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Looking Ahead

2024 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Farouk Rajab
President/CEO

As we reflect on 2024, a year of both challenges and triumphs, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude. Pride in the remarkable achievements of the Rhode Island Hospitality Association (RIHA) and its members, and gratitude for the unwavering dedication and support that has fueled our collective success.

This past year has been truly historic for RIHA. We turned a significant page in our association's history with the retirement of Dale Venturini, a legend whose impact on hospitality in Rhode Island and beyond is immeasurable. I am deeply honored to have been chosen by the RIHA Board to succeed her, and I am committed to building upon her extraordinary legacy. Dale's 35 years of dedicated service have set a high bar, and I will strive to uphold the values of excellence, advocacy, and collaboration that she so passionately embodied.

I recognize that the successes we have achieved as an association are a direct result of the power of collective action and the strength of our membership. The resilience demonstrated by our industry throughout the past year, navigating unforeseen challenges with grace and determination, is a testament to our adaptability and unwavering spirit.

Looking ahead to 2025, we will continue to prioritize our core pillars:

- **Advocacy:** We will remain steadfast in our efforts to advocate for policies that support the growth and sustainability of the hospitality industry in Rhode Island. This includes working closely with legislators, policymakers, and community partners to address critical issues such as workforce development, regulatory reform, and economic competitiveness.
- **Education:** Investing in the future of our industry remains paramount. We will continue to expand our educational offerings, providing valuable resources and training programs to our members, from entry-level employees to seasoned professionals. Furthermore, we will prioritize the growth and development of the Rhode Island Hospitality Education Foundation (RIHEF), ensuring it takes its rightful place as a leader in hospitality education and training throughout the state.
- **Networking:** Fostering meaningful connections within our industry is essential for collaboration, innovation, and shared success. We will continue to create dynamic and engaging networking events that provide valuable opportunities for our members to connect, learn, and grow.

Furthermore, I have identified two key priorities for the coming year:

- 1. Diversifying Revenue Streams:** To ensure the long-term sustainability and financial health of RIHA, we will explore and implement new revenue streams beyond our traditional membership model. This may include partnerships, sponsorships, and the development of new programs and services that generate revenue while delivering value to our members.
- 2. Strengthening Member Engagement:** We will strive to enhance member engagement and participation through improved communication channels, personalized member experiences, and a renewed focus on member needs and priorities.

I am confident that by working together, leveraging the collective strength of our membership, and embracing innovation, we can build upon our successes and create an even brighter future for RIHA, RIHEF, and the entire Rhode Island hospitality industry.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be a stylized 'A' or similar character, written on a white rectangular background.

2024 RIHA CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



David Smiley
Chairman, RIHA

As my tenure as Chairman comes to a close, I reflect on a remarkable year of change and growth for the RHIA Association. We have embarked on a new chapter, strengthening our commitment to our members—hospitality professionals who bring passion and dedication to this industry.

Throughout this era of transformation, we have remained steadfast in our mission, ensuring that our members receive the support, resources, and advocacy they deserve.

With great confidence, I pass the gavel to Collin Geoffroy of G Hospitality. Under his leadership, alongside your Executive Board and the RHIA Leadership Team, the Association will continue to champion the needs of our members and navigate the challenges ahead. RHIA's influence extends beyond Rhode Island, and we will remain one of the top associations in our field.

The future is ours to shape. Thank you for your trust, dedication, and commitment to our shared vision.

Sincerely,
Outgoing Chairman, RHIA

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Smiley". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light purple watercolor-style background.

2024 RI HOSPITALITY EDUCATION FOUNDATION CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



David C. DePetrillo
Chairman, RIHA

Thirty years ago, the RI Hospitality Education Foundation was formed with the purpose of encouraging individuals to embark on a career in the foodservice, lodging, and tourism sectors. Over the past three decades our programming has grown from just a few small training options to a robust collection of workforce development opportunities. Our programs have helped thousands of young people gain skills that changed their lives by opening new career paths. As we grow, our commitment remains strong; to grow the future generation of hospitality professionals and to lead the hospitality workforce by providing industry standards of professionalism and certification.

SOME OF THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Our career and technical education partnerships have grown to 23 culinary arts, foodservice, and hospitality management programs that support 1,500 high school students throughout our state.
- The Hospitality Student Career Summit attendance nearly doubled and allowed us to serve 200 students for a full day of professional development in a meeting/convention setting.
- Over 1,000 employees were trained in industry specific certification courses.
- The Al Zannella Memorial Scholarship Fund awarded \$7,000 to students pursuing higher education degrees in hospitality.
- We awarded \$30,000 to hospitality workers who were facing financial hardship through our Employee Relief Fund.

As I reflect on my service as the Education Foundation's Chairman, I am grateful for the guidance of a committed Board of Directors and a dedicated, hardworking staff. I am proud to have served and excited about the future of our Foundation!

Thank you for your continued support and generosity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. DePetrillo". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light purple background.

OUR MISSION & VISION



MISSION

To lead Rhode Island's hospitality industry through advocacy, communication, and education.

VISION

To advance Rhode Island's hospitality industry.



MISSION

To grow the future generation of hospitality professionals.

VISION

To lead the hospitality workforce by providing industry standards of professionalism and certification.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The RI Hospitality Association and Education Foundation promote a Culture of Community. The tenets of the **Culture of Community** are comprised of eight main themes. We use the eight Cs daily through our core services and offerings.

COOPERATION

working together for the common good of the industry.

COLLABORATION

fostering supportive industry engagement through teamwork and community partnerships.

COMMUNICATION

exchanging ideas and information, and sharing industry opportunities.

