



STORIES OF THE MIRRORS OF MJ

2013

CHRISTOPHER AGOSTINO

He makes life fun.



One of the greatest compliments has to be, “He makes life fun.” His captivating humor draws people in and his warm heart makes them glad they came. His idea of a good time is to find ways to surprise, delight and create joy for those around him. He carries the title of Business Travel Sales Manager, but Christopher Agostino’s job is to Deliver Extraordinary Experiences for those he serves. If you ask Christopher what he does, he might smile and say, “I’m the cruise director of this ship.”

It is a good thing that the principle “Change Is Good” is one of Christopher Agostino’s favorites. Change has been a part of his Providence Marriott life since he began in 2003. He started as A.M. Room Service Server, then P.M. Server for the Bluefin Grille; Bar Attendant, Supervisor and Manager, Convention Services Manager and now he rocks his position as Business Travel Sales Manager with numbers that reach 146% of his revenue goal!

Maybe Christopher treats everyone like family because family matters a lot to him. He was born and raised in upstate New York in a place his parents, Frank and Maryrose still live. He is very close to his sister and brother-in-law who live in Chicago and thrilled with the newest addition to the family – his nephew, Lannon. Early in life Christopher learned how to work and serve. He and his sister ran a neighborhood newspaper route delivering over 150 newspapers. He learned at 16 that working inside as a bar back at a small neighborhood Italian restaurant was aligned more with his true passion.

Johnson and Wales University’s Culinary Arts program brought Christopher to Rhode Island. His love of its people and those who choose to visit is what keeps him there. He has been named the Manager of the Quarter at the Providence Marriott. He is an active member of Global Business Travel Association.

There are hearts that simply beat and there are hearts that beat in rhythm with others. It is these few that empathically serve and make lives better. We honor the dancing rhythmic life of Christopher Agostino.

LISA M. BIRCHLER

I know I have a responsibility to set an example not only in my office and community but within my family.



It doesn't say "cheerleader" as one of the requirements in the job description of a Director of Sales. But for Lisa Birchler it is a necessary requirement for life. She is a cheerleader in all walks – whether it is celebrating the successes of the team at the Courtyard Marriott or cheering on her two young sons from the stands in football, basketball, baseball and soccer seasons. She is a positive person who celebrates the moments in life.

But Lisa isn't just about the celebrations ... she's about the journey that precedes them. As Director of Sales she is notorious for having team meetings to set goals, identify plans of action, and internally market the progress. She truly lives the Journey in her professional and personal life, often modeling her favorite principle: The Terrible Truths. "These Truths focus me on the one thing I have control over -- ME!" Lisa confesses. "I try and approach every situation evaluating my own behavior, my decisions and my reactions. I know that I have a responsibility to set an example, not only in my office and community, but within my family. Hopefully, through my learning and reflection I can be a positive influence on others."

Reflection also helps Lisa achieve and often exceed her goals. She is driven to achieve success. Maybe she can credit that fact to her family legacy of serving America in the armed forces. She is a fifth generation U.S. Army Veteran. Eight years of her life were dedicated to serving and protecting. She continues to serve through charitable organizations such as the VFW that help veterans and their families. She is an enthusiastic and loved volunteer and her creativity catches the hearts of other volunteers. For the past several years, Lisa has organized The 30 Days of Giving Thanks in November. Each day the hotel team adopts an act of kindness such as feeding the homeless or providing bed sheets for a shelter. The goal is to find the need and involve the entire hotel staff in fulfilling that need. Lisa even organized a "Change is Good" campaign where team members collected their loose change for a month and presented it a fellow associate who had a family member struggling with cancer.

For Lisa Birchler it is all about heart. At the foundation of success is the heart of a servant. And the servant realizes the power of a moment. "I recently told my boys that there is nothing more important in life than creating memorable moments with people. It is the one thing no one can take away from us. We always have them to give and to receive." Lisa and her husband enjoy every moment with their sons, Johnathan and Foster.

Lisa attended Kent State University. While serving in the United States Army she was awarded many honors, most significantly Soldier of the Year at Fort Jackson. She joined the Meyer Jabara team in 1997 as a front desk agent. Left after five years and returned as Director of Sales in 2011. It was a sweet return for the hotel team. Lisa Mary Birchler is a shining example of the culture of Meyer Jabara.

