Sharing Aloha In The Midst Of COVID-19

On April 3, Hawai‘i Lodging & Tourism Association, in partnership with Hawai‘i Tourism Authority and Hawai‘i Visitors and Convention Bureau, kicked off a new statewide initiative to provide complimentary hotel rooms to individuals on the front line against COVID-19. Thanks to state tourism funding provided by HTA, the program, aptly named Hotels for Heroes, gives eligible individuals a safe place to stay where they can self-quarantine when not on the job.

To put this plan into motion, we established points-of-contact with Healthcare Association of Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i Medical Association, police and fire departments in all counties, and state law enforcement through the Attorney General’s office, as well as EMTs and paramedics on all major islands. Each sector was personally contacted and will coordinate between the heroes in their sector and HVCB to handle bookings.

At the time of this writing, Hotels for Heroes has just gone into effect — and the response has been tremendous. Not only have we been inundated with requests from those seeking rooms, but our local hoteliers have also gone above and beyond to make this program possible. More than 30 hotel properties have signed up to participate, and more than 600 room nights were allocated in the first few days of the program.

More Hotels Help Out
If the stay-at-home/work-from-home orders have done anything, it has forced all of us to be creative in our day-to-day lives. We have been hearing countless stories of the creative ways that local businesses are pitching in for their employees as well as their communities, and I wanted to share just a few of these with you.

• Residence Inn by Marriott O‘ahu Kapolei has partnered with Kama‘aina Kids to provide free childcare for their guests who have been deemed essential and must continue to work through the COVID-19 outbreak.
• Hanalei Colony Resort has invited Kaua‘i Foodbank to come every Thursday to set up a food pick-up site.
• Turtle Bay Resort teamed up with Hau‘ula Civic Club to donate food and care packages to kūpuna at Kahuku Elderly Hau‘oli Hale and around the community.
• Kā‘anapali Beach Hotel has continued its ongoing renovations during COVID-19. In order to keep the people working on the project safe, the hotel is currently housing them on the property and providing them meals.
• Fifteen hotels and organizations have donated essential items, including bed linens, towels and toiletries. The Andaz put together care packages that included lunches for the entire group.

These are just a cross section of the stories that we all are experiencing. Every day we learn of some act of aloha or sacrifice that buoys our spirits. In the meantime, please stay safe, care for yourself and your family, and remain home as much as possible.

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