COMPASSION

cultivating a culture of empathy, equity, and patience.

CURIOSITY

asking questions, inspiring positive dialogues, and expanding educational opportunities.

CONNECTION

creating engaging, impactful, long-lasting relationships in our community.

CAMARADERIE

securing our industry's future through mutual respect, friendship, and generosity.

CIVILITY

promoting kindness through courteous engagement.

2024 ADVOCACY SNAPSHOT

In the early hours of Friday, June 14th, the Rhode Island General Assembly concluded its business for the 2024 legislative year.

RIHA Lobbyist Bill Walsh reviews each bill introduced and highlights items of interest and impact to the Advocacy Committee and seeks additional feedback from RIHA members in the weekly Hospitality on the Hill newsletter. RIHA also participates in weekly analysis of legislation with the Rhode Island Business Coalition regarding bills of widespread business impact, particularly employment, taxation, and healthcare issues.



William Walsh
Lobbyist, RIHA

BILLS THAT PASSED indicates RIHA win



Outdoor Dining Act : S2028A, H7064A

the Outdoor Dining Act established standards for the municipal regulation of outdoor dining that followed the expiration of the moratorium on penalties for pandemic related modifications. It prevents retro-active regulation by any governmental entity, provides grandfather protections for structures inspected to meet building, fire and food safety codes, and precludes new parking standards for outdoor dining spaces in excess of pre-pandemic levels.



MAKING KINDNESS PERMANENT: S2271A, H7065A

These bills make permanent protections for hospitality workers established in 2022 that were scheduled to sunset on July 1 and will continue to allow innkeepers the right to eject guests who are verbally abusive towards or physically threaten a hotel employee or guest.



HOSTING PLATFORM ACCOUNTABILITY: H6449

Requires the display of short term rental registration numbers and expiration dates on hosting platform advertisements, removal of unregistered or expired properties by hosting platforms, and quarterly reporting by hosting platforms to the Department of Business Regulation regarding short term rental location, type, and utilization.



Frank DiBiase III (Atwells Group), **Bill Kitsilis** (Angelo's Palace Pizza), **Jen Luxmoore** (Sin) **Heather Singleton** (COO, RIHA/RIHEF), **Sai Viswanath** (DeWolf Tavern), and **Ryan Moot** (RIHA) attended the 2024 Public Affairs Conference in D.C. to meet with federal legislators.



TEMPORARY CAREGIVER INSURANCE: S2121A, H7171A

RIHA joined advocacy efforts to stop new unfunded mandates on businesses regarding data breaches. The Senate proposed a bill to shorten notice periods, extend remediation services, and mandate immediate reporting to state police. The House amended the bill, limiting new requirements to government agencies only. This means businesses won't face additional obligations concerning data breaches.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET: S7225A

The FY2025 Budget appropriates nearly \$14 billion, including:

- Extending from 5 to 20 years on carryforward of net operating losses for businesses
- Increasing the retirement income exemption from \$20,000 to \$50,000
- Matching \$3 million of federal funds with \$3 million of the Commerce Corporation's hotel tax receipts for tourism campaigns in destination markets for airline routes to Rhode Island T.F. Green International Airport
- Providing \$16.2 million for Real Jobs Rhode Island workforce training programs and re-appropriates unspent ARPA funds for the Enhanced Real Jobs program.
- Appropriating \$24.5 million to the Convention Center Authority to cover debt service requirements
- Operating support of \$400,000 for WaterFire Providence art installations
- Marketing support of \$100,000 for promotion of local seafood products

WINE MANUFACTURERS LIMITS: S2127, H7220

These bills allow manufacturer-wineries to sell up to 3 drinks of wine for on-site consumption or 3 bottles of wine for off-site consumption.

BILLS THAT DID NOT PASS *indicates RIHA win*



TIP CREDIT ELIMINATION / INCREASE: S2237, H7531

Both held for further study by their respective Labor Committees, RIHA vigorously opposed legislation seeking to increase the tipped minimum wage to from \$3.89 to \$6.75, and in the case of the House bill, continue increasing it until it meets the state minimum wage in 2030.



PRICE TRANSPARENCY: S2257, S2503, H7284

Described as "junk fee bills", these pieces of legislation sought to add as a deceptive trade practice the misrepresentation of the total costs of goods and services by omission of notification to consumers of any mandatory fees from advertised prices. RIHA opposed passage of these bills, which were all held for further study.



CAPTIVE AUDIENCE MEETINGS: S2785, H7106

These bills that seek to prohibit employers from requiring non-managerial employees to attend meetings about legislative proposals, regulatory matters, as well as information regarding labor organization efforts were not enacted.



MINIMUM WAGE: H7579, S2475, S2124

With the final step of the prior minimum wage increase schedule looming on January 1, 2025, when it will reach \$15 per hour, RIHA opposed, and the House Labor Committee held for further study the bill by Rep. Morales to make annual increases to the state minimum wage until it reached \$20 per hour in 2029 and increase by inflation thereafter. The Senate did not hold a hearing on legislation to make annual increases in the state minimum wage until it reached \$20 per hour in 2026. The Senate did, however, enact a study commission that will study past, present, and future changes to the minimum wage, and provided a designated seat for the RIHA President/designee on the 11-member panel.



NEWPORT HOTEL TAXES: S3033, H8133

Held for further study by both Finance Committees, RIHA opposed legislation by the City of Newport seeking to impose an additional local hotel tax of 2.5% in Newport for use on public infrastructure and resiliency purposes.



NEWPORT AMUSEMENT TAX: H8132, S3022

Held for further study by both Finance Committees, RIHA opposed legislation by the City of Newport seeking to enable a local 9% amusement tax in Newport on the sale of certain amusement ticket sales.



