



January 31, 2025

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Crowne Plaza Orlando-Downtown Celebrates Relaunch



Congratulations to our CFHLA Lodging Member [Crowne Plaza Orlando-Downtown](#) on their official relaunch! After completing a significant renovation project to its 255+ room hotel, several of our hospitality leaders, community partners and members were excited to see the extensive updates this week, located in the heart of downtown Orlando.

Moving forward, guests will now be able to embrace comfort and style in their newly modernized accommodations, including upscale furnishings, elegant amenities and sophisticated decor. These spacious accommodations offer the epitome of comfort and convenience, ensuring a rejuvenating stay after a day of exploration or productivity. The extensive renovations also included the ballrooms, meeting spaces, full service restaurant and more.

Thank you to all of our CFHLA leaders and members, including 2025 Board Chair **Chris Mueller** with the [Hilton Orlando](#), who joined in the celebration of the downtown hotel's renovations and relaunch.



On behalf of CFHLA, we'd like to wish all the best to **General Manager, John Lyon**, and the entire Crowne Plaza Orlando-Downtown team on this momentous occasion. Here's to "Reigniting the Magic" for many more decades to come!



Registration Closes Today for State of Hospitality & Tourism



State of Hospitality & Tourism

Thursday, February 6, 2025 | 8:00 am - 11:00 am

Caribe Royale Orlando | 8101 World Center Dr.
Orlando, FL 32821

The event will feature presentations on Central Florida's market trends (ADR, occupancy) in 2024, national & local forecasts for 2025, recent workforce data and career growth opportunities within the hospitality & tourism industry.

Registration Fee: \$75/person

Presentations by:

- Nilda Blanco, SVP Strategic Initiatives, CareerSource Central Florida
- Isaac Collazo, VP, Analytics, STR

Corporate Sponsors:

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Registration closes today for the [2025 State of Hospitality & Tourism](#) breakfast.

This informative breakfast event will feature presentations on **Central Florida's market trends**, including ADR and occupancy throughout 2024, **as well as national and local forecasts for 2025**. Plus, it will include **newly released workforce data** and explore the career growth opportunities for the hospitality industry within our region.

Do not miss out on this signature CFHLA breakfast that will feature presentations by **Nilda Blanco**, Senior Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at [CareerSource Central Florida](#) and **Isaac Collazo**, Vice President of Analytics at [STR](#). The cost is \$75 per person. Again, registration for this must-attend event closes today.

[CLICK HERE](#) to register.

CFHLA Supports OCPS 15th Annual Culinary Competition



Once again, CFHLA was proud to sponsor the 2025 [Orange County Public Schools](#) 15th Annual Culinary Competition! This year's competition featured a record-breaking 240+ talented student competitors on 92 culinary teams, representing 15 schools. Additionally, more than 80+ professional Chef Judges took the time to help support these students by tasting the culinary creations, evaluating their presentations, and weighing in on who created the best culinary delights.

Congratulations again to all of the students who participated, including CFHLA High School Outreach partners at the [Colonial High School](#) Culinary Program, [Jones High School](#) Culinary Program and [Wekiva High School](#) Culinary Program. Thank you to the amazing host, [Orange County Convention Center](#) and all of the industry professionals who attended and helped contribute to another successful student competition!

We appreciate the continued partnership with [Orange County Public Schools](#). This important culinary competition is just another example of how our

industry is collaborating with our local schools, to prepare our students for the bright future careers of tomorrow, within the culinary and hospitality industry.



CFHLA is Now Accepting Applications for Student Scholarships



HOSPITALITY & CULINARY STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Apply Now!



**APPLICATION DEADLINE
MAY 2, 2025**

SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY

- Open to Full Time and Part Time Students
- Applied / Accepted / or Enrolled at an accredited Central Florida College or University
- Pursuing Hospitality & Culinary related Minors, Majors, and Certificates

The [CFHLA Foundation](#) is now accepting applications for this year's [Hospitality and Culinary Student Scholarships](#) and for [Employee and Family Member Scholarships](#).

[CLICK HERE](#) to apply today.

The deadline to submit your applications for this year's scholarships is **May 2, 2025** and we look forward to supporting the continued investment and advancement of the next generation of hospitality professionals!



EMPLOYEE & FAMILY MEMBER SCHOLARSHIPS Apply Now!



APPLICATION DEADLINE
MAY 2, 2025

SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY

- Full-Time / Hourly / Non-Management Employees
- Immediate Family Members of Full -Time Hourly / Non-Management Employees
- Attending an accredited College or University in the United States

Hilton Orlando Assists with Mock Interviews for Second Harvest Food Bank

CFHLA thanks the team at [Hilton Orlando](#) for giving back and helping to mentor the next generation of culinary leaders. Executive Chef David Scalise, accompanied by Franziska Melzer from HR, represented Hilton Orlando during a mock interview session at [Second Harvest Food Bank Orlando](#). By providing feedback to the five culinary students enrolled in the program, the Hilton Orlando is working to strengthen its relationship with Second Harvest, an important local partner.

