

# HI CHICAGO

*The J. Ira and Nicki Harris Family Hostel*

## Message from the General Manager

It has been an exciting year for **HI Chicago**. Most notably, we were recognized as the **3<sup>rd</sup> Best Extra Large Hostel worldwide**, up from 9<sup>th</sup> place in 2014.

To capitalize on our success, we invested in facility updates and a redesign that will continue to impress our guests for years to come.

Additionally, we renewed our commitment to being environmentally responsible by implementing new recycling and composting procedures.

Much of the success that we have enjoyed over the last year is due to the dedication of our talented staff and volunteers.

Thank you to everyone who has played a part in making a great fiscal year!

## Facility Updates

HI Chicago has undergone major renovations over the last year. We enhanced the first and second floors with beautiful art installations, a complete dining room makeover, a new information desk, and updated signage on every floor. These changes have improved our space by increasing the comfort level and fostering a greater sense of community.



## Sustainability

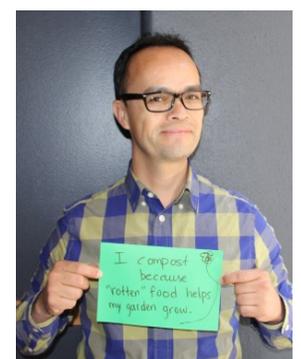
Environmental responsibility has always been at the core of HI USA's values. Hostelling is "green by design" via shared room accommodations and community spaces. HI Chicago recently trained staff on proper recycling practices, food waste, and our new composting procedure. By partnering with **Collective Resource, Inc.**, we are now able to collect and donate all organic waste produced at the hostel. To show our commitment to these new initiatives, each employee created a Green Pledge; a few are pictured below.



Megan Arlow  
Regional Engagement  
Manager



Christa Sangster  
Front Desk



Jesus Villegas  
Front Desk

## BY THE NUMBERS

- 98,985** overnights
- 7,418** traveler participants in hostel activities
- 1,620** student participants in education programs
- 308** hostel-led community activities
- 295** engaged volunteers
- 135** in-hostel events
- 65** classroom visits to schools
- 63** foreign groups stayed in hostel
- 36** Girl Scout Troops stayed in hostel
- 25** Cultural Kitchen programs
- 20** Exchange Neighborhood programs
- 6** Culture Quest programs
- 1 HOSTEL**

## Community Hostelling Fund

A new pilot program has been launched in the Central Region! HI USA has developed the [Community Hostelling Fund \(CHF\)](#), a scholarship program awarding 18-30 year-olds interested in travel and making a difference. CHF is run by HI USA Volunteers in Chicago, Houston, and Austin. The two scholarships offered are: The Explore America Hostel Scholarship and the Explore the World Travel Scholarship. We are eager and excited to help young people explore the world through hostelling!

## Exchange Neighborhoods

Exchange Neighborhoods, one of Chicago's premier [Education programs](#), began in Chicago in 2003. In partnership with Chicago Public Schools, Exchange Neighborhoods strives to break down the invisible barriers that divide our city. Participating schools implement a cultural curriculum and research unit to prepare for the Exchange day. The day of the Exchange, students spend half the day at their own school where they share about their school, neighborhood, and culture, and the other half visiting their peers' school across the city where they learn about their unique experience in Chicago.



*David, a student from Taft High School, discusses diversity at his school on the Exchange Day.*

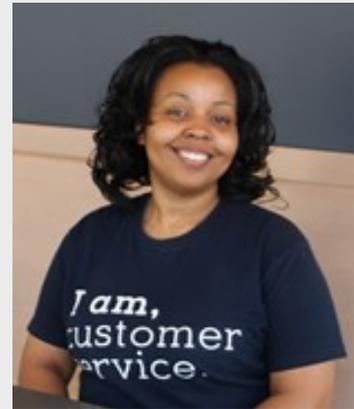
The Exchange day ends with teambuilding activities, dinner, and an overnight at HI Chicago. Students leave the program with increased understanding of themselves, and their new friends from across the city. When asked what they learned from Exchange Neighborhoods, students responded: "We are the same, we just grew up in different places." "I learned that the more you talk to different people, the more you learn and grow." "It doesn't matter where you're from, we're all human." Hostelling International's mission of creating a more peaceful world comes to life in Exchange Neighborhoods, and we hope the program will continue to expand in years to come.

## HI Chicago Team Updates

We are pleased to welcome Anna Lucas Marin as the Education Coordinator, and Anna Henschel as the Community Engagement Liaison. We also promoted three exceptional members of our team: Rhonda Thomas was promoted to Housekeeping Supervisor, Kyle Rowe was promoted to Front Desk Supervisor, and Cesar Alvarado was promoted to Maintenance Assistant. Additionally, we had new members join the team in Breakfast, at the Front Desk, and in Housekeeping. We welcome our new employees and congratulate those newly promoted for their outstanding service!

## Staff Spotlight:

Tequilla Rochelle Bardney



What do you do at the hostel?  
*I work in the kitchen, prepping breakfast, greeting guests, and cleaning.*

What is your favorite part about your job?  
*I love the interaction with diverse guests and learning about where they come from.*

What is your personal philosophy?  
*Treat others the way you would like to be treated.*

If you could do another job for just one day, what would it be?  
*I would join the circus!  
It would just be fun and crazy.*

How do you define success?  
*Accomplishing goals that you set for yourself, while helping others.*

Tequilla joined the housekeeping team at HI Chicago in May 2013. Her charisma and interpersonal skills were noticed immediately, and soon after beginning she was transferred to the breakfast room, where she brightens the day of our guests each morning!