CHILDREN'S MEALS: S2627, H7233

Held for further study by both Health & Human Services Committees, legislation requiring restaurants to offer at least two prescribed healthy versions of children's meals on their menus were not approved by the legislature.

HOTEL TAX PARITY: H8057, S2062

Neither RIHA priority legislation seeking to apply the state 5% hotel tax on short term rentals to be distributed according to the current distribution formula that supports hospitality partners and municipalities, nor Governor's Budget Amendment 13 seeking to apply the same tax but direct funding towards housing stability and homelessness programs, were approved by the legislature.

WORKPLACE BULLYING: H8044, H8274, S2473 SUB A

Passed by the Senate, but held for further study in the House, RIHA and the Rhode Island Business Coalition opposed legislation seeking to hold employers liable for psychological abuse in the workplace, including amongst employees.



In September 2024, we participated in **Hotels on the Hill** in Washington, DC as members of the **American Hotel & Lodging Association**. We urged Congress to address staffing shortages by requesting an increase to the annual cap on H-2B visas. Additionally, we advocated for pro-business federal tax policy and the protection of the franchise model.

Ryan Moot, RI Hospitality Association; **Anthony Pellegrino**, The Dean Hotel/ASH-NYC; **Farouk Rajab**, RI Hospitality Association

2024 MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS



NEW MEMBERS
77



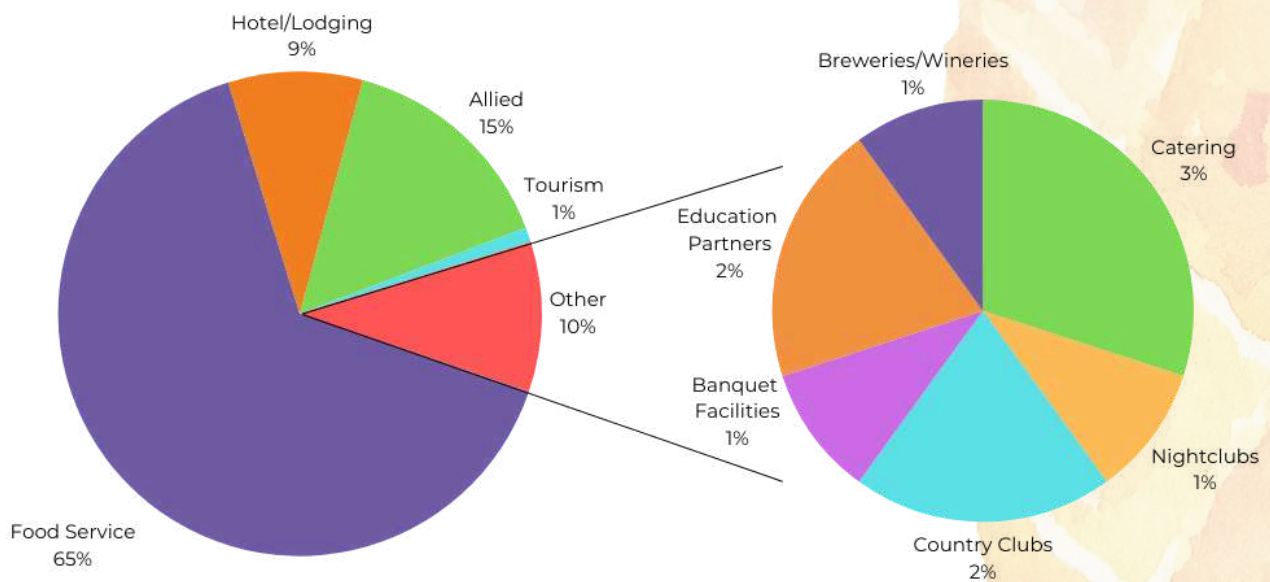
GAINED NET INVESTMENT
\$12,650



RETENTION RATE
85%

Membership Snapshot

Who are the members of RIHA?



MEMBER PROGRAMS



BEACON MUTUAL SHARED EARNINGS PROGRAM

Through a partnership with Beacon Mutual, some RIHA members are eligible for a Shared Earnings endorsement on their workers' compensation policy.

Beacon has returned over \$700,000 in shared earnings to RIHA members in the past 5 years (over \$10,000 monthly). Thank you to our partner Beacon Mutual for providing this excellent member benefit!

This valuable partnership between RIHA and Beacon Mutual continues to deliver exceptional financial benefits to our members. By offering the Shared Earnings endorsement, Beacon Mutual helps eligible members reduce their overall workers' compensation costs, providing significant savings.

This collaboration underscores the commitment of both RIHA and Beacon Mutual to supporting the success and sustainability of Rhode Island's hospitality industry. We are proud to have Beacon Mutual as a trusted partner in delivering such a beneficial program.



WASHINGTON BRIDGE RELIEF

In December of 2023, the westbound side of the Washington Bridge was closed due to a critical failure in the bridge's structure. The hospitality industry was hit amongst the hardest by the sudden closure, with estimated losses of \$114 million in revenue and 1,300 jobs.

In order to help support the businesses impacted by the closure of the Washington Bridge, RIHA stepped up to offer free memberships, providing access to wide range of savings programs and other resources.

- 15 businesses were gifted free membership to RIHA, totaling \$7,425 in value to those businesses most impacted by the bridge closure.
- The new members used their memberships to access free legal advice, grant opportunities, and discounts on business expenses such as liquor liability insurance.

