



## NEWS RELEASE

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau**

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## **Lee County VCB milestone: 100th Certified Guest Service Professional designation**

*A step closer to being the friendliest destination in the country*

**LEE COUNTY, FL** — The Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB) has reached the milestone of certifying its 100th Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP®) as part of its goal to become the nation's first Certified Guest Service Destination – and the friendliest destination in the country. A group of 27 CGSP graduates brought the total to 107.

The VCB began the process in October 2012, when it partnered with the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI) to include Guest Service Gold® and the CGSP® as part of the VCB's multifaceted Guests First Customer Service Training Program. That program consists of six or seven (for supervisors and managers) 2.5 hour modules covering all areas of tourism-focused service.

To earn certification, hospitality employees must complete Guests First, the VCB's award winning, seven-module customer service program. Christine Davlin, VCB tourism education and training manager, manages and facilitates the program. She is enthused that this partnership allows participants to become eligible to take the AH&LA Educational Institute's CGSP® final exam.

In October 2013, the Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites — The Forum in Fort Myers became the first hotel property in Lee County to have its frontline staff earn the Certified Guest Service Property designation. Since then, two more properties — Windward Passage Resort and Beach Club I — have earned the Certified Guest Service Property designation, and more individuals are signing up for the training modules that culminate with the CGSP® exam.

“It is essential for hospitality employees to have effective guest service skills in today's competitive market,” said Tamara Pigott, VCB executive director. “The CGSP designation is recognized worldwide and the highest acknowledgment of award-winning guest service for employees in the hospitality industry. The Beaches of Fort Myers and Sanibel is steadily moving forward to our goal of becoming the friendliest destination in the United States.”

The most recent graduates include: Derek Baker, DiamondHead , Kimberly Carvalho, Sunset Beach Inn, Melissa Chung, Doubletree Suites, Denise Croon, City of Ft. Myers Yacht Basin, Elizabeth Cruz, Sanibel Beach Club, Patti Dutcher, Fairfield Inn, Eric Ernst, RHM @ FGCU, Charm Evans, Lee County VCB, Monica Freeman, Lee County Port Authority, Emily Frost, Sundial Beach Resort & Spa, Lari Hayhoe, City of Sanibel, Alana Henry, City of Bonita Springs, Janet Holoubek, Lee County VCB, Shannon Lee, Outrigger Beach Resort, Lauralee Mason, Hampton Inn & Suites, Maya Mathis, RHM @ FGCU, Cara Pennetti, Sundial Beach Resort & Spa, Paula Poe, Outrigger Beach Resort, Robert Scammon, Westin Resort, Zeb Strait, Lee County Port Authority, Holly Welker, Homewood Suites and Stefanie Zinke, Lee County VCB. Students from Keiser University also received their certification: Margot Anderson, Berthie Cherubin, Soatja Cherubin, Chris McCoy, and Michael Shaffer

Contact Christine Davlin, tourism education and training manager, for more information on Guests First or the CGSP® certification at [cdavlin@leegov.com](mailto:cdavlin@leegov.com).

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*Editors' Note: The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel include: Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Boca Grande & outer islands, North Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres. Images available upon request.*

Sanibel & Captiva Islands Fort Myers Beach Fort Myers Bonita Springs Estero Cape Coral Pine Island Boca Grande & Outer Islands North Fort Myers Lehigh Acres

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