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The Future of Travel is Diverse & More Inclusive!

It is National Travel and Tourism Week, and we are excited to continue championing and celebrating the diversity and inclusivity of our industry, our people and the Central Florida community. Valuing diversity can no longer be a “separate” conversation but naturally woven into our decision making, resource allocation and social interactions. When organizations such as CFHLA establish a culture of inclusion through leadership focused on issues of diversity; organizations achieve a new culture of inclusion. An inclusive culture makes team members feel safe and creates an awareness and connectivity to the guests and to our community, which we serve.

So you might ask, what hinders diversity? Bias.

Bias is how we perceive the world around us and the small assumptions we unconsciously and consciously make. It happens when we speak to others, when we apply to jobs, and when we work with others. Bias influences our behavior—and our behavior has an impact on others.

When leadership values, includes, and respects others, team members become more engaged, and they make their best contributions. In the contrast, when we ignore or exclude individuals due to bias, it affects their sense of belonging and, as a result, their level of engagement decreases.

According to McKinsey and Company:

- Companies in the top 25% on gender and racial diversity are more likely to over perform in relation to their industry peers.
- Companies in the lowest 25% on gender and racial diversity are more likely to under perform in relation to their industry peers.

These data points reflect that when bias is mitigated and diversity is encouraged, teams feel more inclusive, make better decisions, and deliver better results.



Words in Action

Since 2020, the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association (CFHLA) has made a commitment to using our collective voice to build a stronger and more inclusive community - where each individual is welcomed, valued, respected and free to pursue lives of choice.

To this end, throughout 2021, the CFHLA Board of Directors completed a 6-part training on "The Importance of Understanding Implicit and Explicit Bias."

What you may not know is that we analyzed the data, and the results were astounding:

- 90% showed knowledge gained
- 92% showed knowledge retained
- 100% stated others would benefit from the bias training

In response to these results, CFHLA launched a brand-new Diversity Committee focused on building out an effective framework, in order to amplify our voice on behalf of the hospitality industry. The first initiative for the Diversity Committee was to draft and administer a D.E.I. assessment for the CFHLA Board of Directors to complete.

The results of the assessment, uncovered the need for the additional actionable items:

1. **Create a Tool Kit for Listening Circles** - Listening Circles provide companies with an open environment for all staff to share their thoughts and experiences on diversity, equity, and inclusion with leadership. The Listening Circles Tool Kit will provide resources to our CFHLA Lodging and Allied members, on how to focus on empathy and equality, so participants listen and learn from the experiences of their peers.
2. **Launch a Leadership Mentoring Program** - After reviewing the results of the CFHLA Board of Directors Diversity Assessment, it was discovered that there tends to be a disparity when comparing the diversity of mid-level management to senior and executive-level positions within CFHLA's member properties. CFHLA is committed to supporting our future Lodging and Allied leaders, by creating programs and opportunities for mentoring and developing mid-level leaders. By doing this, we will help advance careers, increase retention in Central Florida marketplace, and build a more diverse future workforce.
3. **Create more Outreach opportunities for High School students** - CFHLA's Lodging and Allied Members have currently Adopted 73 schools for the 2021-2022 School Year. Unfortunately, several of our local middle and high schools, which have

hospitality and/or culinary magnet programs, do not have a strong connection with CFHLA and our members. The goal is to work with our local school boards to develop new outreach activities, including increased mentorship and internship opportunities, that will support these magnet programs and advance CFHLA's commitment to the future workforce of the hospitality industry.

There are currently working subcommittees for each aforementioned action item; and to join a subcommittee, please contact **Melanie Anesh**, at melanie.anesh@cfhla.org.



[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CFHLA DIVERSITY COMMITTEE!](#)

CFHLA Member Spotlights

CFHLA is proud to celebrate the cultural diversity of the hospitality industry and our entire Central Florida community.

Throughout the year, we will continue to highlight the success stories of our CFHLA members and its leaders within the hospitality industry, on our social media platforms. So be on the lookout for these stories and more, as we continue to cultivate an environment where diversity and inclusion are celebrated throughout the Central Florida Hospitality Industry.
#Diversity #HospitalityStrong #CFHLA



If you have a team member that you would like to recognize for **#AAPIHeritageMonth**. Please share their story with CFHLA President/CEO **Robert Agrusa** at robert.agrusa@cfhla.org.

Learning Opportunities

Here's a little challenge for you: Spend 5 minutes and



Project Implicit

take the free [Internal Implicit Bias Test from Harvard](#). It will be eye-opening! And you will learn something about yourself that may or may not surprise you.

Also, check out this video to see assumptions people make based on internal biases.



Get Involved

We need your voice!

Consider attending one of our upcoming CFHLA Diversity Committee meetings:

Monday, May 16, 2022 – 1:00 pm at the CFHLA Offices

Monday, July 18, 2022 – 1:00 pm at the CFHLA Offices

Monday, August 22, 2022 – 1:00 pm at the CFHLA Offices

Monday, September 19, 2022 – 1:00 pm at the CFHLA Offices

Monday, October 17, 2022 – 1:00 pm at the CFHLA Offices

Monday, November 14, 2022 – 1:00 pm at the CFHLA Office

A Message from our President/CEO

“On Behalf of the CFHLA Board of Directors, I wholeheartedly endorse the outstanding presentation abilities of our Allied Member Tekoa Puerie, relating to the difficult topics of

America's cultural bias and social injustices. Ms. Pouerie has consistently challenged myself and our members to rethink the topic and to take appropriate individual and organizational actions.”

Robert Agrusa
President | CEO Central Florida Hotel & Lodging Association

Thank you to our Newsletter Sponsor, Tekoa Pouerie!



Want to learn more about bias? Need support navigating this conversation?

Please contact **Tekoa Pouerie** at www.tekoapouerie.com or **(407) 602-8189**.

Tekoa Pouerie is a subject matter expert on explicit and implicit bias who has trained over 10,000 individuals throughout the U.S. and abroad. Most recently, Tekoa has both consulted and provided training for the CFHLA Board of Directors and is actively involved within the association.

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