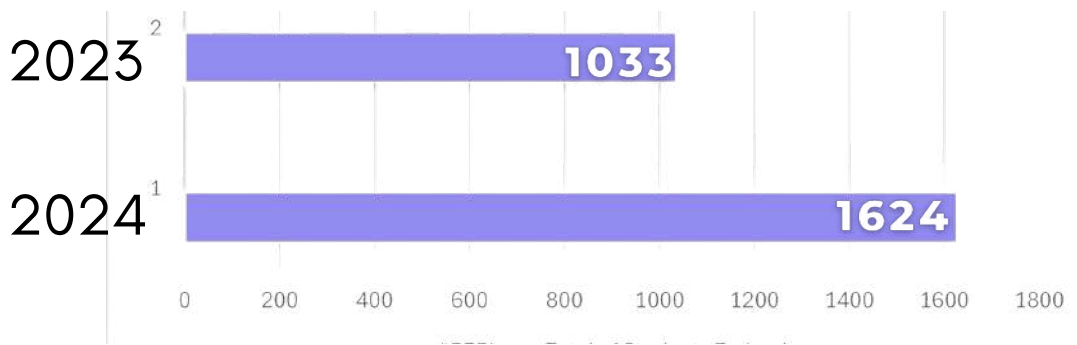
In 2024, we were able to assist 15 businesses, totaling \$7,425 in savings!

2024 TRAINING STATISTICS

RIHA training welcomes everyone from middle schoolers and newbies looking for work to top-notch hospitality pros and business owners.

We maintained a steady growth in our training numbers in 2024 and applaud our members for their continued investment in their team's professional development!

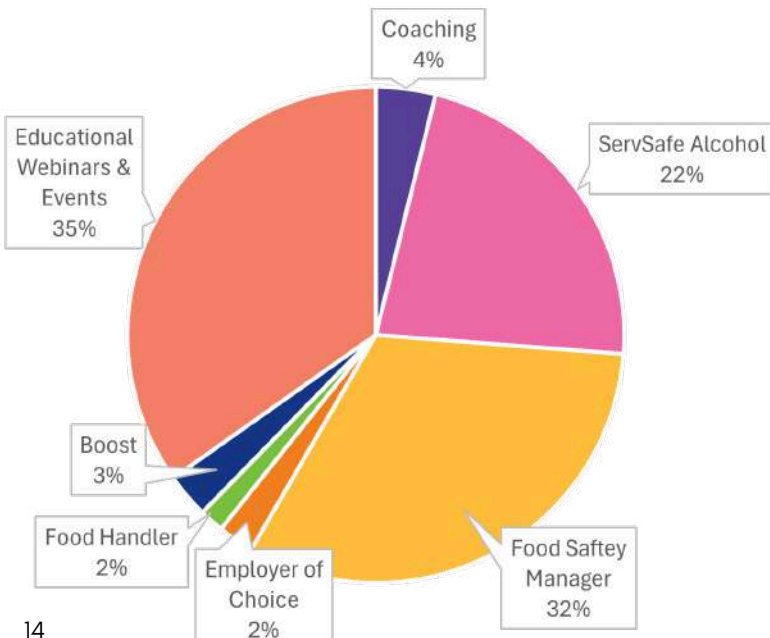
TOTAL STUDENTS TRAINED



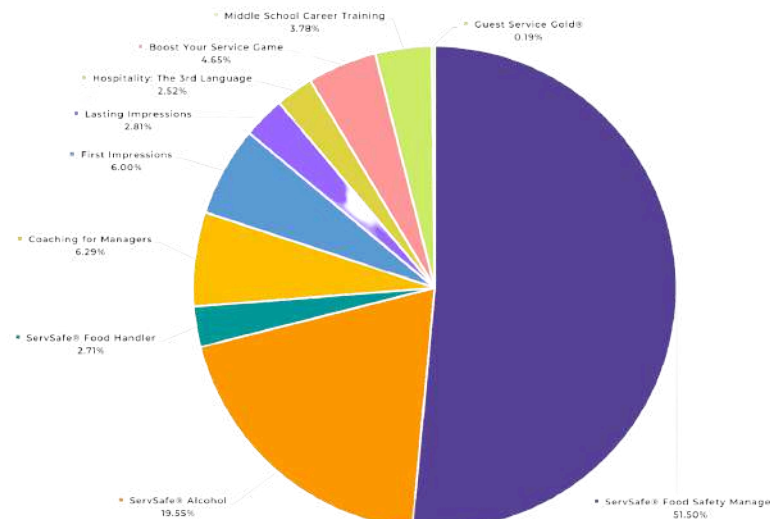
TRAINING SNAPSHOT

What classes are RIHA students taking?

2024



2023



COACHING FOR MANAGERS

Studies show the #1 cause of employee turnover is poor management. Great managers reduce turnover and control employee retention. **Coaching for Managers is one of our most popular courses.**

- In the Coaching for Managers course, managers dive into essential skills like effective communication, various leadership styles, conflict resolution, and understanding emotional intelligence. They also learn strategies for building successful teams.
- The spaghetti challenge activity is a fun way for leaders to grasp concepts like teamwork, collaboration, and problem-solving. The challenge underscores the importance of continuous improvement in reaching shared goals.



FREE SERVSAFE® ALCOHOL TRAINING

In partnership with the City of Providence, RIHA administered FREE ServSafe® Alcohol Training to Providence employees.

In 2024, we trained and certified 128 employees in Providence ensuring safe alcohol service!

