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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hawaii Hospitality Businesses and Organizations Join New Effort to Support Service Excellence Certificate Program, Reaching nearly 1,000 Students this Fall

Launched in 2020 by ClimbHI, the Certificate was renewed by the DOE for the 2021-2022 academic year

Honolulu, Hawaii, September 7, 2021 – High school students across Hawaii can receive credentials from a nationally renowned hospitality program through the Hawaii Department of Education (DOE) this year with no additional cost, due to the support of a new collaborative effort by hospitality industry leaders.

Launched in January 2020 by Hawaii workforce development nonprofit ClimbHI with funding from the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA), the Service Excellence Certificate for the DOE Career and Technical Education (CTE) Hospitality Pathway helps graduates be more workforce ready. The Certificate has been renewed for the 2021-2022 academic year, becoming a permanent part of the DOE's CTE curriculum.

"Our hospitality leaders are generously supporting a program that will pay dividends for these students and the Hawaii workforce for years to come," said Julie Morikawa, president and founder of ClimbHI. "This incredible public-private effort is especially appreciated during the most challenging of times for our hospitality industry."

ClimbHI has trained dozens of Hawaii teachers to lead discussions in the coursework. Student training is provided across nine modules, which can be completed remotely. More than 600 students have finished the program, and nearly 1,000 students from 13 high schools statewide are expected to participate during the fall semester.

"It's exciting that we are able to continue to offer this world-class curriculum to our students. This program is the perfect fit with our Hospitality Pathway, to strengthen customer service skills. Providing these opportunities without an added fee makes this program much more accessible for our students," said Jill Tanaka, a teacher in the Public and Human Services Academy at Kapolei High School. Her classes received 50 fall semester sponsorships from Residence Inn by Marriott in Kapolei.

The curriculum was exclusively developed in partnership with the School of Hotel Administration at the Cornell SC Johnson College of Business, one of the leading hospitality administration programs in the world. Upon completion of the program, students receive a Service Excellence Certificate of Achievement from Cornell University and ClimbHI. Courses cover skills development, managing customer interactions, and Aloha Spirit Law as outlined in the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS 5-7.5).

Sponsors included: Prince Resorts; Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association; Ka'anapali Ocean Resort Charitable Trust; Mauna Kea Resort; Residence Inn by Marriott in Kapolei; Koloa Landing Resort at Poipu; Marriott Ko Olina Beach Club; The Ritz-Carlton Residences Waikiki Beach; Highgate and Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort & Spa.

"The Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association counts education among its three core pillars, and we have been committed to investing in and supporting the future leaders of the hospitality industry. ClimbHI's Service Excellence Certificate for the DOE CTE Hospitality Pathway provides both credentials and critical training for public school students, and we are grateful that the program will be continued," said HLTA President & CEO Mufi Hannemann.

For additional information on the Service Excellence Certificate program, e-mail info@ClimbHI.org.

About ClimbHI: Founded in 2009, the Hawaii-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit ClimbHI seeks to inspire students to finish high school and proceed to post-secondary education or employment by exposing them to future career paths and the steps necessary to achieve those goals. For more, visit climbhi.org.

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