IRVING CONCEPCION

*We work as a team. No individual is left to go it alone.
Our associates are our customers just like our guests.*



How many people think about doing something monumental? Probably a lot.
How many people actually do something monumental? Not very many.

Irving Concepcion thinks about doing monumental things daily and actually does them....like riding a bicycle across the United States from San Francisco to Providence in just 39 days. He was raising awareness and money for Crohn's Disease. He has worked two jobs at the hotel when a teammate has been on leave for surgery or illness. He has decorated behind-the-scenes spaces on his own time just so "The place feels more like home." He even dresses up each spring and plays the role of the Easter Bunny for all the little guests of the Providence Marriott. Irving is one of a kind. And these wonderful acts of unselfish-ness landed Irving the Heart of the House Associate of the Year award in 2001.

Awards find Irving. He served twenty years in the United States Navy. He also served six years in the White House with the Clinton administration on the advanced tactical team ensuring the President's safety. His duties required him to use the skills of ingenuity, organization, awareness and leadership. His service was outstanding and recognized as such. He received the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal...a rare honor awarded very infrequently and usually reserved for commanding officers when leaving a command. Irving received the award as an enlisted man.

After his years of service, Irving followed his passion to serve by entering the hospitality world. He worked at the Mohegan Sun Casino as Banquet Supervisor. Then the Mystic Marriott called his name in the same position. After a little run as a carpenter in Georgia, he returned to New England and worked at the Ritz Carlton in Boston. But the Providence Marriott Downtown had the feeling of team and family that he yearned for.

Of all the honors and titles Irving has amassed in his years, his favorite one of all is that of "father" to his beautiful and charismatic daughter, Samantha.

Irving is a terrific Purchaser for the hotel, but he is even more terrific at creating memorable moments for the guests and the associates. He sees his task clearly and simply, "We work as a team. No individual is left to go it alone. Our associates are our customers just like our guests. We work together to make sure both are well taken care of."

JOY EVANS

I have the Power, Permission and Protection to always try new things and take care of our guests.



It takes more to be a Mirror of MJ than just a smile and the ability to deliver service. A Mirror has the heart of a servant and values relationships, but he or she also embraces learning, teaching, reflecting on performance and balancing the three legs of the stool. Joy Evans works hard to create a stool that is so solid, the entire Hyatt Place team could climb atop it. She is known as the A.M. Detective, seeking out guests that may not be having a wonderful stay or day. She finds out the situation, works to resolve any issues, documents her findings and shares the learning with the team. Not something listed in the Gallery Host's job description.

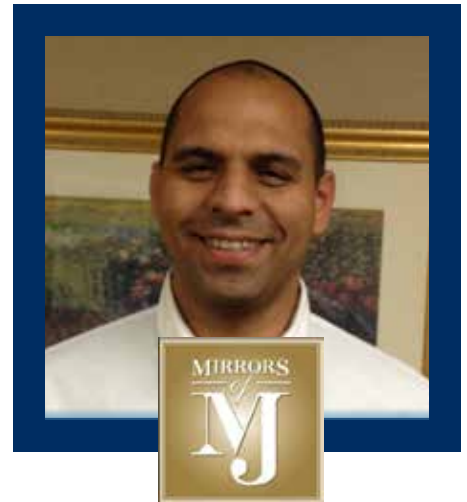
Personal development and continuous learning are big priorities for this petite full-of-energy spirit. She even raised her hand to voluntarily enroll in the Leading the Journey eight-week course just so she would be ready if ever called on to lead within the MJ team. Joy already takes on many more duties than expected such as placing food orders, completing food inventories and conducting room inspections. One of her biggest challenges: sitting straight and tall to see over the steering wheel of the shuttle van. She often jumps in to help out when the regular driver is unable to run.

When asked about her favorite Journey Principle, she is quick to reflect on the Three P's, "I have the Power, Permission and Protection to always try new things and take care of our guests."

Joy and her husband, Robert, have two young boys. She loves to sing and dance and enjoy life's moments. Her favorite pastime is capturing those moments through pictures. She even owns her own photograph business.

ANTHONY FERNANDEZ

A Guest Prevention Program that works because 'He fixed it'.



If it moves, roars, clinks, clanks or clunks, Anthony Fernandez can fix it. He was born to make sure engines, electrical elements and contraptions all connect correctly; but, he was also born to connect hearts together in wonderful ways.