RAVE REVIEWS: EDUCATION FOUNDATION

— “ —
My name is Kylei Prout and I am a sophomore at Coventry High School. I am emailing you to thank you and ask if you could extend my appreciation to all the panelists who spoke today. It was very informative and helpful to understand more about this field of work. **I feel much more confident that hospitality is the field i want to focus on.**
— ” —

— “ —
It was so nice to meet you in person! Thank you for inviting me to be part of this event. I hold ProStart **close to my heart**, so yesterday was very special.
Colleen Kranich, Newport Vineyards
— ” —



— “ —
Your class today was really beneficial. **I’m excited to use the skills I learned for future interviews and jobs.**
— ” —

— “ —
Thank you so much! This is truly a **blessing to all of us**. I will be communicating with you soon.
— ” —

— “ —
I wanted to thank you again for offering those classes. I found in incredibly helpful for myself and I hope that I’ve been able to **grow in my management skills because of it.**
-Matt Hudson
— ” —

— “ —
On behalf of Taylor, Teresa and Sara, I wanted to say thank you for an informative afternoon yesterday. **We cannot wait to put our new skills to work and make more money.**
— ” —

— “ —
Joel is doing great. We are currently working on knife skills and recipes. His cleanliness is immaculate, and his teamwork is outstanding. **He has also opened up a lot since moving to a cook.** Let me know if there is anything I need to send to you.
Thank you- Stacy
— ” —

— “ —
Thank you for the **wonderful opportunity** you and the Rhode Island Hospitality Association provided this past Friday.
— ” —

EMPLOYEE RELIEF FUND



In response to the unforeseen challenges faced by employees in the Rhode Island hospitality industry, the RI Hospitality Association established a relief fund to provide one-time grants to workers experiencing financial hardship. The goal of this fund is to offer support during tough times, helping to cover essential living costs and alleviate some of the financial burdens brought on by difficult circumstances.

Throughout the year, the fund provided a total of \$29,000 in grants, benefiting 30 recipients. These funds were used to assist with a variety of critical needs, including rent and mortgage payments, medical bills, car repairs, and insurance costs. By offering this financial support, the RI Hospitality Association is committed to helping those who make our hospitality industry thrive, ensuring they have the resources they need to get back on their feet during times of unexpected hardship.

This initiative underscores the association's dedication to supporting not just businesses, but the hardworking individuals who make up the heart of Rhode Island's hospitality, restaurant, and tourism sectors.

“Wow thank you so very much, we are really grateful for the organization and your help.” -Relief fund recipient.

“This is truly wonderful news. I teared up reading this email. Thank you! ☺”

GRANTS

We've worked hard for many years to build strong relationships with our grant funders and are so grateful for their continued support.

Thank you to our 2024 partners.



HONORING LEGACY, EMPOWERING FUTURES: THE ALFRED A. ZANNELLA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

In 2024, we continued our commitment to nurturing Rhode Island's hospitality talent through the Alfred A. Zannella Memorial Scholarship. Established in memory of Al Zannella, the former Executive Vice President of Mancini Beverage and a dedicated Board Member of the Rhode Island Hospitality Association (RIHA), this scholarship honors his unwavering support for the hospitality community. Al was known for his generosity and dedication, always willing to lend a hand to help the industry thrive.

The scholarship aims to assist Rhode Island college students, adult learners, and current hospitality employees in realizing their potential through higher education or professional development training opportunities. In 2024, we awarded four scholarships totaling \$7,000 to deserving high school students enrolled in ProStart® and Hospitality & Tourism Management (HTM) programs. These students are pursuing degrees at Johnson & Wales University in Business Administration, Hospitality Management, and Beverage Management.

By investing in these future leaders, we honor Al Zannella's legacy and continue his mission of fostering growth and excellence within Rhode Island's hospitality industry.



HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAMS



ProStart® is a career and technical education program that teaches high school students culinary arts and restaurant management skills.

Hospitality & Tourism Management is the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute's (AHLEI) two-year, turnkey high school curriculum.

On February 6, 2024, the Rhode Island Hospitality Education Foundation (RIHEF) hosted the 12th Annual Rhode Island High School Culinary Arts, Foodservice & Hotel Management Competition at the Crowne Plaza Providence-Warwick. This prestigious event brought together 70 talented students from across the state, competing in three categories: Culinary Arts, Foodservice Management, and Hotel Management. Over 75 industry professionals served as judges, evaluating the students' skills and presentations.

Participating Schools:

The competition featured students from the following institutions:

- CHARIHOTech
- Exeter Job Corps Academy
- Newport Area Career and Technical Center
- Warwick Area Career and Technical Center
- Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center

Competition Categories:

- **Culinary Arts:** Students demonstrated technical skills, including safe food transportation, knife skills, and the preparation of a three-course meal using only two burners. Emphasis was placed on teamwork, professionalism, and plate presentation.
- **Foodservice Management:** Participants presented a restaurant concept and designed a comprehensive business plan, including design boards, floor plans, marketing strategies, and menu designs.
- **Hotel Management:** Students showcased their understanding of the hotel industry by designing a hotel property and presenting their concepts to judges through verbal presentations, critical thinking Q&A sessions, and visual posters.

Scholarship Opportunities:

The winning teams in the Culinary Arts and Foodservice Management categories earned the opportunity to represent Rhode Island at the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation's National ProStart® Invitational competition in Baltimore, Maryland. 26–28, 2024.

Winning Teams:

- Culinary Arts: Exeter Job Corps Academy
- Foodservice Management: Warwick Area Career and Technical Center

Featured Dish:

The winning dish from the Culinary Arts competition, a Black Angus Ribeye with Yukon mashed purée, roasted carrots and green beans, and a roasted garlic and veal demi-glace, was featured at Newport Restaurant Group's Iron Works in Warwick, RI, from March 11th through March 17th.

