

Youth leaders

BHTA TAPS YOUNG PEOPLE TO REINVENT TOURISM

by Anesta Henry

At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has forced the tourism hotel industry to a standstill, the Barbados Hotel Tourism Authority (BHTA) has introduced a programme to encourage young people to come up with "different and fresh ideas" in the industry for when the tourist's return.

BHTA's Young Leaders Development Programme has been designed to develop young professionals in

the industry to help develop the association, and by extension, tourism in Barbados and the region.

During today's online launch of the committee where 12 members were officially introduced, BHTA Chairman Stephen Austin said the programme is an opportunity to renew and refresh the tourism industry by assisting in the development of the young leaders.

He said it is also proposed that the development committee will also enhance the engagement of members.

Austin said: "We believe that allowing young people to give their ideas to be able to express themselves to have projects that they can manage and implement will

be key towards our future and our success. It would reinvigorate the association as well, and contribute to the transformation of tourism. The committee will also offer opportunities for young professionals in that there will be educational programmes, there will be improved awareness and benefits from networking as well as mentorship.

"This committee will meet at least once or twice each month to discuss ideas that can be implemented and initiatives that can be driven. But I think the main thing is that the mentorship from myself, and from directors as well as senior management and owners within the hospitality industry will also be key to the success of this programme.

"It is key towards each person's personal development. We have an opportunity at this moment to refresh and these twelve young leaders will be able to do that because they are talented, intelligent professionals, and really have passion. We can only get better by listening to different ideas. Getting younger people involved will be key towards getting different and fresh ideas."

Austin explained that the 12 committee members were selected from 52 applicants with all but four of the applicants being members of the association.

Each applicant was required to submit a statement of interest outlining how they feel about the tourism industry, and following a series of interviews and a selection process, the programme was scheduled to be launched at BHTA's quarterly meeting in March.

Chairman of the Committee Jamal Griffith Sales and Marketing Manager at Bougainvillea Beach Resort said the programme would play an integral role in succession planning as it relates to leadership in the industry.

Griffith indicated that exploring the need for sustainability of the industry will be a priority for the committee.

He said: "There is environmental sustainability, business sustainability, technological sustainability. And I think after the entire COVID experience that we have been going through in the past three to four months and it hitting Barbados as it has, we need to diversify the economy and kind of make the industry stronger from within. There is a lot of opportunity for us as young leaders to pitch ideas and to help with the current ideas that the BHTA, BTMI [Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc] may have."

Griffith, who is also a member of the Caribbean Hotel Tourism Association (CHTA) Young Leaders Committee, said enhancing the use of virtual technology is also one of the issues the young professionals will seek to address.

The other members of the committee, ranging in ages from 21 to 38, are: Senior Hotel Sales and Marketing Manager at Crane Hotel Charita Jordan, Residential Property Manager Deidre Small, Front Desk Supervisor Ocean Hotel Group Nikita Warrington, Operations Support Assistant Marriot Hotel Group Shalana Payne, Front Office Agent Sandals Barbados Shanice Seale, Property Manager Chesterton Barbados Shemora Alleyne, Food and Beverage Operations Manager Sandy Lane Hotel Tonia Boyce, Security Shift Leader Marriott Hotel Group Keeshan Callender, Service Ambassador Marriott Hotel Group Richard Daniel, Airport and Transportation Manager Sandals Barbados Timothy Williams, and Sales and Marketing Manager Bougainvillea Beach Resort Jamal Griffith. anestahenry@barbadosday.bb



YOUNG LEADERS COMMITTEE

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