

## Carlson Hotels Worldwide Expands Diversity Initiatives

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### Broad-Based Diversity Includes Guests, Franchisees, Employees, Suppliers and Local Communities

Carlson Hotels Worldwide today announced the latest additions to its diversity initiatives, reflecting a commitment to foster relationships with a wide range of diverse groups when it comes to hotel developers, guests and even the cities where the company operates.

"The goal is to grow our business using the lens of diversity in a noble way," said Maria Seiler, vice president of diversity for Carlson Hotels Worldwide. "We know that the way we operate impacts our guests, franchisees, current and future employees, and even our suppliers. We want to create good will in the community, as well as with our partners and customers, by having our company reflect the communities where we do business."

On the development front, Carlson Hotels Worldwide has broadened the diversity of its franchisees by signing several hotels with owners representing women, minorities, and the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. This includes the new 145-room Radisson Hotel Lubbock Downtown in Texas, which is owned by Ms. Priya Dias, who was born in Sri Lanka and immigrated to the United States.

"I have been in the hotel business for 20 years, starting as a hotel manager and expanding my work experience as I realized my passion for being a hotelier," said Priya Dias, owner of Lubbock Investments LLC. "In some ways it has been about breaking into an industry dominated by men -- especially when I became a hotel owner. Our first commitment is to our guests by making them comfortable and taken care of by our staff. I believe the best way to help our guests feel at home in our hotel is working with a hotel staff that loves what they do and are equally as dedicated to our guests as I am."

Helping expand Carlson's outreach to multi-cultural franchisees is supported by the company's new position on the corporate advisory board for the Hispanic Hotel Owners Association (HHOA). The non-profit organization is focused on the advancement of Hispanics within the lodging industry, including opportunities to own, develop and operate hotels.

In addition to its participation with HHOA, Carlson continues to be active with several other minority and multi-cultural organizations, including board positions with the Asian American Hotel Owners Association and an annual scholarship for \$50,001, and the National Association of Black Hotel Owners, Operators & Developers.

Carlson is also committed to young people and has given substantial donations to help youth succeed during school and as they prepare for a career. Partnering with the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), Carlson Hotels Worldwide joined with its parent organization, Carlson, to offer a \$5,000 UNCF scholarship to a student from a historically black college. The company is also planning to provide an information technology internship to the recipient. In addition, Minnesota-based Carlson is working closely with local universities and colleges to increase the diversity of the company's technology interns, hoping they will eventually become full-time employees.

Through Achieve!Minneapolis' STEP-UP program, a summer employment program for diverse, skilled and motivated youth, Carlson Hotels hired 10 students of color for paid internships at hotels and the company's corporate office. Also on the local level, Carlson made a substantial donation in 2007 to La Escuelita, a Minneapolis-based non-profit program focused on academic enrichment and leadership development for Latino immigrant and non-immigrant youth currently enrolled in grades 6-12 in area schools. Its mission is to empower Latino youth and their families to achieve educational equity through academic support and advocacy.

Guest needs are a very relevant part of Carlson's diversity initiatives. To help ensure the safety of guests with dwarfism and other physical limitations, in 2007, owned and managed Radisson Hotels & Resorts, Park Plaza Hotels & Resorts and Country Inns & Suites in the Americas began offering Short Stature Accessibility Kits. The complimentary kits include a stepstool, a reaching tool, a bar to lower the clothes rack in closets, and a device to retrofit the latch-hook lock on the door.

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