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TOURISM PARTNERSHIP LAUNCHED TO CONNECT MARYLANDERS WITH MARYLAND JOBS

OCEAN CITY, MD - The Maryland Center for Hospitality Training (MCHT) has teamed up with the Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association (OCHMRA) to launch a new initiative designed to connect Marylanders with available seasonal jobs in Ocean City, Maryland to help fill the thousands of open positions. Each summer, more than 12,000 seasonal positions are available in the hospitality industry and the surrounding population is not large enough to fill all slots. So, historically, many of these positions are filled by J1 Summer Work Travel Visa students. However, the summer of 2020 was quite different when only 100 slots were filled, leaving OCHMRA members working around the clock and most reduced the number of hours they were open due to the staffing shortages.

The desire to find solutions drove Susan L. Jones, Executive Director of the OCHMRA, to connect with fellow tourism leader, Mike Haynie, Founder and CEO of MCHT. "Having grown up in the hospitality industry, I know the value of hard work and understand the ease of entry into the industry," noted Jones. "Providing a young person with a job allows them to have purpose and builds their self-esteem," added Haynie. Through several conversations the pilot program, "Connecting Marylanders with Maryland Jobs" was born whereby OCHMRA member employers will be connected with students who are recruited, vetted and trained by the MCHT. A caveat of the pilot is that OCHMRA members must provide housing as part of the employment package.

Through organizational assistance provided by the Maryland Department of Commerce and \$29,000 in funding from the Maryland Department of Labor, the two state agencies are proud to support the launch of OCHMRA and MCHT's new pilot program. Recruitment is slated to commence in the beginning of April.

The ultimate goal of Connecting Marylanders with Maryland Jobs is to build a hospitality program that can be utilized by tourism offices all around the State.

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