2024 RI HIGH SCHOOL COMPETITION



The winning teams were honored at the State House, receiving citations and having their names read into the record.



HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT
CHARIHOTech



CULINARY ARTS
Exeter Job Corps Academy



FOODSERVICE MANAGEMENT
Warwick Area Career and Technical Center

HOSPITALITY CAREER SUMMIT



The Hospitality Career Summit, hosted by the Rhode Island Hospitality Education Foundation (RIHEF), aimed to inspire high school students enrolled in ProStart® (foodservice and culinary arts) and Hospitality Tourism Management programs. With over 200 students in attendance, the event provided a unique opportunity for them to explore the diverse career paths available in the hospitality industry.

The summit featured engaging activities, including the opening “RIHEF Talk Show,” where ProStart® alumni shared their career journeys, and five breakout sessions led by 17 industry professionals. Sessions covered essential topics such as resume building, interview skills, financial literacy, sustainable culinary practices, and the art of flavor pairing.

Students also gained valuable hands-on experience with experts, exploring career paths in foodservice, hotel management, and culinary arts. The event successfully ignited passion and ambition, giving students the confidence and tools they need to pursue their hospitality careers.



NORTHERN RI BOY'S & GIRL'S CLUB

Awarded Bank RI Grant to provide Middle School Career Exploration

RIHA represents over 800 foodservice, hotels, vendors and hospitality members in the state of Rhode Island and has been the voice of the hospitality and foodservice industries in the state since 1963. <https://www.rihospitality.org/>

BGCNRI students attended our 2024 RI High School Culinary Arts, Foodservice and Hotel Management Competition on Tuesday, February 6, 2024.

ProStart® is a career and technical education program that teaches high school students culinary arts and restaurant management skills. Hospitality & Tourism Management is The American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute's two-year high school curriculum that prepares students for a hospitality career.

The annual RI High School Culinary Arts, Foodservice and Hotel Management Competition brings together RI's top students to show off their skills and compete for a spot at Nationals!

Teams will face off in one of the three following categories:

- Culinary
- Restaurant Management
- Hotel Management

BGCNRI students attended a ServSafe® Food Handler Course, taught by Alisha Plante, Manager of Hospitality

Training & Development

Alisha Plante accompanied **BGCNRI** students to **Angelo's Palace Pizza**, for a Culinary Experience. Students had the opportunity to experience both the front and back of house of a restaurant and put the skills that they learned in Food Handler to the test! Students had the opportunity to make pizzas, calzones, and salads. Students then got to set their tables and eat the food that they created. Once they were done, they learned about clearing plates and the dish room.



Beacon Charter High School for the Arts Culinary students and chef instructor visited **BCNRI** for a chef demo. Chef William and the culinary students showed BGCNRI students how to make gnocchi. BGCNRI students got to make their own gnocchi.



RI HOSPITALITY EDUCATION FOUNDATION MARKS 30 YEARS

The RI Hospitality Association (RIHA) Celebrated its RI Hospitality Education Foundation's (RIHEF) 30th anniversary on Nov. 6 at Aloft Providence. The education foundation was formed with purpose of encouraging individuals to embark on a career in the food-service and hospitality industries in the state, providing education initiatives with the help of training programs. The celebration also kicked off a scholarship fund to assist Rhode Island high school hospitality students. "For three decades, the RIHEF has worked tirelessly to inspire and cultivate the next generation of hospitality professionals. With strong educational initiatives and programs, our mission has remained steadfast: to grow the future of hospitality in Rhode Island. Through food safety, management and customer service training, we've supported countless individuals in advancing their careers and elevating the standards of our industry. This anniversary is not only a celebration of our past but a pledge to continue fostering excellence for many more years to come," said Farouk Rajab President/CEO, RIHA.



CHEERS TO 35 YEARS: DALE VENTURINI'S RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

Events

The Rhode Island Hospitality Association hosted a retirement party to honor Dale J. Venturini, the Association's President/CEO, who retired at the end of February after over 35 years of dedicated service. The event, held on March 4 at the Crowne Plaza Providence-Warwick, celebrated Venturini's significant impact on Rhode Island's lodging, restaurant, and tourism sectors, highlighting her role in shaping the association into a key advocate for the state's hospitality industry. The evening was attended by prominent figures from both local and national trade associations. Grammy-nominated country songwriter Tim James performed, and Luke Renchan Entertainment offered a photo booth where guests could take pictures with Venturini's iconic eyeglass frames. With more than 900 foodservice, hotel, vendor, and other hospitality members in Rhode Island, RIHA has been the voice of the state's hospitality industry since 1963.



GET SERVED

MAY 17TH

A heartfelt thank you to Speaker Shekarchi, House Majority Leader Blazejewski, Senate Majority Leader Pearson, Senate Minority Leader de la Cruz, and Senate Majority Whip Lawson for joining us at our "Get Served" Luncheon! Your presence and support made the event even more meaningful and impactful. We truly appreciate the time you took out of your busy schedules to engage with us.

A special thanks to Iron Works for graciously hosting the event and providing such a wonderful venue. The atmosphere was perfect, and we couldn't have asked for a better place to gather and celebrate.

However, the highlight of the day was undoubtedly working alongside the talented students from the ProStart High School Culinary and Management Program at Cranston Area Career & Technical Center. Their passion, creativity, and professionalism were truly inspiring, and they did an exceptional job showcasing their skills. It was a privilege to support and work with these future leaders of the hospitality industry, and we're excited to see all they'll achieve. This collaboration made the event even more special, and we can't wait to continue nurturing the next generation of culinary and management talent!



