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CONTACT:

Sarah Panko

Communications and Marketing Manager

Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association

(407) 313-5025

sarah.panko@cfhla.org

**CFHLA FOUNDATION DISTRIBUTES OVER \$178,000 TO SUPPORT
STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS AND EDUCATIONAL GRANTS**

ORLANDO, FLA. (October 22, 2025) - Tuesday, the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association (CFHLA), in partnership with the CFHLA Foundation, proudly announced that - through the support of its members - the organization has now awarded more than \$1.5 million in hospitality student scholarships since 2000.

This year alone, \$160,300 was distributed to 62 local students during CFHLA's annual Gives Luncheon, held at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista South.

The program also recognized 112 CFHLA lodging and allied members who participated in the association's Adopt-A-School Partnership throughout the 2024-2025 academic year. This was a 9% increase from the 2023-2024 academic year.

"The hospitality industry is an incredible asset to Central Florida, and our members continue to show just how much they care about this community. This year, another 62 local students who may not have had access to an education without our financial support, have now been given the opportunity to further their education in either hospitality management or culinary," said Chris Mueller, Chair of the CFHLA Board of Directors and General Manager of the Hilton Orlando. "Through Adopt-A-School partnerships, our dedicated Scholarship Committee, and the CFHLA CARES Collection Drive, we're making a real difference for students, teachers, and families across the region."

Robert Agrusa, President and CEO of CFHLA, said "This year, we proudly welcomed 30 new Adopt-A-School partnerships, bringing us to more than 110 across Central Florida. Through these efforts, our members continue to invest in the next generation of hospitality leaders and make such a positive difference within our local community."



Among this year's highlights was the presentation of the Don and Lorraine Freeberg Foundation Scholarship- a \$52,000 full-ride scholarship along with a paid internship opportunity at the Caribe Royale Orlando and at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista South. This year's recipient, Aubrey Pugh, graduated from Wekiva High School last spring and is continuing her education at UCF's Rosen College of Hospitality Management this fall.

In addition, CFHLA and the CFHLA Foundation awarded nearly \$18,000 in educational grants to three local schools and county-wide initiatives. Grant recipients included:

- **Horizon High School** – \$2,750 to support nearly 300 students annually through the purchase of equipment that teaches ice cream making and supports program fundraising.
- **Seminole County Public Schools Foundation** – \$5,000 to enhance culinary education for more than 200 students by updating kitchen equipment and supplies.
- **Orange County Public Schools Culinary and Hospitality Competition** – \$10,000 to support competitions that allow high school students to showcase their culinary skills, hospitality knowledge, and marketing creativity.

CFHLA also hosted a CARES Collection Drive prior to and during the event, with more than 226,600 donated items going to support Central Florida students in need throughout the region.

About Central Florida Hotel & Lodging Association

As the largest regional hospitality association in the United States, CFHLA represents approximately 80% of the more than 129,500 hotel rooms throughout the Central Florida region (including, but not limited to, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Polk, and Seminole counties), and nearly 500 "supplier" organizations that do business with the hospitality and tourism industries.

For more information on CFHLA, please visit www.cfhla.org.

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