He is a graduate of Automotive High School with a certification in diesel mechanics plus he holds a certificate in HVAC from Harlem School of Technology. He has owned his own business and also kept world class establishments running smoothly such as The Manhattan Club and the Royalton Hotel. He joined the Stamford Marriott in 2012 as the Assistant Chief Engineer.

What a difference one heart can make! The tangible performance difference is amazing: Room Inventory increase from 501 to 506 because “he fixed it;” a guestroom preventative program that works, because “he fixed it;” an increase in the Guest Room - Everything in Working Order question by 3.9 points over same time prior year, because “he fixed it;” a fully staffed and mentored engineering team led by four students from the Bullard Havens Technical High School because Anthony Fernandez showed how “fixing it” can lead to a successful career. The tangibles are obvious but the intangibles are changing the world for many.

He is a mentor who leads with patience and the Three P's. He has instilled much-needed confidence in four young men by sharing the concept of Power, Permission and Protection. These young engineers now view themselves as Guest Ambassadors and are often seen delivering a soup and ginger ale for a guest not feeling well, presenting a box of chocolates to a guest with an apology when something isn't working correctly, stepping in and helping a guest with their personal belongings. He coaches these behaviors and the learning that accompanies them.

He is married to Geraldine Fernandez and smiles as he names off his five children beginning with the 26 year-old, Cristian and stopping with his 17 year old baby, Felicia. When he is not fixing things or raising children – he loves to fish. It is a wonderful time to sit and think with a grateful heart about all the things that make life worth living for Anthony Fernandez.

EMILIA GUZMAN

She has a grateful heart.



A grateful heart is a beautiful thing. Emilia Guzman has a grateful heart. Each day is viewed as a gift...another chance to make a living for her family and to touch the hearts of those she serves. A grateful heart is a giving heart. Emilia is consistently giving to the associates who work in the laundry department in Allentown. She has even been known to bring in snack baskets filled with homemade treats to each and every one of them.

“Leader” isn’t a title...it is a behavior and it begins with understanding how to serve those you need and want in your life. Emilia gets this. She is happiest when everybody wins. She is a catalyst for these wins, caring deeply for those who work on her team and in her hotel. While Emilia is limited in the English language, her caring acts speak the universal language of love. It does not take words to understand her heart. Little gestures make great impressions on the Holiday Inn team. Last summer the team had an associate party at the pool. Emilia took her own money and time to make floral centerpieces for each table ... “Just because she thought everyone would like them.” She cooks special food on non-special days, “Just because she wanted to make her team happy.” She sings a happy tune as she works throughout the hotel, “Just because she is grateful to have a job and feed her family.” Why is Emilia Guzman a Mirror of MJ? “Just because.”

Emilia’s career with Meyer Jabara began in 1998 as a room attendant. Prior to joining MJ she worked in several hotels throughout the Domini-can Republic. She particularly excelled as the Housekeeping Manager and Certified Regional Housekeeping Trainer for a large resort property. She came to the United States and found a home at the Holiday Inn in Allentown. Her leadership skills has allowed Emilia to embrace the “Journey Buddy” initiative helping Spanish speaking associates better understand the ways of The Journey.

Lorenzo Guzman has been the love of Emilia’s life for more than 43 years. They have three children and four grandchildren. Family and relationships matter to Emilia. It makes the days worth living. She shares her feelings, “A ‘great day’ at work is simply the ability to walk in through the doors because I am grateful to be employed at my age with a company that allows me to provide for my family. Daily I am surrounded by great people a great coach and an environment where hospitality and people are a priority. Relationships matter.”

TODD LUOMA

He understands he is in the experience creation business.



Banquets in a hotel can be about food and table settings and the color of napkins. Or it can be about the experiences people will have eating, meeting, dancing, laughing, crying, learning and rejoicing. Todd Luoma understands that he is in the experience creation business. His props of food, décor, glassware, music and lighting just help him create the atmosphere of unforgettable moments.

