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2016 WAVE AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Seven hospitality employees recognized for outstanding service in Kent County

Grand Rapids, Mich. – Experience Grand Rapids (EXGR) and the Kent County Hospitality Association (KCHA) announced the 2016 winners of the 9th Annual WAVE (Way Above Visitor Expectations) Awards at the Impacting Hospitality Celebration on Thursday, November 17th. The WAVE Awards is a program that recognizes outstanding service providers in the Grand Rapids and Kent County hospitality industry.

A judging panel evaluated the nominees on a set of criteria, including the individual's attitude, attentiveness, performance, knowledge and consistency within the local hospitality industry. Winners were selected in the categories of Restaurants & Breweries, Attraction & Events, Lodging 150+ Rooms, Lodging Less than 150 Rooms, Retail & Service, and Volunteer in Hospitality.

Certified Tourism Ambassadors (CTA) were also recognized at the WAVE Award Celebration for their commitment to improving the customer experience. The CTA Program educates individuals on Grand Rapids and the importance of exceptional customer service to the area.

2016 winners include:

- Restaurants & Breweries: Diego Calderon, six.one.six.
- Lodging 150+ Rooms: Fayez Radwan, CTA, Amway Grand Plaza
- Lodging Less than 150 Rooms: Iesha Young, Sleep Inn & Suites
- Retail & Service: Erin Alley, Malamiah Juice Bar
- Attractions & Events: Don Dekker, Meyer May House Steelcase Inc.
- Volunteer in Hospitality: Tom McGrail, CTA, Experience Grand Rapids
- CTA Star of the Year: Norina Cadili, CTA, JW Marriott

The seven winners will also be nominated in their respective categories for the Stars of the Industry Awards. The winners will be announced at the 2017 Pure Michigan Governor's Conference, which is the annual industry gathering of tourism and lodging leaders hosted by Michigan Lodging & Tourism Association and Travel Michigan.

More information about the 2016 WAVE Awards is available at <http://www.experiencegr.com/wave-awards/>.

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