

## VisitSanAntonio.com

### Summer 2019 Newsletter

#### Visit San Antonio Honors Event Was Serious Fun!

Visit San Antonio hosted the second Visit San Antonio Honors event on May 14 at the Aztec Theatre. The house was “a-rocking” with industry professionals, honorees and lots of mascots!



After a mix and mingle with mascots from the major attractions, schools, sports teams and more, Mayor Ron Nirenberg kicked off the celebration with a proclamation addressing Visitor Experience Month. This was followed by the announcement of the San Antonio CTA of the Year Award. This year’s recipient is Rick Garza, a concierge at Omni La Mansion. You can read more about Rick later in this newsletter.

Next up was the recognition of 105 CTAs who celebrated their 5-year CTA anniversaries. Those who were in attendance were brought to the stage to receive their 5-year pins.

The evening continued, as following prestigious awards were presented: the Robert H. H. Hugman (recipient: [True Flavors Catering](#)), Con Corazon (recipient: Edward McClure, CEO of [Phoenix Hospitality Group](#)) and Deep In the Heart (recipient: Susan Naylor).

In true hospitality-industry fashion, the evening didn’t end quietly, but closed with a great concert featuring [The Zack Walther Band](#), an Americana roots band based out of New Braunfels.



**Robert H. H. Hugman** | True Flavors Catering (Johnny, Leticia, and Mark Hernandez and Denise Rodriguez-Hernandez)



**Con Corazon** | Edward McClure, CEO of Phoenix Hospitality



**Deep in The Heart...a passion for giving** | Susan Naylor, Business Leader and Community Influencer

## *San Antonio CTA of the Year Announced!*



The heartbeat of the Certified Tourism Ambassador program is a focus to enhance the visitor experience. There are few ambassadors, however, who embody that focus more than Rick Garza at the Omni Mansion del Rio in San Antonio.

The examples of his dedication are many. In one case, he discovered a guest from Latvia had arrived specifically to see Spurs player Davis Bertans, a star who hails from that country. The visitor asked Rick to help him get a Bertans jersey or T-shirt, and Rick responded by making him one by hand. Afterward, the guest indicated that it was Rick's kindness, not seeing Bertans play, that stood out as the highlight of his trip.

In another instance, Rick found out that a family had a 2-year-old with them. He took the initiative to make a fort for the youngster out of a dozen pillows and have it ready when the travelers arrived.

Rick, an active member of the CTA program, is also one of only five Les Clefs d'Or concierges in the city. He's an active member of the local concierge association, whose members respect him as an example of dedication and service. With this in mind, he educates himself on the great diversity of attractions that San Antonio offers. He consistently attends the opening of new restaurants, tourist attractions and doing the little things that pay big dividends, such as alerting the front office team at the hotel when there are impactful street closures during events or if a guest is celebrating a milestone such as an anniversary or birthday.

His supervisors note that Rick regularly presents great ideas, whether it's spearheading the Elf on the Shelf program at Christmas or placing directional signs for busy Saturday evenings when people are heading in several different directions in San Antonio's celebrated downtown and River Walk. It's little wonder that Rick is consistently lauded in guest surveys and receives letters and thank-you cards from guests.

Rick is a shining showcase of the strength of the CTA program, helping the Omni and San Antonio deliver a positive destination brand experience. He has a heart for people, and it shows every day.

## *Refer Friends & Family to the next CTA Class and Get an Invite to an Exclusive CTA Mixer!*



The challenge has officially started for you to refer a friend or a family member to register for our Brooks/Southside Community CTA class on Thursday, September 12th 1pm-5pm. Your family or friend will get a discount of \$15 (\$25 vs \$40) and a chance to celebrate their certification afterward with you! Enjoy an exclusive mixer hosted by Embassy Suites at Brooks immediately after the class. Once your family/friend registers for the class, email [Faith Green](mailto:Faith.Green@vsa.com) their name and you both will be put on the list to attend!

## *Maximize the Benefits of Your CTA Certification*



The San Antonio CTA program is ever-evolving and changing with the introduction of different event formats, a growing Facebook Group, great Freebies and Discounts and this year's offering of an abbreviated CTA re-certification for former CTAs who would like



Group, great freebies and discounts and this year's offering of an abbreviated CTA re-certification for former CTAs who would like to become re-engaged.

With that in mind, here are a few hints to maximize the benefit you receive from your CTA certification:

**Join the private Facebook Group: [San Antonio Certified Tourism Ambassadors](#).** It has become a valuable resource-sharing cite for CTAs, a forum to remind us of upcoming events, and the place to watch for last minute giveaways!

Read your "Know Before You Go" emails. Our events are unique and any special instructions on where to park, how to dress, what to bring, etc. are included in those pre-event emails. This will help you come prepared and ready to enjoy the event.

**Log Into Your Account on CTANetwork.com.** Once you become a CTA, you'll have access to your own page on the [CTA network website](#). From there you can RSVP for events, log points toward your annual certification renewal, access Freebies and Discounts, submit your renewal application, and refer a friend and more! You'll need your user name and password. If you've lost them, reach out to Faith Green or Lorie Kennedy for assistance.

**Take advantage** of the Freebies and Discounts offered by our generous partners. What better way to know our city than to visit our attractions, museums, restaurants and more. Visitors will love your first-hand recommendations.

**Refer a Friend!** If you love the CTA program, you probably have a friend who would like to become a CTA too. It's as easy as tapping on the Refer a Friend Link on your CTA page. You may even win a prize for your referral, please register at [CTANetwork.com](#)

**Submit your Nomination for CTA of the Year.** We are surrounded by awesome colleagues. If you know of someone who is deserving of the title CTA of the Year, we'd love to hear from you. The nomination form is available [here](#) and you may submit a candidate at any time.

## ***Congratulations to Our Collegiate CTAs!***

UTSA and St. Philips College both include the CTA Certification as a module in specific tourism and hospitality courses. Each year, several groups of new CTAs come out of these classes with a CTA certification to include on their resumes! We congratulate these new CTAs and look forward to seeing them put their CTA knowledge to work!



## ***Lots More To See, Do and Eat in San Antonio This Summer!***



Whether you gravitate toward thrilling adventure rides, culinary delights, nature, history or education, there are many new offerings in San Antonio this summer. [Explore what's new.](#)

## **Experience Dedicated Destination**



Help us to continue to find out how San Antonio is doing in the eyes of our visitors- now and over time – by being part of the Experience Dedicated® Destination (FDD) program. We are currently in our second year of the program and



... have collected valuable research and data to help improve the guest experience. By joining in the program, you will receive reports on challenges identified and how we collectively work together to solve them. We encourage all partners to commit to the program. To sign up for ED®, [click here](#).

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### ***Facebook Page***



Don't miss out on last-minute invites and special offers! Be sure to join our private CTA Facebook group, where we post upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, last-minute Freebies & Discounts and exclusive CTA giveaways. This helps reduce the number of emails we send and serves as a platform for you to connect with fellow CTAs. To join the group, go to [www.facebook.com/groups/SanAntonioCTAs](https://www.facebook.com/groups/SanAntonioCTAs).

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