Todd is a beautiful example of the way The Journey is supposed to work. He joined the Meyer Jabara family in 1997 as a banquet server/houseman. He moved to banquet captain when leadership realized he had a knack for serving with the heart. After about two years he progressed into the assistant Banquet Manager role. Then, the thriving and growing Balti-more properties of Pier 5 and the Brookshire Suites needed banquet help. Todd was the man who could help differentiate these unique facilities. For nearly four years, he learned the nuances of the Inner Harbor guest and helped to build a very successful banquets and events business. Simultaneously the wedding and event calendar in Christiana began to explode and Todd returned as Assistant Banquet Manager and then moved into the lead role as Banquet Manager. His unique gift at cre-ating out-of-the-ordinary backdrops for amazing experiences has Todd busy benchmarking and teaching with other MJ family associates. Todd is always holding some kind of living classroom.

While in Baltimore Todd met his wife Sarah who was the Experience Specialist for the properties. They both understood the power of relationships to make life worth living. Together they are a true force of positive energy and people skills. They enjoy life with their young son, Chase and appreciate the power of making moments memorable.

ROLAND A. PROULX

He's about making true heart connections with fellow PEOPLE.



If there was a theme song that best suited Roland Proulx it would be “People” by Bette Midler. The lyrics tell his story, “People...People who need People...are the luckiest people in the world.” Roland needs people in his life to be happy and people need Roland. Guest comment after guest comment, multi-page letter after letter prove that point. This Guest Service Agent isn’t about serving Guests... he’s about making true heart connections with fellow PEOPLE.

Roland attended Johnson and Wales University where he received both his Bachelors and Masters in Hotel Management. During his high school and college careers he also served as Head Page in the House of Representatives for the State of Rhode Island. At 16 he picked up an extra job at a hotel and worked part time or full time for hotels ever since.

Roland doesn’t use the word, “group” very often... he is more inclined to refer to them as “people.” Each individual is unique and has individu-alized needs and situations. Recently the hotel became home base to a large organization in the community. At any one time 60 to 80 pieces of luggage would be delivered to the hotel simultaneously. Roland knew each person needed to have their correct bag delivered to the room and readied for their arrival. It would be horrible to receive the wrong bag after a long day of travel. So Roland calls the entire bell staff and At Your Service Zone staff together to discuss possibilities instead of problems. Soon the plan was created, implemented and tested. Not ONE bag mis-hap! The Flock Style leadership theory works. All of us are better than one of us. It’s a “people” thing!

Someone unfamiliar with Roland’s ability to connect with people would be confused oftentimes seeing a line of people standing in the lobby of the hotel as if waiting to buy a ticket or gain an autograph. But for those who know Roland, that line is nothing to worry about. It’s just people... wanting to talk with Roland and share a new story about how life.

Roland will have more stories to share as he accepts his fiancé’s hand in marriage in December of this year.

EVAN ZOLDESSY

There are always stories waiting to be discovered. I love to hear their stories.



If someone were to yell out the letters O H — Evan would undoubtedly answer with a hearty I O! He is a true Scarlet and Gray Ohio State Buckeye. But the letters OH also form the word, “Oh!” which is often exclaimed by the guests of the Stamford Marriott when they encounter the amazing front desk service provided by Evan Zoldessy. Other words often written in positive guest comments are, “WOW!” “GREAT,” “PERFECT,” AND “THANKS.” One guest even wrote, “I love it that his initials are EZ because he certainly makes every aspect of my trip very EZ. And for that I am grateful.”

But delivering great guest service is expected of a Front Office Manager. What makes Evan Zoldessy a Mirror is his ability to find other great service providers, engage their minds and hearts and develop them into amazing team members. He is a teacher, a nurturer, a developer.

Evan started in the hotel business right out of college. The ability to learn at the Stamford Marriott has kept him emotionally connected. As a manager his favorite principle has become the Three-Legged Stool. High expectations have been placed on the front office team and Evan has realized it takes happy hosts to make happy guests which make happy owners. He strives to balance that stool every day.

A love of guests has always given Evan the edge. He delights in stepping out from behind the desk and interacting. “There are always stories waiting to be discovered,” Evan declares with eyes wide open. “I love to hear their stories.” He encourages each host to be a collector of stories. Showing interest in the guests and their stories equates to happy guests who feel valued. In turn those guests write stories back about the hosts. Evan’s greatest joy comes when he sees one of the hosts’ names mentioned in a guest comment. A heart connection was made. A life was touched. That makes a great day.

Great personal performance. Great leadership of others. Great people development. And a great ability to lead the Stamford Marriott front office team out of the red is why Evan Zoldessy is a very deserving MJ Mirror.

Roland will have more stories to share as he accepts his fiancé’s hand in marriage in December of this year.