

## It's Trade Expo Time!

With more than 400 exhibit booths, the Ocean City Hotel Motel Restaurant Association Spring Trade Expo is certainly the place to be on March 5-6. Industry professionals will gather to share innovations, insights and solutions for all things hospitality. This year marks the OCHMRA Director Susan L. Jones's twenty-second year spearheading what is the main event for the non-profit trade group. "I have certainly seen many changes in the industry, but the one constant is that we are in the people business," said Jones. "And in today's review driven economy, the front line employees are critical to a company's success." With this thought in mind, the Association has hired industry expert Bob Brown to deliver the keynote sessions.

Owners can build their hospitality A-team by attending the Keynote session, "Turn Your Staff into Sales Superstars – How to Not Leave \$\$ on the Table – 8 Keys of Dining Sales Success." Bob Brown Services Solutions will take the sales team

to the next level. Attendees will gain insights on engaging and softly upselling with the "by the way" techniques and the "don't ask; suggest" method. It is possible to build hospitality superstars from the start by hiring smiles and training for success! This workshop will be held on Sunday, March 5 at noon and is *not to be missed* for all managers and owners who hire and train for bars, nightclubs and restaurants.

His insight and teaching will continue on Monday, March 6, prior to the show floor opening, at 10:00 a.m. where he'll present "Service Excellence for Lifetime Loyalty – How to Handle Today's Demanding Customer." This session is designed for both lodging and restaurant industries. Once a business achieves superior service, customer loyalty will follow. Owners should reflect and determine if they are developing their staff to be armed with the tools, knowledge and service pizzazz to attract and retain customers for life. During this session, Bob will teach the following: Six Building

Blocks of a Service Star; The Art of Respectful Phrasing; The Six Steps of Handling Customer Complaints; The Empathy Tool Box; and Service Dazzlers.

Another powerful session will be "From Boss to Coach: Turning Great Managers into Great Coaches." Speaker Leslie Sheldon of The Integrity Team describes this session in the following way: "Success in management isn't based solely on following a set of mechanical, process-driven rules. It begins within the head and heart of the person. This session will focus on shifting managers' coaching mindset from that of a "mistake catcher" and "problem solver" to a coaching leader capable of instilling confidence, a sense of ownership, and fully realized potential in the people they manage." In this seminar, attendees will develop a practical roadmap for building a coaching culture that unleashes inner potential and drives results



from people of all ages and experiences. This session will be offered on both Sunday and Monday.

The Trade Expo sessions promise to deliver helpful takeaways, stimulating

ideas, and powerful messages to improve operations and spark new philosophies. Attendees will receive cutting-edge industry knowledge. A complete schedule and a list of the exhibitors can be found on the Expo website. Exclusively serving the lodging and foodservice industry, the Ocean City Spring Trade Expo is known for bringing together hospitality buyers and sellers in a fun atmosphere. "This is one of my favorite times of the year as owners come out of winter hibernation to reconnect," says event manager Liz Walk. Expo dates are Sunday and Monday, March 5 and 6. For complete information, visit [www.oceancitytradeexpo.com](http://www.oceancitytradeexpo.com) or call 410-289-6733.

### A PLACE FOR SAM *cont. from page 7*

person had to understand that creating a great place for Sam to have meaningful work was at the heart of everything.

Over dinner in October 2015, Michael and Jennifer had a proposal for one of their dearest friends, Elli Straus, who had known Sam most of his life. With a background in teaching as well as experience in the nonprofit world with the March of Dimes and with the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Maryland, Elli was looking for her next job to help people. But a coffee shop? With special needs employees? From scratch? It was a stretch. But her love for Sam won out. Elli said yes.

The last year has been a whirlwind of activity for Michael, Elli, and restaurant consultant Henry Pertman, who was brought in to bring restaurant experience and know-how. First, finding the right space for a coffee shop. It had to be close to Itineris, with the right amount of foot traffic, and clients who would bring a neighborhood feel — where everybody "knows your name," so to speak. "We want to know the guests and for the guests to know the employees," Elli says. Michael put in a bid on an existing cafe in the Tuscany-Canterbury neighborhood near Johns Hopkins University's Homewood campus. "Sam's Canterbury Cafe" was born. And once the location was found, the

scale grew from a small coffee shop to a full café serving breakfast and lunch. Once the size and scale grew, Michael, Jennifer, and Elli realized the Café could provide a place for other adults with Autistic Spectrum Disorders to work.

Elli designed the space, using the same cool and calming colors found in the Itineris space. She bought equipment, furniture, dishes, and food items, hired a daily manager and a staff of 15. During orientation, the staff members underwent awareness training so they would know, for example, that humor, body language, and information can be processed quite differently by those with ASD. "It's one thing to have a job," Elli says, "It's quite another thing to have

something meaningful and be part of a meaningful team."

Eventually, Michael plans to bring in at least six employees who are on the autism spectrum to work in the space. As he says, "Sam's Canterbury Cafe is not designed as a place for special needs adults to work. It's a special place where adults with special needs happen to work."

And Sam? He loves going to work at the restaurant. He will prepare food trays, organize napkins and silverware, and most importantly, greet guests. Sam already refers to it as "My Café!" Thanks to his parents and many, many others who helped along the way, this is truly "a place for Sam."

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