

CH&LA Educational Foundation Receives \$100,000 From the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation
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'We Welcome Service Animals' Program Receives Major Funding

The California Hotel & Lodging Association (CH&LA) Educational Foundation has received \$100,000 to fund the We Welcome Service Animals(TM) program from The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation. The funding is being provided by the Foundation for reproduction and distribution of the We Welcome Service Animals training videos and collateral materials, with the specific goal of ensuring there will be enhanced accessibility throughout the hospitality industry for guests and patrons who use service animals.

We Welcome Service Animals is a national education and outreach campaign created by the California Hotel & Lodging Association Educational Foundation to teach people in the hospitality industry and law enforcement community how to improve service to guests and patrons with disabilities who depend on service animals for assistance. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, hotels, motels, and restaurants are required to treat customers with disabilities accompanied by service animals like all other guests, providing them with the same service and access to all areas where other guests are allowed. The development of the program's training videos and collateral materials was made possible with initial funding from the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Foundation and the American Express Foundation.

The We Welcome Service Animals program won a prestigious "Associations Advance America Award" from the American Society of Association Executives, as well as a gold "Telly" award.

"We're very excited to be able to move this project forward to its next phase with the assistance of The J. Willard and Alice Marriot Foundation," said Al Sessler, President of the CH&LA Educational Foundation. "Recognition and funding of this program greatly forwards the mission of the CH&LA Educational Foundation."

The We Welcome Service Animals program is already being implemented by key organizations in the hospitality industry. For example, it will be offered by Marriott International, Inc., as an education and training component to its approximately 2,200 lodging properties in the United States. In addition, Best Western International will be implementing the program in more than 2,400 properties in the United States and Canada in early May, and the Asian American Hotel Owners Association is furnishing the videos and collateral materials to its 8,500 members.

"Having organizations like Marriott International and Best Western implement the program adds to distribution that is being undertaken by many other companies and in countless hospitality establishments," said Jim Abrams, President and CEO of the California Hotel & Lodging Association.

The California Hotel & Lodging Association (CH&LA) is the largest state lodging industry trade association in the country. Its 1,600 members, which comprise approximately 175,000 guest rooms, include hotels, motels, bed and breakfast inns, guest ranches, resorts, spas, condominium rentals, timeshares, and vacation home rentals located throughout California. CH&LA's mission is to be the indispensable resource for communicating and protecting the rights and interests of the California lodging industry, for providing educational training and value programs for all segments of the industry, and for supporting strategic alliances to promote the value of California tourism and travel. Sacramento-based CH&LA has been representing California's lodging industry for more than a century. CH&LA is on the web at www.calodging.com.

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