HOSPITALITY LEGAL SUMMIT



May 8th

This year's Hospitality Legal Summit featured a legislative update from RIHA lobbyist William Walsh, a presentation on Department of Labor compliance by Patty Colarossi, and a discussion of legal topics that impact our industry led by attorney Charles Ruggerio. 40 RIHA members gathered for this educational event which provided a comprehensive overview of the legal and regulatory landscape impacting the hospitality sector.



Our Women in Hospitality event series continues to grow! We held two events in 2024, each with its own mission & purpose.

JUNE 6TH: WINE DOWN THURSDAY

Sin had the honor of hosting our spectacular 20th anniversary Women in Hospitality event!

The evening was a true celebration of the remarkable women in our industry. We were delighted to have **Laura Afonso** and **Sascha Roberts** lead an insightful and engaging presentation on the power of social media, sharing valuable tips and strategies for leveraging digital platforms to boost our professional presence.

Throughout the event, attendees were treated to an exquisite selection of food and wine, with culinary delights provided by **Luigi's Restaurant & Gourmet Express**, alongside **Sin's** own delicious offerings. The combination of outstanding food, fine wine, and thought-provoking discussions created an unforgettable atmosphere, fostering connections and sparking new ideas among the guests. It was an evening of inspiration, empowerment, and camaraderie that truly honored the incredible women in hospitality.



OCTOBER 16TH: EXCLUSIVE BREWERY TOUR & SO MUCH MORE

A special thank you to **Narragansett Brewery** for generously hosting an exclusive and memorable tour, which was expertly led by their **talented brewmaster, Lee Lord**. Lee's deep knowledge and passion for brewing were evident as she took us on a captivating journey through the rich history and intricate techniques behind their craft. Her engaging storytelling not only gave us a deeper appreciation for the art of brewing, but also provided invaluable insights into the process that makes each brew unique. It was truly an unforgettable experience that left all of us with a newfound respect for the craft beer industry.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to **Sin and Luigi's Restaurant & Gourmet Express** for contributing to the event's success by providing a mouthwatering selection of bites. The thoughtfully prepared dishes paired beautifully with the atmosphere, enhancing the overall experience and adding a delicious touch to the evening. Their support and culinary expertise truly elevated the event, making it all the more enjoyable and memorable for everyone in attendance.



2024 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PROSTART EDUCATORS

Our ProStart educators spent the day at **Newport Vineyards**, gaining valuable knowledge about beer and wine, as well as witnessing a locally sourced hog demonstration from Blackbird Farm. The event featured a diverse group of experts, including **Chef Andy Teixeira, a James Beard nominee; Chef Paul Servideo, a Master Butcher;** Traci Dufresne, Director of the Education Foundation; Heather Singleton, Interim CEO/President of RIHA; and Victoria Greco, Manager of Marketing and Events at RIHA. The day's agenda included a Greenhouse Tour, a Vineyard Tour, a Kitchen Demonstration with Chef Andy and Chef Paul, and a hog processing demonstration, where attendees learned about the entire process of sourcing and preparing the hog. To wrap up the event, guests enjoyed delicious hog tacos paired with wine, served by Chef Andy.



MEMBERSHIP RECEPTION

JUNE 11TH: THE CAPITAL GRILLE

We kicked off summer in style with our highly anticipated annual Membership Reception at **The Capital Grille** (TCG). It was a fantastic evening of networking, celebration, and delicious food, and we couldn't have asked for a better venue. A special thank you to our incredible host, **Chris Phillips**, and his exceptional team at TCG for their warm hospitality and outstanding service. The atmosphere was welcoming, and the evening flowed seamlessly, thanks to their attention to detail and dedication.

Guests were treated to an exquisite selection of seafood from **Metro Lobster and Seafood**, with a special shout-out to **Chris Trosin** for providing such fresh and flavorful options that truly elevated the experience. It was the perfect complement to the vibrant energy of the event.

A highlight of the evening was the presence of the **Zannella family**, who made the event even more memorable by presenting the prestigious **Al Zannella Scholarship**. This year, the scholarship was awarded to the deserving **Andrews Arriaza** from Providence Area Career and Technical Center, who received a \$2,000 award to help further his education. It was an inspiring moment, and we are proud to continue supporting and encouraging the growth of talent within the hospitality industry. **#RIHAeducates**

All in all, it was an unforgettable evening, and we are grateful to everyone who joined us in making this event a success. We look forward to even more opportunities to celebrate and support the future leaders of our industry!



RI LODGING & RESTAURANT ECONOMIC OUTLOOK SEPTEMBER 4TH: RI LODGING & RESTAURANT ECONOMIC OUTLOOK BREAKFAST

On September 4, 2024, we had the honor of hosting our **21st Annual Economic Outlook Breakfast**, bringing together hospitality industry professionals from across Rhode Island at the Rhode Island Convention Center. This annual event continues to be a key opportunity for industry leaders to come together, discuss current trends, and share insights into the future of the hospitality sector.

This year's panel was truly exceptional, featuring three highly respected experts: **Chad Moutray, Vice President of the Research & Knowledge Group at The National Restaurant Association (NRA)**, who provided valuable data and trends on the national restaurant landscape; **Kate Mashburn, Vice President of Pinnacle Advisory Group**, who shared her expertise on the financial outlook and economic factors shaping the hospitality industry; and **Heather Singleton, Chief Operating Officer of both the RI Hospitality Association (RIHA) and the RI Hospitality Education Foundation (RIHEF)**, who offered a unique perspective on the local industry's challenges and opportunities. Their insights sparked meaningful discussions and provided attendees with practical takeaways to navigate the evolving market.

