



AHLA FOUNDATION, CASTELL PROJECT ANNOUNCE MERGER

Industry Strengthens Commitment to Elevate Women in Hospitality

ATLANTA (March 22, 2022)— The American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA), the AHLA Foundation, and the Castell Project today announced a merger, with Castell officially becoming part of the AHLA Foundation.

Together, the AHLA Foundation and Castell will work to strengthen and accelerate the industry's commitment to elevate women in hospitality. Specifically, they will focus on four efforts to better serve and support current and prospective women in the industry:

- **Facilitating leadership development** for current and prospective women in the industry
- **Strengthening the college talent pipeline** through mentorships, exposure to career paths, and engagement with our future workforce
- **Elevating more women to the podium** through AHLA's ForWard: Advancing Women in Hospitality and other industry events and expanding a speakers' bureau of hospitality leaders who are women
- **Conducting ongoing research** related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I), including women in hospitality leadership and diversity benchmarking

"Women are critical to our industry—as the owners, leaders, workforce, and guests of today and in the future," said **Chip Rogers, president and CEO of AHLA**. "As we celebrate Women's History Month, we also celebrate Castell's efforts to advance women leaders and owners in hospitality. We welcome them to the AHLA family, and together we will be stronger as we continue advancing women in the industry."

“Today’s announcement marks an exciting new chapter for the AHLA Foundation and Castell as we work together to advance women leaders and owners in hospitality,” said **Rosanna Maietta, president and CEO of the AHLA Foundation**. “With our shared mission and focus, we believe that joining forces will lead to more rapid change for our industry.”

“Joining forces with the AHLA and AHLAF will bring reach and strength to Castell’s work, opening leadership in hospitality to women and people of color,” said **Peggy Berg, founder and chair of the Castell Project**. “We are excited to be engaging in this important work with the team at both organizations.”

According to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), 57% of employees in the accommodations sector are women. Yet according to Castell’s [2022 Women in Hospitality Leadership](#) report, women hold only one leadership spot for every 10.3 men, up from one in 11.2 in 2019. By joining forces, Castell and the AHLA Foundation hope to accelerate the pace of progress and have a greater impact on women’s ability to advance as leaders and owners in the industry.

Today’s announcement builds on the AHLA Foundation’s commitment to foster DE&I and open doors of opportunity to all individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender. AHLA and the AHLA Foundation are focused on boosting leadership diversity across the industry under their new strategic plan adopted earlier this year. Last year, the AHLA Foundation announced a new \$5 million, multi-year commitment and action plan to advance DE&I in the industry.

AHLA, the AHLA Foundation, and the Castell Project have a long history of investing in and advancing women in hospitality:

- ▶ In 2018, AHLA launched ForWard to recognize the women of the hospitality industry and champion the next generation of leaders, with an annual conference, a virtual series, and Forward@ events embedded into major industry events
- ▶ Last year, 76% of AHLA Foundation scholarship recipients and 60% of participants in the Foundation’s apprenticeship program were women
- ▶ Castell has built a community of more than 100 women in its leadership development program cohorts, more than 300 executive women who connect with students, and a speakers’ bureau of more than 1,000 hospitality leaders who are women

About the AHLA Foundation

The AHLA Foundation, the charitable giving arm of AHLA, is dedicated to helping people build careers, improve their lives, and strengthen the lodging industry. From lifting individuals out of poverty and connecting them with a life-long career in the industry to providing certifications to promote current hotel employees into leadership positions, the Foundation's programs are changing the industry by changing lives. We are committed to elevating, educating, and empowering individuals and the public on the industry's story of opportunity and advancement. The Foundation is funded solely by contributions from generous individuals and companies who want to give back to the hotel industry and ensure a successful future. Learn more at www.ahlafoundation.org.

About the Castell Project

Castell Project, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to the advancement of women to the highest levels within the hospitality industry. With support from industry partners, Castell delivers impactful leadership development to rising female industry executives; innovative research on diversity in the hospitality industry; Castell@College connecting executive women to students; and WSH List connecting conference organizers to expert women speakers.



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