**2018 HOSPITALITY AWARD WINNERS**

Our first nominee shows a tremendous amount of dedication and heart for her job. She lives 30 miles away from her hotel and does not have her driver’s license. For 12 years, she has taken six buses each way to get to work. She wakes up at 3:30 a.m. every day to make sure she arrives to work by 8:00 a.m. After getting off work at 4:30 p.m., she does the same trip in reverse, with the earliest she gets home being 8:30 p.m. When her story was discovered, she was asked why she continues to commute when she may have opportunities closer to home. She simply answered, “Because I love it here. This is my home. This job has helped provide for my sons and I am forever grateful.” Her dedication means the world to the hotel. She’s a quiet associate that just comes to work, does her job amazingly well, and goes home. She’s currently studying for her driver’s license and hopes the second time is the charm. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Akouavi Avegnon*** of the **Westin Arlington Gateway** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee is an essential member of the hotel’s team, adding to the well-being of both the guests and hotel. For 18 years, her kind, considerate nature has impacted all she has come across. Once, a guest was attending funeral services for the death of a family member and had received flowers. When this nominee entered the room to clean it, she found the flowers still wrapped in their original packaging. She then found a vase for the flowers, and placed the flowers in an ideal area for sunlight. When the guest returned to the room, she was overwhelmed by the thoughtfulness and requested to see the nominee before departing to thank her for her kindness. More recently, an upset guest called the hotel after leaving her wedding ring in the room. Upon discovering the ring, the nominee quickly secured the ring and gave it to her manager for safekeeping. The guest was so grateful for her honesty that she asked to meet her in person to thank her. This nominee’s integrity and compassion has resulted in a number of delighted guests. Her dedication is evident as she proudly wears her company pin every day. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Ramona Aquirre de Torres*** of **Crowne Plaza Washington National Airport** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee demonstrates consistent initiative, dependability and commitment to high standards. She created a pop-up monthly restaurant that has transformed the regular culinary arts program by training students about the front and back end of running a restaurant. She goes above and beyond the culinary arts standard curriculum so that students learn and apply the hospitality and business skills related to the restaurant industry. She has been recognized as an outstanding teacher, which is reflected by the countless scholarships and awards that her students have earned. She is a true asset to those who work with her and to her community. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Chef Renee Randolph*** of the **Arlington Public Schools** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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The next nominee has gone above and beyond in her role showing a positive attitude and true dedication to her job. When the hotel rolled out a major room configuration conversion, without hesitation she championed the initiative to help increase revenue for the hotel. She worked many hours in addition to her assigned job duties to complete this complicated and labor intensive project. Because of her hard work and knowledge, she was able to complete the project seamlessly without any errors and ahead of schedule without impacting the hotel operations or customers. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Tenesia Alston*** of the **Crystal City Marriott** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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The next nominee has demonstrated constant professionalism, efficiency, and high-level quality service. He consistently receives positive comments for his warm and welcoming demeanor, and is one of the key reasons why groups return to the hotel year after year. There was an instance where he did not work one day and a repeat guest noticed and left a note stating, “I missed you! I always remember your talent and great attention to detail.” His service is truly memorable, creating a lasting impression for years to come. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Chiranjibi Sapkota*** of the **Crowne Plaza Washington National Airport** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee’s passion and dedication to her job is exemplary. She is always attentive to guests’ needs and proactively listens to what they are expressing or what their concerns may be. She is always full of energy, optimistic and eager to learn new things in her day to day operations. The hotel’s most frequent guests often inquire about her and express that she has become part of their family. She is vital to the team’s onboarding process, taking extra time to share her extensive knowledge, and has taken a great deal of pride in the property. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Zenaida Galang*** of the **Hyatt Centric Arlington** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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The next nominee is the type of person who consistently goes above and beyond to complete her tasks without being asked. She fills in when others are out and makes sure that any groups who are arriving have been taken care of with any needs. She sets up prearrival requests on her own and proactively looks for ways to improve her guests’ stays. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Ashley Tigue*** of the **Residence Inn by Marriott Capital View** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee has shown initiative to learn and grow in his role. He is a self-starter, creating featured specials in the hotel’s restaurant that are very well received by the guests. He is always willing to cover open shifts and to accept additional responsibilities. He takes time to make dishes for guests with special allergies or religious beliefs. He is also a learning coach for the culinary department where he helps train new team members to be successful in their positions. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Kevin Marshall*** of **The** **Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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The next nominee is known for his dedication to his work. As a newly hired employee, in less than one year, he has proven to be one of the most reliable team members. He never calls out of work and is always willing to stay after his shift to help the hotel. He does a fantastic job communicating any issues to the appropriate department. A recent example being when he was making coffee for the early risers and noticed the hotel was completely out of coffee filters on a very busy morning. He informed the breakfast attendant who quickly ran to another nearby hotel to borrow a box of filters so guests would have coffee that day. On another day, when several wings of the hotel lost their water for four days, he was the first person guests would call. He managed to minimize the problem and worked hard to help compensate anyone impacted. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Shon Chau*** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Rosslyn** a 2018 Hospitality Award Superstar.

