

## TRADEWINDS ISLAND RESORTS JOINS PILOT PROGRAM TO OFFER DEBT-FREE COLLEGE DEGREES TO EMPLOYEES

### TradeWinds Island Resorts Among 10 Hotel Companies Selected for Innovative Pilot Program to Offer Employees No-Cost Associate and Low-Cost Bachelor's Degrees

[ST. PETE BEACH, Fla.] – The American Hotel & Lodging Educational Foundation (AHLEF), the foundation arm of the American Hotel & Lodging Association, recently named **TradeWinds Island Resorts** as one of 10 hotel companies in a pilot program to offer streamlined degree programs to hotel industry employees. Through this groundbreaking new program, offered in partnership with Pearson's AcceleratED Pathways program, TradeWinds Island Resorts employees can pursue higher education pathways at no cost to the employee.

"We are honored to be able to offer this cutting-edge program to advance the education of our employees," said Keith Overton, president of TradeWinds Island Resorts. "Our goal is to promote the well-being of each member of our team and allow them to succeed as individuals, giving them the opportunity to become future leaders of the hospitality and other industries that drive America's economy."

The announcement underscores the hotel industry's commitment to enriching its workforce and ensuring a strong and prosperous future for the industry.

"The hospitality business is about taking care of people--both our guests and our workforce, said Katherine Lugar, president and CEO of the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA). "We could not do what we do without a strong, talented workforce. Our industry exemplifies the American Dream, fostering development, upward mobility, and exciting lifelong careers. Today's announcement builds on a legacy of resources and training the hotel industry provides to our employees, and we are excited to give working adults in the hotel industry a more affordable and flexible education, and helping employers to attract and retain talent in the process. This is a win-win."

This new program offers TradeWinds Island Resorts employees more affordable, flexible, and personalized educational paths to complete their high school GED, a cost-free Associate degree, or a low-cost Bachelor's degree. By eliminating the high upfront cost of pursuing higher education, more students can take advantage of tuition assistance programs and successfully complete higher education. The program also includes personalized guidance, resources and additional support services to help students reach their goals and complete their educational journeys.

Employees who pursue and complete post-secondary education tend to earn more money over the span of their careers, are more qualified for promotion, are effective at driving customer satisfaction, and stay at companies longer.

For more information on TradeWinds Island Resorts, visit [www.JustLetGo.com](http://www.JustLetGo.com).

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### **About TradeWinds Island Resorts**

The TradeWinds Island Resorts – the Island Grand and Guy Harvey Outpost – are located directly on the sugary white sands of the Gulf of Mexico on St. Pete Beach in Florida. The resorts offer access to two properties in one, with limitless beachfront recreation, sumptuous dining and world class meeting and function facilities.

### **About the American Hotel & Lodging Association**

Serving the hospitality industry for more than a century, the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) is the sole national association representing all segments of the 8 million jobs the U.S. lodging industry supports, including hotel owners, REITs, chains, franchisees, management companies, independent properties, bed and breakfasts, state hotel associations, and industry suppliers.

### **About the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Foundation**

AHLEF is the industry's philanthropic organization, dedicated to helping people build careers that improve their lives and strengthen the lodging industry. Founded in 1953, AHLEF is a subsidiary of the American Hotel & Lodging Association and provides resources for hospitality-related education, career development, research and public awareness of the industry.

### **About Pearson**

Pearson is the world's learning company, with expertise in educational courseware and assessment, and a range of teaching and learning services powered by technology. Our mission is to help people make progress through access to better learning. We believe that learning opens up opportunities, creating fulfilling careers and better lives. For more, visit [www.pearson.com](http://www.pearson.com).