The interviewees came well-prepared with their resumes, eagerly sharing their passion for learning, growth, and the important culinary skills they've gained through Second Harvest's culinary training program. You could see their confidence build during the

interviews as they began discussing their love for cooking and their dedication to their craft.

The Hilton Orlando culinary team was especially proud to share with the students that one of its very own team members, Jeremy, who successfully completed the program, is now thriving in his role with the hotel.

CFHLA thanks the Hilton Orlando for their investment into creating culinary careers and its commitment to supporting our community partners.



Partners in Action - Grand Bohemian Orlando Judges Cooking Competition at Jones H.S.



A big thank you goes out to our Partners In Action at [Grand Bohemian Hotel Orlando](#). General Manager Benjamin McCarney and his team recently spent time mentoring students at the hotel's year end visit with [Jones High School](#), the hotel's partner in our [Adopt-A-School](#) Program.

Volunteers donated \$200 worth of delicious donuts and cases of water, along with ingredients for their class cooking competition. McCarney and team members served as judges and they enjoyed the students' delicious creations. They also reminded the students to always inspire their young minds, by working hard and pouring their hearts into their dishes.

Thanks again to the Grand Bohemian Hotel Orlando team and all of our CFHLA partners, who make time to invest in the futures of our students through the **Adopt-A-School** program.





Partners in Action - SpringHill Suites Team Helps Students in Need at Sunshine Elementary

Also, kudos to our Partners in Action at [SpringHill Suites & TownePlace Suites Orlando Theme Parks/LBV](#) for their continuing commitment to help students at [Sunshine Elementary School](#), as part of our [Adopt-A-School](#) Program. Volunteers from the hotel placed two huge bags filled with wrapped gifts underneath the school's Holiday Tree to brighten spirits for students in need at the school. It's another example of how CFHLA partners are investing in our community and in the future of our students!



CFHLA Members Recognized at Polaris Star Awards



CFHLA would like to congratulate two of our Members who were recently recognized as Polaris Star Award Winners. **Ally Martin, General Manager** at [Hyatt House Orlando Airport](#) and our **2025 Board Treasurer**, along with **Greg Burnes, General Manager** of [Hampton Inn & Suites Orlando Airport at Gateway Village](#) and **CFHLA PAC Board Member**, were honored with the Spotlight Award.

The Polaris Star Awards recognize individuals and organizations who are committed to stopping human trafficking. [United Abolitionists](#) and the UCF Center for Study of Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery hosted the program. This year's awards ceremony was hosted at the [UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management](#), in the Darden Auditorium last week.

CFHLA thanks all our Members and partners for their continuing efforts to end human trafficking within our community.



CFHLA Joins Community Partners in Refining the Mission and Future of Valencia College

Thank you to our educational partner, [Valencia College](#) and **Valencia President Dr. Kathleen Plinske**, for inviting our CFHLA leadership to join the Refining Our Mission, Shaping Our Future forum this week. This engaging forum was focused on bringing together local businesses and community leaders to discuss ways Valencia College can evolve to meet the regional needs of our local economy and community residents moving forward.

We look forward to the continued collaboration and partnership, as we work together to ensure the demands for skilled workers and careers within Central Florida's hospitality and tourism industry will be met over the next decade and beyond.



Part of International Drive Could be Named in Honor of Harris Rosen

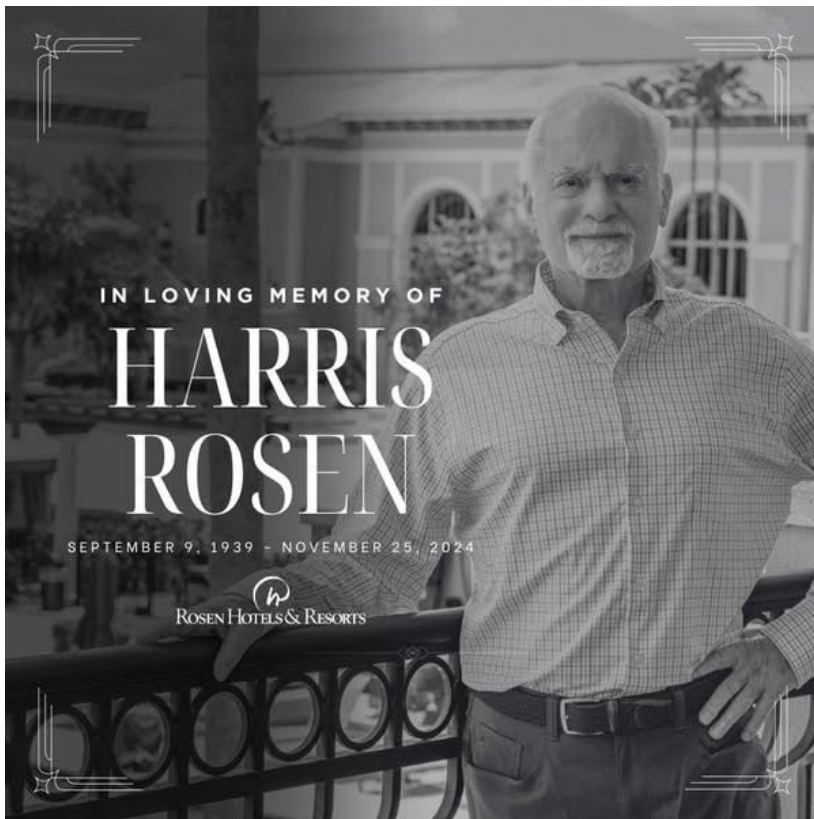
Two of our local lawmakers are working on a bill to rename part of International Drive to honor the late hotel mogul and philanthropist **Harris Rosen**.