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This nominee’s positive outlook, dedication, and friendly personality are a very important part of the hotel’s success. He has a strong attention to detail and ensures all maintenance projects have the highest quality. He is willing to be at the property anytime he is needed. During the snow storm in 2015, he stayed at the hotel for three days, working around the clock to ensure the grounds were clear and safe for guests. During the same storm, he assisted in the kitchen. When assistance is needed in housekeeping, he is again there to assist in any way he could to keep the hotel running smoothly. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Gene Walker*** of the **Hilton Garden Inn** a 2018 Hospitality Award Superstar.

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The next nominee is the go-to person in the hotel. She has held a number of positions within the food and beverage department and is willing to help out whenever needed. No matter which job she performs, she is always friendly and service oriented towards the customers making them feel welcomed and relaxed. She receives numerous positive comments from her customers for her efficient service and friendliness. She always ensures that the guest expectations are met by anticipating their needs. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Miliete Hailu*** of the **Holiday Inn Arlington at Ballston** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This nominee demonstrates kindness along with problem solving skills throughout his 16 years of service. On one particular night, two distressed passengers arrived from the airport who were older and did not speak English. The gentleman had difficulty moving around, as he was crutches. Due to the weather conditions, they had missed their international flight from Russia to Vancouver and when they arrived to the hotel, were confused about why they were sent there. The next day, this nominee and a co-worker tried their best to communicate with them and assist in getting them back to the airport. This nominee comforted the guests and arranged a taxi ride for them. He paid the driver with his own money, not only for the ride, but paid extra so that the driver would make sure they got to an airline counter for guidance. His passion, dedication and loyalty to his job are key to the success of the hotel. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Luis Pileta*** of the **Hyatt Regency Crystal City at Reagan National Airport** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This dedicated nominee is the epitome of professionalism and has always demonstrated a passion for service. This was most recently demonstrated when she found out that one guest needed a baby stroller for visiting different tourist attractions. Even though the hotel does not carry baby strollers, our nominee asked the guest to check back in the morning and that she would have a stroller waiting for them. She went to Walmart near her home, purchased a stroller with her own money, and had it ready for the guest the next day. The guest was at a loss for words because of this nominee’s hospitality and said that “they would never forget the gesture.” In addition, this nominee has been recognized by her managers for taking the time to create homemade birthday cards for guests. The guests are very appreciative of this action, which is just another example of her focus on details to make their experience brilliant. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Philomene Ndene*** of **Crystal Gateway Marriott** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This next nominee is a shining star with 18 years of service. She has taken on a number of different responsibilities, always with a positive attitude and works consistently as a team player. She is a communications hub for the sales team, manages all site visits and VIP guest alerts, any pays excellent attention to detail. She goes above and beyond not only within her department, but can be found assisting others on a regular basis. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Yolanda Bolanos*** of **The Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This nominee is a natural problem solver and communicator. He once helped the engineering team control a power outage, taking ownership by fixing the problem even though it was outside of his own job responsibilities, and assisting with the communication between the hotel staff and the engineers. He was also most recently awarded “Employee of the Year”. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Julio Hernandez*** of the **Holiday Inn National Airport/Crystal City** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This next nominee is a true leader and team player. He worked his way through the ranks before moving into the AV and Catering department and was recently promoted because of his hard work and dedication. He is often asked to be a part of guest site visits since he is so good with the customers and can answer any logistics questions for their AV needs. Although it is not his role, he is often referred as the “AV sales person,” because he is that good at managing the budget. He always covers for his colleagues in various departments when they are out. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Redouane Elazhari*** of **Key Bridge Marriott** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee is an exceptional employee who originally transitioned from a J-1 visa student to a Front Office Agent. She did such a great job in her J-1 cultural exchange program that she was immediately hired. She has hotel knowledge, receives positive guest feedback, and exemplifies a passion for service – all qualities that lead her to another promotion. She is constantly taking on new challenges with grace and continuing to grow. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Joana Viloria*** of **Westin Arlington Gateway** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This next nominee is an excellent representation of what it means to be hospitable and dedicated to her guests, making impressive sacrifices to juggle her work life balance. She is both a full-time employee and student, where she is studying nursing. Her peers rely on her, and she is always flexible to best tend to the needs of the hotel. She can be seen talking to her guests, making sure they are creating memorable moments and taking the time to listen to their guest stories. She carries herself in a professional and positive manner at all times and was awarded recognition as “Employee of the Year for 2018.” The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Lidia Zepeda*** of **Residence Inn Arlington Courthouse** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee has been providing outstanding service to guests at the hotel for 23 years. She has received numerous compliments from guests for her friendly efficient service and ensures that the guests’ expectations are met by anticipating their needs. She creates a welcoming environment to all her customers and maintains a very positive attitude towards all guests and coworkers. She works well under pressure and successfully solves stressful situations. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Naseema Pazhwak*** of the **Holiday Inn Arlington at Ballston** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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The next nominee is an outstanding team member who embodies the hotel’s values of hospitality, teamwork and integrity. For example, there was one extra busy time because a number of flights were cancelled, so housekeeping had to clean many more rooms than expected. She volunteered to stay longer to assist with the higher demand and get the job done working a total of fourteen hours in one day to clean double the amount of rooms. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Martha Rosa*** of the **Residence Inn by Marriott Arlington Capital View** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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For more than 23 years, our next nominee has been providing the finest personal service for all guests. He takes pride in his work, always completing tasks silently without seeking recognition. He is satisfied when he successfully flips a room from a classroom style for four hundred to a dinner for four hundred with all of the settings. Meeting planners always ask for him, knowing that with him, they are in great hands because he is aware of their needs. On one occasion, there was a site visit for a potential group worth a contract of three million dollars over a three year period. He organized the set-up several different ways in a short window of time until the room was the best option for them. The group signed the contract and he was a crucial part in sealing the deal. On a personal note, he’s been the go-to person assisting the Chamber Gala set up for many years, and our staff feels just the way the nominator described clients working with him. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Edwin Huanaco*** of **The Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee does an excellent job taking care of guests and making them feel like family. He started his career as a Front Desk Agent and moved his way up to Human Resources Generalist. He receives multiple letters from guests expressing how welcome he makes them feel and has multiple “Spirit to Serve” recognitions. He embodies a genuine, caring attitude and has been recognized for his teamwork, earning the title of “Associate of the Month” in January. Although no longer at the front desk, guests still come up to the desk asking for him just to say hello or bring him treats. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name***Cedrick Rivers*** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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As a general accountant, our next nominee has gone above and beyond for 20 years to assist her colleagues and guests. When there was an open position in the accounting department, she immediately jumped in to assist. She took on responsibilities of the open role while still keeping all of her normal tasks. Thanks to her efforts, the hotel was able to get a green score on the accounting audit even while short staffed. She is known for being a hard worker and extremely helpful around the hotel, not just in the accounting department. She always pitches in to help set up associate holiday parties and since she knows several languages often helps with interpreting for fellow associates. She is truly a trusted figure throughout the hotel. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Arbia Abassi*** of the **Key Bridge Marriott** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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The next nominee knows what it means to go the extra mile. She arrives to work early, always welcomes guests with a smile and takes time to learn about why guests are visiting Arlington. On one occasion, she found out that one guest was sick and provided breakfast in their suite, even though the hotel does not provide room service. She also helps guests celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and weddings by bringing them special treats or a card. She has won “Employee of the Month” in the food and beverage department three times and guests often comment about her desire to start their day off on a positive note. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Nelly Pena*** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Rosslyn** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This next nominee is known as a hard worker who pushes boundaries in the pastry world. She is eager to meet and exceed customer expectations and establishes an emotional bond that creates a guest for life. She has been able to form relationships with guests who suffer gluten intolerances by understanding their food allergies providing special made desserts for them. She ensures that vegan guests are also well cared for and offers an array of options for them to choose from as well. Her passion and skill set in cake decoration is amazing to see. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Denise Miller*** of **The Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee is a valuable asset for his willingness to go above and beyond to fulfill any request and tackle any challenge. Working at the hotel for 18 years, he is known for his reliability and the quality of his work. He takes great pride in completing a job well done and takes time to work with his fellow associates so they can learn and grow their own careers. A recent example of his dedication was this past January, when the water supply had to be shut down in the entire hotel to complete a project. It was imperative that engineer associates be actively involved, and without hesitation, he volunteered to assist. The hotel had to perform the procedure overnight, and after working his regular shift, he stayed to work those extra hours staying until the morning to make sure the water was working properly for all guests. Due to his dedication, the project was completed with minimal impact to the hotel guests. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name***Abdelkrim (Kareem) Lounis*** of the **Crystal City Marriott** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Providing excellent customer service is what this next nominee does on a daily basis. Once, a guest ate dinner at the rooftop restaurant every one of the four nights she stayed at the hotel. In conversation, this guest told the nominee that beef stroganoff was her favorite meal. The nominee then spoke with the restaurant manager to make sure the hotel had the proper ingredients, and then on the last night of the guest’s stay, she presented beef stroganoff as the nightly special. She receives many compliments from guests who notice her attention to detail and wonderful attitude. