kara Veldhuis

Community leader

Alex Blust, GM at **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Riverfront, Covington, Ky.**, has been a member of the Covington Business Council since 2007 and was recently voted to the board. Blust also is chairman of the Covington Business Council Advocacy Committee and a board member of the Covington Litter Task force. He currently is working on the Adopt-Your-Block program in which he ensures the area surrounding the hotel remains clean.



Alex Blust

Summer promotion feeds hungry



Left to right: Olivia Helmie, server; Nicole Allen, server; Laura Murphy; Bethany Schmidt, server; and John Sweeney, server

Laura Murphy, p.m. dining room supervisor at **Holiday Inn Cincinnati-Airport, Erlanger, Ky.**, and her team partnered with Absolut Vodka in a summer promotion that both benefitted the hotel financially and also supported Kentucky Harvest, a foundation that feeds 2.7 million meals a year to Kentucky's needy.

Absolut donates five meals to Kentucky Harvest for every bottle of vodka purchased. Murphy and her team created an energetic Absolut Vodka iced tea summer promotion that has generated \$1,800 in sales and 115 donated meals to date. "I am very proud of my team's enthusiasm and success with the promotion."

Contributing to a great cause

Associates at **Marriott Columbus-Northwest, Ohio**, adhere to Marriott's Spirit to Serve when holding a raffle for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Guest service representative **Christine Zebris** shares: "It was really a chance to bring people together for a great cause. Helping to organize the raffle was a great experience."

Banquet server **Gary Scarbrough** won the raffle and donated a portion of the winnings back to St. Jude in the name of Sean Witsoe, a cancer patient at the facility.



Christine Zebris

Banding together



Tianna Malensek (left) and Tina Freeman

When **Tina Freeman**, suitekeeper at **Homewood Suites Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio**, was diagnosed with breast cancer last year, her Homewood family held car washes, bake sales and other fundraisers to assist with expenses. Front desk manager **Tianna Malensek** went one step further and contacted the local Coca-Cola distributor to inquire on fundraising opportunities. The hotel is now selling Breast Cancer Awareness water bottles, with the proceeds going to local breast cancer chapters.

Goal surpassed

Jiman Hilligas, banquet server at **Embassy Suites Lexington, Ky.**, recently participated in the Boone County American Cancer Society's Walk for Life. After losing her sister to colon cancer, Hilligas and her family became active supporters of the local chapter to raise funds.



Jiman Hilligas

GM **Ron van Harren** and Hilligas's Embassy Suites family joined the effort. The hotel sponsored a booth at the event and contributed an overnight stay to attract donations. Together with a local radio announcer and Hilligas' grandchildren distributing promotional cards for the hotel, the booth drew the crowd's attention.

"Many thanks to the staff of Embassy for helping a small team from Northern Kentucky surpass their goal for such a worthwhile event," Hilligas shares.

Industry leaders



Nancy Sorrells (left) and Julie Faver-Dylla

Sales account manager **Julie Faver-Dylla** and GM **Nancy Sorrells** represent **Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport-South** as they work with other hotel executives to revitalize the Hotel Association of Tarrant County. The association is dedicated to the enhancement of ideas and camaraderie to project a unified, proactive voice in government affairs, meaningful involvement in the community and continuing education of existing and future leaders.

"Nancy currently serves as the association president, while Julie serves as membership chair," says HR director **Aric Briggie**. "The two recently coordinated the first hospitality event to take place at the new Dallas Cowboys Stadium. More than 265 local hotel executives and hospitality vendors attended the meeting to hear a representative for the Super Bowl Host Committee speak about plans for Super Bowl XLV in 2011."

Extreme dreams team



Renaissance Hotel Indianapolis-North joined with other Indianapolis-area Marriott hotels to provide a home makeover for a local family with a child with disabilities.

"The family enjoyed a weekend stay at a hotel with all of the room service and poolside fun they could ask for while we went to work on renovations to their home," shares HR director **Erin Hayek**.

Supervisors and associates from the hotel worked in shifts all weekend long to renovate the child's room, build a swing set and deep clean the entire house. "It was a great time," shares GM **Paul O'Connor**. "We got a lot of work done, and we built camaraderie throughout the Marriott family and our own hotel. Plus, we made a huge difference in the life of an Indianapolis family."

Pictured left to right: Molly Worthington, sales manager; Erin Hayek, HR director; Lauren Parker, sales coordinator; Kenny Didier, AGM; and Jonathan Kirchner, Grille 39 Supervisor



Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn, Ohio, recently held its annual blood drive and picnic luncheon to support the Community Blood Center of Dayton. The event collected 18 pints, with each pint having the potential to save up to three lives. Those unable to give blood could contribute \$5 for the picnic lunch. Pictured above: **Emily Dunlavy**, bookkeeper, and **Ron Fillmore**, p.m. restaurant supervisor

FOCUS

Fall 2009 Vol. 25, No. 3

Winegardner & Hammons, Inc.

4243 Hunt Road
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PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER © 2009 WHI

FOCUS CORRESPONDENTS

WHI's company newsletter relies on a correspondent from each property to submit newsworthy information about co-workers and his or her hotel. Since the last issue of *Focus*, we welcomed **Michelle Miller**, **Radisson Hotel Lansing, Mich.**, as our newest member of the newsletter correspondent team.