The bill would designate the tourist corridor between State Road 528 and Sand Lake Road as “Harris Rosen Way.” Rosen, the founder of Florida’s largest independent hotel chain [Rosen Hotels & Resorts](#), and one of Orlando’s most prominent charitable donors, died Nov. 25 at the age of 85.

State Sen. Kristen Arrington, D-Kissimmee, is one of the bill’s sponsors. She said, “Mr. Rosen was a remarkable role model for the Central Florida community. Through his dedication and unwavering work ethic, he embodied the pursuit of the American Dream, inspiring others along the way.”

State Rep. Rita Harris, D-Orlando, is the bill's sponsor in the Florida House.

The Florida Department of Transportation would erect markers, attaching Rosen’s name to I-Drive.



Seminole County Welcomes Thousands for ECNL Soccer Tournaments

Seminole County once again took center stage, hosting the annual [Elite Clubs National League \(ECNL\)](#) Girls and Boys Soccer Tournaments across two weekends this month at **Sylvan Lake Park** and the **Seminole Soccer Complex**. These premier events brought over 23,000 players, coaches, and visitors to our area, filling more than 3,800 hotel rooms and generating a direct economic impact of over \$5.2 million for the County.

With more than 300 elite-level teams competing, Seminole County showcased its top-tier sports venues and their convenient access to hotels, restaurants, and attractions. ECNL has chosen Seminole County as a host location since 2010, thanks to its exceptional facilities and commitment to providing a first-class tournament experience.

The departments of **Economic Development and Tourism**, and **Parks and Recreation** organized these tournaments in partnership with the [Greater Orlando Sports Commission](#), [Seminole Soccer Complex](#), and the local hospitality industry.



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**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR
JANUARY MEMBERS OF THE MONTH**



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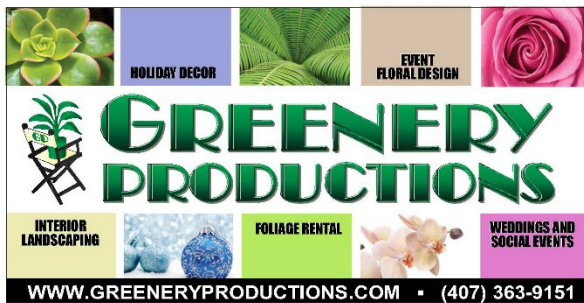
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Vista Resort

Akai Baker

Daisy Baker Cakes

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UPCOMING EVENTS

For more information on upcoming events, or to register, just click on the button below.

- [Housekeeping Council - Laundry Training Day \(2/5/2025\)](#)
 - [Membership Committee \(2/5/2025\)](#)
 - [2025 State of Hospitality & Tourism \(2/6/2025\)](#)
 - [St. Patrick's Day Golf Open Committee Meeting #1 \(2/10/2025\)](#)
 - [Vacation Ownership Council Meeting \(2/11/2025\)](#)
 - [CFHLA Executive Committee Meeting \(2/11/2025\)](#)
 - [Wednesday AM Leads Group \(2/12/2025\)](#)
 - [Wednesday Noon Leads Group \(2/12/2025\)](#)
 - [Downtown Hoteliers Luncheon \(2/12/2025\)](#)
-

[Click Here to View Upcoming
CFHLA Meetings & Events](#)

JOB OPENINGS

Check out the latest hospitality employment opportunities in Central Florida.

[VIEW JOB POSTINGS](#)

CONNECT WITH CFHLA



WWW.CFHILA.ORG

About CFHILA

6675 Westwood Blvd #210, Orlando, FL 32821

The mission of the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association is to represent the Central Florida Hospitality Industry, by setting the standard of excellence through advocacy, collaboration, education, recognition, and service.