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Shati Barva*** of **Holiday Inn Rosslyn** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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The next nominee is known for her supportive and caring nature. Once the hotel had a memorial service room block for guests attending a funeral for a service member at Arlington Cemetery. Upon check out, the spouse of the fallen soldier let the hotel know that in spite of this difficult time, this nominee was always there for her to provide support and meet any requests that she had. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Keisha Ellis*** of **Key Bridge Marriott** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee is with a pro at helping to train her colleagues and connecting with guests. She volunteers to personally train other associates when they are struggling and offers to help managers not in her department by picking up extra work. She also spends time with guests to ensure they discover something new and special on their trip. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Kathleen Marie Scott*** of **Renaissance Arlington Capital View** **Hotel** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee is the epitome of a superstar. She is resourceful, kind, efficient and goes above and beyond to ensure the team is doing well. Even though the hotel is new, she has been there every step of the way supporting not only her team but all teams. She has also been essential to the hotel’s opening. She and the sales team accomplished their million dollar of revenue on the books by the hotel’s opening date. An accomplishment that was huge for the hotel’s brand and opening team. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Bernadette Cadiente*** of **Homewood Suites Arlington Rosslyn Key Bridge** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This nominee always provides excellent service with a smile displaying a welcoming, professional and positive attitude at all times. She is flexible and willing to work on any floors assigned to her. When inspected by her supervisors, her rooms score very high due to her attention to detail and focus on ensuring guests get perfect rooms. She receives numerous positive guest comments from hotel guests and is known for leaving personalized notes to her guests. It is not unusual for our guests to request to stay on her floor because of the special treatment she provides. One guest mentioned she was “the best housekeeper” he has ever had in his 25 years of extensive travel. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name***Dasha Morton*** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Rosslyn** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This guest service agent has been a fundamental component of the front office team for the last 16 years. She leads the charge in training all incoming colleagues and managers. She is a true team player, always willing to help out whenever she can. She cares about not only her work, but the team and the team’s work. She shows up every day with care and commitment up front. She has a talent for remembering guests’ names and preferences- which is quite a feat for a 308 room full-service hotel. She is frequently mentioned in online reviews as guests remark on the little things she does for them that constantly exceed their expectations. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Sandy Liu*** of the **Crowne Plaza Washington National Airport** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This next nominee is the associate every manager dreams of having. She is hard working, dedicated, and can make important decisions on her own. She is not afraid to jump in and assist guests during breakfast, whether it means walking them up to their room or simply getting them an extra cup of coffee. For example, one guest staying at the hotel was visually impaired. This nominee quickly picked up on this, and despite the whirlwind of tasks around her, she took the time to assist this guest in the buffet line and guide him back to his room. This is just one display of her compassionate nature and ability to take care of guests. She is a leader among the gatehouse team and respected by all. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Dina Garcia*** of the **Residence Inn by Marriott Arlington Capital View** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This next nominee is a front of the house superstar and go-to guy. He was hired for the receptionist position, though he stepped up, creating new responsibilities for himself that made him invaluable. He now plays an intricate role in managing and disseminating the vast event paperwork flow to all departments, as well as to the off-site team, back of the house, and outside venues. His changes have allowed the sales team to have additional time to serve their clients. With seven to nine tastings a week, he also came up with a system to welcome each client by writing a custom note and attaching it to their reserved parking spot. Then before the before completion of a tasting, he changes the message. Clients have been delighted by his attention to detail, and his new welcome/farewell process has also closed many business opportunities. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Fabio Camacho*** of **A Main Event Caterers** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This nominee is a very strong asset to his employer with his great attitude, flexibility and customer service. He understands how important it is to keep public spaces clean and to deliver all guest requests on time and correctly. He is able to multi task in an effective and calm manner. He has worked double shifts on multiple occasions and is always willing to come in on his days off to ensure the hotel has coverage. He recently went on a trip to the Philippines and brought back souvenirs for the entire staff. He is very generous with his team members and always offers assistance carrying heavy items for coworkers. He has been mentioned on several occasions in guest comments during quarterly secret shopping visits and scores maximum points when he is the houseman on duty. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Jerry Miranda*** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Rosslyn** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This next nominee always goes the extra mile to get the job done with the highest quality, even working double shifts when needed. She completes her duties with grace and pride and her efforts are met with success, as she has received some of the highest room cleanliness scores in the hotel for guest satisfaction. She always does more rooms than expected of her and every single one is serviced to perfection. Aside from her duties as a housekeeper, she has even been scheduled as a houseman when needed which involved heavy lifting that she did without breaking a sweat. Due to her exceptional performance in housekeeping, she was immediately recommended for a job within the Illy Coffee shop. She was offered the job right away, and since joining the team, the service scores based on guest satisfaction increased well over 20 percent. In her short time on beverage and food team, she has already cross trained in the restaurant as a hostess and is about to start training in the elite club lounge. She is an exemplary employee who continues to shine and learn. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Aynalem Spooner*** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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An Elite Coordinator, our next nominee takes pride in his work and always goes above and beyond to accommodate a guest’s request. He always reaches out to the hotel’s top 50 guests and ensures that he makes special arrangements for their birthdays, anniversaries, or any particular interests. He is always mentioned by guests within the guest’s satisfaction survey and is acknowledged for his dedication to his job. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Sandun Fernando*** of the **Key Bridge Marriott** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This nominee is an example of a perfect housekeeper. She takes her job seriously and works hard to improve her skills every day. In her first six months on the job, she has worked on her days off when the hotel is short staffed and cleaned any floor assigned to her. Her rooms are impeccable and smell very clean. She has also gone above and beyond by finding a lost item that had sentimental value to a guest. She quickly returned the item so the hotel could ensure it made it to the guest safely the very next day. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Vanessa Dongmo*** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Rosslyn** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This nominee provides amazing contributions to the kitchen team with 18 years of service. He is someone who can be counted on for always producing quality products for guests. He prides himself in being organized and ensures adequate communications occur to help the team be successful at all times. He is the mentor to the new members of the team and is a well-respected member of the culinary team. Over the years, he has familiarized himself with the special needs of many groups in the hotel and has become a valuable resource. He is also the winner of the “Five Star Employee of the Quarter Award.” The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Andrew Mesmer*** of **The Ritz- Carlton Pentagon City** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This next nominee is an ambassador who consistently goes above the call of duty regarding service expectations. One notable instance that demonstrates his exemplary work ethic is a time he delivered an in-room dining order to a handicapped guests’ room. He offered assistance to the elderly folks and set up their meal in their room to truly enjoy the a la carte experience. He took the extra time to not only deliver their food properly, but made sure the guests knew that he was there to assist them with anything they might need. He has won “Ambassador of the Month” and numerous “Spirit to Serve Awards” for embodying model behavior. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Shuvo Barua*** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee is a top performer in the housekeeping department and is an outstanding example to her colleagues. She is a caring person and has never failed her valued guests, including their pets. On one occasion, she entered the room of a frequent stayer for a routine cleaning only to find the guest’s loving and excited dog in the cage waiting for its owner to return. Typically, before cleaning tasks start, she sits down near the cage to calm the dog. On this occasion, the dog had been in the cage for a long time and she took it upon herself to call the owner who had left contact information to let her know the dog might need to go outside. With the owner’s approval, she took the dog on its leash outside for as few minutes for the needed relief. Her actions demonstrated her thoughtful and considerate attitude not only for the pet, but also for her valued guests’ peace of mind. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Rosa Bautista*** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Ballsto**n a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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The next nominee has made it her personal mission to elevate the service and experience offered to guests. She has collaborated with tea purveyors to pick specific teas, based on research and surveys that she has conducted, to provide exactly what the guests want. She has trained staff in the service standards of traditional afternoon tea. Her dedicated work can be measured by the increase in service scores, increased afternoon tea revue, and personal recognition on social media. She is also the #1 most mentioned food and beverage associate on TripAdvisor for the hotel. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Elizabeth Beleke*** of **The Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This nominee is an exemplary leader in the valet department. On several occasions he has been there to guide the team in times of need. Not only does he cover his appointed responsibilities, he is the rock that management can rely on for suggestions, support and ownership for customer service. On one particular Easter weekend, the hotel was home for a very large international church conference of over 2,000 attendees, ranging from infants to the elderly. The group arrived all throughout the day with significant needs for assistance, not to mention over 200 vehicles coming in. Many guests either did not want to valet park or there were too many cars to fit in the garage, which makes managing the process challenging without the right system in place. On this weekend, this nominee was working and discovered they spoke his native language. Without being given direction or asked, he immediately converted to being the leader for both the group and the hotel to manage the arrival process and ensure every one received the same service. He gathered the valet team and managers and then created a game plan. Each vehicle that arrived, he met with a smile and a warm welcome explaining in detail the parking plan. This system required many hours of constant communication, energy, and a positive attitude, and he performed so well the group demanded that he again be the leader in future years to they could receive the same experience. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Douglas Prempeh*** of the **Hyatt Regency Crystal City at Reagan National Airport** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee is what every employer is looking for in an Associate. She is hard working, dedicated and always willing to go the extra mile. Every time she is given more than the allotted rooms, she has no problem cleaning all of them. She also happens to be the fastest housekeeper on the team, and if she finishes her rooms early, she does not wait until the day is over, but instead goes from housekeeper to housekeeper asking if she can help them. If no one needs help, she will come downstairs without being told by anyone and begin helping clean up the office and doing laundry. Both of those things are not in her job description but she does them anyway. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Evelyn Vasquez*** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee is the type of employee that a hotel always wants on the clock. She consistently goes above and beyond to make sure all hotel guests get a personal touch during their stay. Last year, there was a family from France staying at the hotel for the summer. She developed a connection with one of their daughters who asked about Ethiopian restaurant recommendations in the area. On her day off, she took the whole family to her favorite Ethiopian restaurant. The family had a great time and was so pleased for the extra effort she took to satisfy their craving. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Seblewongel (Seb) D,Arcy*** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Ballston** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This next nominee has consistently gone above and beyond for her colleagues and guests with 15 years of banquet service experience. She frequently lends a hand to her fellow co-workers and ensures that she can assist them to the best of her ability. As an example, once she came in to work a breakfast function, finished early and decided to start prepping for the following events that evening. She was not even assigned to do the events, but she wanted to help her coworkers. Another time, a guest she was serving was particularly interested in sight seeing around the area. She suggested Mount Vernon and starting sharing information and all important details with the guests. She even took it upon herself to get tickets for the guest. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Ingrid Andree*** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This very dependable nominee is a front desk extraordinaire. He once drove a little girl’s teddy bear all the way to Dulles Airport to return it to the family, after they called and explained how upset their daughter was for leaving it behind. He has received the hotel’s highest front desk agent grade on many occasions for his passion and dedication to his job and to ensure a positive guest experience. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Bruce Kroeger*** of the **Holiday Inn Rosslyn** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next outstanding nominee has a caring personality and lovely smile that makes guests and co-workers alike feel special at all times. He embodies the phrase “delivering service with a smile.” Even when juggling multiple clients, he makes sure that guests’ needs are taken care of in a timely manner. He’s also happy to assist other area hotels with support when needed. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Donnell Washington*** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee is a concierge lounge attendant who never fails to make the guests feel welcomed. She makes guests feel like they are at home when on business travel and treats each guest like a valued friend. She goes out of her way to ask about guests’ days and inquire about their families. Her service is one of the main reasons why guests choose this hotel for business. Recently, a guest checked into the hotel late and dinner service had ended. She knew the guest was hungry and personally made the guest a light supper. That is just one example of how she goes above and beyond to make her customers feel appreciated and at home. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Zohra Touiri*** of the **Key Bridge Marriott** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee makes sure every guest is satisfied with their hotel experience. She focuses on all guests, being sure to pay extra attention to the highlighted VIPs and special meals requests. As the menu changes on a daily basis, she always follows up with the chef to ensure that they are aware of all ingredients in the food served. On one occasion, the hotel was having a gingerbread decoration event and one of the guests was not pleased with their table. She introduced herself and took ownership and apologized for the inconvenience to the guests. She ensured she would personally take great care of them during the gingerbread decoration. She proactively bought hot chocolate for their children. She interacted with the guests and helped the children choose some of the candies. At the end of the gingerbread workshop, the guests were very happy and grateful for the service. Her actions created guests for life as the same family has now been attending the gingerbread workshop at the hotel for the past seven years. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Teresa Duran*** of **The Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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People come to the restaurant just to see if our next nominee is working. He has proven to be an outstanding professional and an overachiever. He earned the respect of his colleagues through his hard work and most of all, his willingness to help others in need. One time, a group was staying at the hotel while in town to attend a memorial service at Arlington National Cemetery and he was their server for three nights in a row. During this time, he built a strong connection with one of their guests, an elderly woman named Nancy. Even though Nancy was feeling down, he did his best to keep her smiling each night. Nancy mentioned to him that in instances like these, her mother used to calm her down and cheer her up with cookies and milk before bed. To ensure Nancy was ok the night before the memorial service, he wrote a personal note to her and had milk and cookies delivered to her room, wishing her a good and calm evening’s rest. Nancy deeply appreciated this act of kindness and raved about how wonderful this nominee was to her. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Nikolay “Nik” Kolev*** of the **Key Bridge Marriott** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This nominee has provided excellent service during her two years in the kitchen. She has been a valuable asset to the hotel’s operation. She has taken it upon herself to bake birthday and anniversary cakes from scratch for team members during every monthly celebration. With her eye for design and flair for baking, she creates the most incredible cakes which show her dedication and commitment to the team. She became a well-known figure, as she started a tradition in the hotel by creating a “sense of place” for the guests. In 2016, she constructed a spectacular creation termed the “Gingerbread Pentagon.” Creating the Gingerbread Pentagon required over 55 hours of dedication and labor. In 2016 and 2017, the remarkable piece was displayed in the lobby. All of the guests were fascinated by the masterpiece, as they looked at it in awe and took pictures to commemorate its creation. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Lindsey Ayala*** of the **Crowne Plaza National Airport** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee is an ideal housekeeping professional. He is a top performer in the department and outstanding example to all his colleagues. He is thoughtful and a caring person and has never failed the guests, distinguished visitors or even their visiting parents. He treats all his valued guests with equal distinction, but when he learned the parents of a VIP were coming, he went the extra mile. He was tending his floor and rooms as he normally does but had heard directly from the distinguished visitor that his parents were going to visit him all the way from Australia, staying in an adjoining room. With this knowledge, he took it upon himself to, with assistance from the front desk, put up a welcome sign, set out a few bottles of water and display fresh flowers in the room of the visiting parents. They were impressed with the reception and it had a lasting impression. This was the first time these guests had been to America and they have returned multiple times since, always seeking this nominee for his hospitality. According to him, “Being respectful and honoring your parents are always reasons for providing extraordinary treatment.” The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Marvin Rodriquez*** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Ballston** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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The next nominee has been an outstanding auditing professional for two years. Over the summer, the hotel had a weekend auditor out on emergency for four weeks. When this nominee heard, she went out of her way to let the hotel know she was available. While talking with her, the manager learned that she had planned a quick weekend trip to see her son, which she cancelled without being asked. The nominee voluntarily cancelled her plans for four weekends straight to help out a sick co-worker because she knew it would cause hardship on anyone else trying to work the overnight schedules that she works normally. Another instance that shows her commitment was a time she checked out a guest that was unhappy with their stay. She apologized, took note of the issues and invited the guest back in the future. This guest took her up on the offer and came back to stay at the hotel a few weeks later and was surprised to see that she remembered his name and had checked in with him to make sure the stay was up to his expectations. During the second stay, she got to learn more about the guest and his needs, such as his requests for wake up calls and taxis at specific times each morning. At the end of the second stay, he thanked her for all her hard work and promised to come back again. He is now a regular guest and looks forward to seeing and talking to this nominee every stay. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Vandella Rice*** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Ballston** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee is one of the hotel’s best housekeepers and truly makes a positive impact on guests. One guest called to praise this nominee for her great attitude, stating that when she came to service his room around noon, he got very upset with her and yelled for knocking on his door saying she was rude for waking him, even though he did not have a do not disturb sign on his door. He said she was so patient and kind, even apologizing for disturbing him while he was sleeping that he wanted to personally apologize to her and let her know he learned a lesson about controlling his temper that day. Another guest wrote in that this nominee cleaned her room one day and found out the guest wasn’t feeling well so she brought the guest some tea with honey and lemon. The guest was touched by the kind gesture. Whether it is her patience when dealing with upset guests or her thoughtfulness for guests in need, she is a true asset to the team. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Ana Rodriquez*** of the **Key Bridge Marriott** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This nominee is such an asset to the hotel because of her commitment and ability to leave lasting positive impressions on guests with her attention to detail. She was originally hired as a housekeeper where she was assigned to a specific floor. During her tenure, both her guest rooms and section scores were higher than her peers. She could be seen doing self-inspections on her assigned rooms before marking them off as vacant ready, to make sure the guests would be welcomed by impeccable rooms. During the past couple years during snow storms, she volunteered to bunker down and stay on the property to ensure guests were taken care of and the hotel could operate as normal. Currently she holds the position of Lobby Attendant where she takes pride in making sure that the hotel entry way, lobby and all other public spaces give a great first impression. When working in the mornings, she is observant of guests coming and going through the lobby and always offers them assistance in any way she can. Many guests are familiar with her attention to detail and her welcoming personality which is why they keep coming back. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Silvia Solorzano Beltran*** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Courthouse** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee is an outstanding employee as Diplomatic and Sales Coordinator and often takes on the hats of many other departments to be a team player. One guest had an incident with her vehicle when parking it. When she called to complain, this nominee happened to pick up the call. The guest proceeded to tell her about the incident and the nominee came to realize the guest had been suffering an illness and was undergoing treatment. Although the guest issue was in no way connected to her department, she owned the guest issue. She would call the guest weekly to check in on the guest to ensure that they were doing all they could to follow up on their end. Long after the guest issue was resolved, she continues to communicate with the guest to provide genuine care and comfort to create this guest for life. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Farida Parker*** of **The Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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An important member of the team, our next nominee is known to exemplify the standard of service called “The Art of Hosting Brilliantly.” Whether she is interacting with the guests of the hotel or her peers, she is always very professional and uses her time to make a personal connection. She gets many comment cards that mention her by name and details stories of her commitment. One guest recently checked in with her friend visiting from another county was only in town for a short time. With her vast knowledge of the local area, she was able to converse with the guest to determine their interests and make specific suggestions. The guest was so impressed that he wrote a letter to the General Manager commending her for her excellent service and customer service. On another occasion, she helped a guest who received an injury from having his wallet stolen in the city. She assisted the guest by setting up an immediate appointment at a nearby local care facility and followed up with the guest the following day. The guest contacted the hotel to thank her for her great service and hospitality. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Thao Huynh*** the **Crystal Gateway Marriott** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This next nominee is known for her exceptional work and patience with training employees in other departments. She helps the hotel by picking up both hourly and managerial shifts. She recently also spearheaded a major conversion project for the hotel, which was a massive undertaking completed with grace. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Katherine Burneko***of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee takes enormous pride in his work and is always looking for ways to go above and beyond his responsibilities to take care of the guests. As a Bartender extraordinaire, he has been an asset to the hotel’s restaurant. He consistently goes out of his way to greet colleagues, stopping by just to shake hands and say hello. He is always great with guests by engaging them. Most recently promoted, he has taken on additional responsibilities to continue growing professionally and the hotel is very happy to have him. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Namin “AJ” Teevorchevin*** of the **Westin Arlington Gateway** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our next nominee is well known in the hotel for her unstoppable high energy and enthusiasm. She is always greeting guests and her fellow associates with an infectious smile and cheerful demeanor. She is often recognized for being proactive with guest needs which allows all guests to have excellent stays. Recently, a guest asked her if she could get a corkscrew after she was done cleaning the room. She gladly went to the restaurant and returned with not only a corkscrew but with real wine glasses for the guest to enjoy. An hour later, the guest approached her again and asked her to please clean the room again since she spilled wine on the floor and on her blouse. She offered to wash the shirt by hand then had it sent out to be dry-cleaned. These actions of caring delighted the guest and created a memorable experience which obtained the guest’s loyalty to the hotel. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Juana Martinez*** of the **Crystal Gateway Marriott** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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The next nominee often demonstrates his commitment to guests and fellow co-workers by the actions that he exhibits on a daily basis. Each week he repeatedly offers a helping hand to servers and housemen, especially when he sees they may have a heavy workload. He is not afraid to cross the line of job duties outside of AV world. He continuously helps guests from either providing directions or providing recommendations for great restaurants. His generosity and caring heart is a great contribution to the hotel community. He treats everyone as if they were family. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Claude Louis*** of the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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The next nominee is a quick learner, reliable and a great team player. She always comes to work on time, impeccably dressed and energized to provide the best possible service for guests. On several occasions she switched her schedule or worked back to back shifts to ensure the hotel was fully staffed. On a recent occasion, the hotel experienced a power outage for several hours and to make matters worse, the backup generator didn’t perform as expected. She did a fantastic job keeping the guests calm and was able to check most guests in manually and direct them to the stairs. Luckily the electricity came back that evening. One guest asked to see the General Manager to inform her that he was impressed with her ability to stay calm, on task and keep the hotel guests safe until the power was restored. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Milonie Howell*** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Rosslyn** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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This nominee often demonstrates his commitment to guests and fellow co-workers by the actions that he exhibits on a daily basis. Recently, the hotel experienced hot water issues to guest rooms. The boilers and storage tanks needed constant monitoring. He volunteered to work overnight to monitor the situation to ensure that guests were able to have the water in the morning. He then volunteered to come in two hours early in the morning each day over the next two weeks to ensure the hotel water was working. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Roberto Diaz*** of the **Holiday Inn Arlington at Ballston** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Our final nominee is a superstar! He is known to be reliable, flexible, and totally focused on getting the job done. He was hired last year, as Front Office Associate; however, three months later, a weekend night auditor resigned. The hotel asked for a volunteer to help and he quickly stepped up to cover Friday and Saturday overnight shifts. Because the position has yet to be filled, he has continued helping the hotel for eight months now. Since he started, he has never called out or arrived late to his shift. Recently, he went above the call of duty when a guest was running late for a meeting and there was a shortage of taxis in Arlington. The guest grew even more frustrated when his taxi arrived, but chose to pick up another passenger who was going a further distance. Feeling the frustration of the guest, this nominee volunteered to use his own personal UBER account and was able to get a car at the hotel within just a few minutes. The guest was extremely happy and appreciative of the kind gesture. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is proud to name ***Youness Gachouch*** of the **Residence Inn Arlington Rosslyn** a 2018 Hospitality Superstar.

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Let’s have a big round of applause for all of our Hospitality Superstar Award Winners!