We would also like to extend a sincere thank you to our generous sponsors who made this event possible: **Healthsource RI for Employers, Beacon Mutual Insurance Co., Falvey Linen Supply, and Inertia Resources.**

Your support is instrumental in allowing us to bring together industry professionals for these important conversations and to continue fostering growth and innovation within the hospitality sector.

This year's Economic Outlook Breakfast was a wonderful success, and we look forward to continuing to provide valuable resources and opportunities for collaboration to all those working in the hospitality industry.

Here's to another year of growth, leadership, and excellence!



FIRST-EVER PROSTART® BOOT CAMP PARTNERSHIP WITH JOHNSON & WALES UNIVERSITY

In 2024, the RI Hospitality Education Foundation (RIHEF) took an exciting step forward by partnering with Johnson & Wales University (JWU) to host the inaugural ProStart® Boot Camp. This event, which involved 76 high school students from seven Rhode Island schools, was designed to prepare them for the 2025 ProStart® Competition—a renowned industry-backed culinary arts and foodservice management competition. The Boot Camp provided a unique opportunity for students to gain hands-on experience in the hospitality industry and set them up for success in the competition and beyond.

Over the course of the program, students were immersed in a wide array of skills critical to the foodservice industry. From perfecting knife skills and plating techniques to developing restaurant start-up proposals, marketing strategies, and food safety practices, the Boot Camp offered a comprehensive look at both the culinary and business aspects of hospitality.

This first-of-its-kind event included students from the following Rhode Island high schools:

- CHARIHOTech – Richmond, RI
- Charles E. Shea Senior High School – Pawtucket, RI
- Exeter Job Corps Academy – Exeter, RI
- Newport Area Career & Technical Center – Newport, RI
- Warwick Area Career & Technical Center – Warwick, RI
- Westerly High School – Westerly, RI
- William M. Davies, Jr. Career & Technical High School – Lincoln, RI

Through this collaboration, RIHEF and JWU provided a rich, hands-on experience for Rhode Island's next generation of culinary and hospitality professionals. The partnership empowered students with practical skills and knowledge that will serve them in the upcoming ProStart® Competition and throughout their careers in the hospitality industry. The success of the 2024 Boot Camp set the stage for future events and further strengthened Rhode Island's commitment to nurturing talent in the hospitality sector.



OCTOBER 7TH: 35TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC



October, we hosted our 35th Annual Golf Classic! Special thanks to our host of many years, **Quidnessett Country Club**. Leading up to the tournament, we held the "Par for the Cause" online auction, featuring all sorts of luxury items and experiences.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS: We were proud to host our 35th Annual Golf Classic at Quidnessett Country Club. A heartfelt thank you to all of our sponsors and donors for their generous support, which was integral to the success of the event.

We would like to extend special thanks to our **Premier Sponsor, Inertia**, for their continued support. We also want to express our gratitude to our **Additional Sponsors:** Sysco, Gordon Food Service, Mancini Beverage, Trimark, Falvey Linen Supply, McLaughlin & Moran, Horizon Beverage, Mr. J's Havana Cigar Lounge, McGrath Clambakes & Catering, Performance Food Service, Metro Lobster & Seafood, Navigant Credit Union, Richard's Pub, Marriott Newport, Seven Stars Bakery, Hilb Group, Beacon Mutual, Downeast Coffee Roasters, Ecolab, Sprague, Blount Fine Foods, Dilanna Foodservice & Paper Products, Laura's Bar & Grill, Newport Harbor Island Resort, Antonio's Pizza by the Slice, Angelo's Palace Pizza, Drum Rock Products, RI Beverage Association, Gregg's Restaurants, Affiliated Insurance Managers, Tito's Vodka, Direct TV, Alan Chille, Cork and Rye, O'Brien's Pub, Ocean State Sandwich, PWCVB, T's Restaurant, Parkside, BMI, McBride's Bar, Warwick Tourism, Adler Pollock & Sheehan, Narragansett Brewery, MS Walker, and Apponaug Brewing Company.

Your contributions made this event possible, and we are truly grateful for your ongoing commitment and support. Thank you for helping to make this year's Golf Classic a great success!



Women's Longest Drive

Women's Closest to the Pin

Men's Closest to the Pin

Men's Longest Drive



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MEET THE 2024 TEAM

We are proud to service the more than 900 members of the RI Hospitality Association!



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2025 CALENDAR

SIGNATURE EVENTS

Our Signature Events are some of the best parties and networking opportunities in Rhode Island's hospitality industry. These events are also excellent opportunities for sponsorship visibility and digital marketing.



Hospitality Leadership Summit | September 15th & 16th

The Crowne Plaza Providence-Warwick

Featuring expert speakers and engaging breakout sessions, this summit offers valuable takeaways that attendees can immediately apply to their careers.



Golf Classic | October 6th

Quidnessett Country Club

Annual golf tournament featuring fantastic food, fun & celebrity guests



Women in Hospitality

Networking event held in February, April, July & November with entertainment



The ANCHORS | January 14th

RI Convention Center

Hit the red carpet for our annual black-tie awards gala

SEMINARS, SUMMITS, RECEPTIONS & NETWORKING

stay tuned as additional dates are confirmed

February 25th

High School Culinary Arts, Foodservice & Hotel Management Competition
The Crowne Plaza Providence-Warwick

May 12th

Student Career Summit
RI Convention Center

June 10th

Summer Membership Reception
The Capital Grille

**September
15th & 16th**

Hospitality Leadership Summit
The Crowne Plaza Providence- Warwick

October 6th

Golf Tournament
Quidnessett Country Club

January 14th

The ANCHORS
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