

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:**

J.R. Rupp

Director of Communications & Marketing

Central Florida Hotel & Lodging Association

(407) 313-5025

jr.rupp@cfhla.org

## **CFHLA FOUNDATION AWARDS \$208,500 IN SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS DURING ANNUAL GIVES LUNCHEON**

**ORLANDO, FLA** (April 21, 2023) – On Thursday, April 20, 2023, the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association (CFHLA), in partnership with the CFHLA Foundation and through the support of our members, proudly announced that the organization had awarded over **\$1,200,000** in Hospitality Student Scholarships since 2000.

This includes another **\$129,000** that was distributed to **57** college and high school students during yesterday's annual Gives Luncheon, held at the Hilton Orlando.

In addition, CFHLA and the CFHLA Foundation awarded **\$79,500** in hospitality education and community grants to local educational institutions and organizations.

Also, part of Thursday's program was the recognition of **89** CFHLA Members, consisting of Lodging and Allied Members, who took part in the Association's Adopt-A-School Partnership supporting Central Florida public schools for the 2022-2023 academic year.

"I am extremely proud of our CFHLA members who stepped up in a huge way, as we supported our local students and organizations with the largest amount of distribution from our CFHLA Foundation to date," stated Anthony Lazzara Chair of the CFHLA Board of Directors and General Manager of the Hotel Kinetic Universal Boulevard. "It is through the dedication, generosity and fundraising efforts of our Scholarship Committee and the membership as a whole that we were able to make such a positive difference on the lives of so many individuals and a strong impact on the organizations within our community."

Robert Agrusa, President and CEO of CFHLA expanded on Mr. Lazzara's comment, "This year, among the 57 scholarship recipients was eight Central Florida High School graduating seniors. With workforce development as a new priority for our organization, it was extremely rewarding to be able to support those hard-working students as they enter the next step of their educational journey and prepare them to begin their future careers in hospitality."

The awards presented during the luncheon included the latest awarding of the Don and Lorraine Freeberg Foundation Scholarship. Recipients of this prestigious honor receive a

\$40,000 Scholarship, with a disbursement of \$10,000 over the course of four years and a paid internship opportunity at the Caribe Royale Orlando. This year's recipient, **Melanie Bezold will be graduating from Osceola High School** next month before continuing her education at the UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management.

Included among the seven grant recipients were four grants that were new awards for 2023. They include **Dr. Jeff Weinland Memorial Scholarship Fund in partnership with FantasyWorld Resort at UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management - \$25,000**; **Seminole State College** to support the college's new hospitality and tourism management program - **\$5,000**; **Wekiva High School** towards the installation of six bakery workstations (only two others throughout the state of Florida) - **\$6,900**; and **Oak Ride High School** towards the creation of interactive hospitality simulations zones, **\$2,600**.

Grant disbursements also included **\$25,00 to the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts**, year 9 of 10 for \$250,000 total; **\$5,000 to the Valencia College Foundation**, year 10 of 10 for \$50,000 total; and **\$10,000 to the UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management**, year 2 of 2 for \$20,000 total.

CFHLA also held a CARES Collection Drive prior to and during the event, with more than **42,000 donated items** going to support Central Florida students in need throughout Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties.

The Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association's mission is to represent the Central Florida Hospitality Industry, by setting the standard of excellence through advocacy, collaboration, education, recognition, and service. As the largest regional lodging association in the United States, CFHLA represents approximately 80 percent of the more than 129,500 hotel rooms in Orange, Seminole and Osceola counties, and the nearly 500 "supplier" organizations that do business with the hospitality and tourism industries.

For more information on the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association, please visit [www.cfhla.org](http://www.cfhla.org).

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