Housekeepers – Our Extraordinary Superheroes
By Dr. Richard Kelley

Over the next two weeks, we will take some time away from our regular duties to honor our Housekeepers. We will give well-earned recognition to those who work tirelessly every day of the year to keep our rooms and public areas looking as great as they do, and we will thank them for everything they do.

Even though they work quietly, far from the limelight, the job our Housekeepers do is nothing short of magnificent. They perform their duties flawlessly 24/7/365 – all day, every day of the week, throughout the year, even on Christmas Day.

Regular readers of Saturday Briefing know that during International Housekeepers Week, I often seek a metaphor for the vital role that Housekeepers play in the success of our hotels.

This year, I believe the term “Extraordinary Superheroes” captures the spirit of our Housekeepers because it brings to mind the legendary, fictional superheroes, Wonder Woman¹ and Superman².

Our Housekeepers are far from fictional. Every day, they perform tasks that would challenge both Wonder Woman and Superman if those icons of yesteryear suddenly came to life and leaped off the pages of the comic books many of us read in our youth, long before the days of computers and the Internet.

Wonder Woman deflected bullets with her magical, metallic bracelets. Superman could leap over tall buildings.

The two represented trust, honesty, dedication and strength. They were swift, hardworking and sincere. They cared for their communities and everyone in them. They were serious about their mission, yet both – and particularly Superman, also known as news reporter Clark Kent – could also pause and laugh at themselves in typically human fashion.

Doesn’t it all describe our Housekeepers?

We are so fortunate to have a group of such extraordinary individuals working in the Housekeeping departments of every Outrigger, OHANA, and affiliated property across the Pacific and, with Outrigger Lodging Services, across the continental United States from Florida to California.

Seven days a week, these Superheroes accomplish exceptional, noteworthy, and remarkable feats in a wide range of activities.

Three hundred and sixty-five days a year, they demonstrate:

• A strong work ethic
• Top skills
• A deep sense of responsibility
• A willingness to help others
• Honesty and integrity
• A wonderful sense of humor

Each morning, as they go forth to tackle a corridor full of guest rooms or the equivalent in public areas, they bring with them this incredible set of skills and dedication. By the end of the day, everything has to be perfect and ready for guests arriving from distant corners of the world. There are thousands of details that need attention. Only people with a strong work ethic and well-honed abilities can do this demanding job with consistently high performance day after day, month after month, and year after year.

Our Housekeepers also have a tremendous sense of personal responsibility for their jobs, their company and their

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fellow workers. They often work alone, focused only on the task at hand. Housekeepers take full charge of their assigned guest rooms or public areas. They take pride in what they do and do not need a supervisor looking over their shoulder to make sure they do it right.

Our Housekeepers are well known for helping others achieve their goals. They often make personal sacrifices by working odd hours and irregular shifts. They are willing to tackle the really tough jobs that no one else wants to do. Generally, these are also the kind of jobs that cannot be put off to another day.

Think how guests would react if we told them, “We’ll make up your room tomorrow and touch up the lobby later this week!”

Along that line, our Housekeepers are compassionate and show it in many ways. They help others in our community through their volunteer service and fundraising. Every year, they enthusiastically turn out in large numbers for the annual Visitor Industry Charity Walk.

Our Housekeepers are legendary for honesty and integrity. Every day, our guests leave valuables and personal effects in the care of our Housekeepers. In my more than six decades in the hospitality business, I have hardly ever seen that trust violated.

Finally, our Housekeepers know that being gracious and, perhaps, even adding a bit of humor to a situation are important qualities to keep at the ready.

In the hotel business, difficult, awkward situations are almost daily occurrence. Guests get grumpy. Some arrive early. Others check out late. The plumbing clogs up. Fresh linen from the laundry fails to arrive on time – or perhaps not at all.

When this happens, I’ve seen that our Extraordinary Superheroes almost always approach the situation with a great deal of grace and patience, and a healthy sprinkling of humor.

So, are our Housekeepers really Extraordinary Superheroes? Absolutely!

To accomplish everything they do, they must turn in extraordinary performances day after day. The only difference between them and the world’s top athletes, film stars or leaders of business and government is that our Housekeepers do not get their stories, photos and achievements reported on the nightly TV news, on the front page of the Honolulu Star-Advertiser, or in an Internet “tweet.”

However, once a year, we do gratefully pause for International Housekeepers Week to recognize what wonderful people they are and all the great things they do for our company, their fellow workers and our guests.

So, to all of our Housekeepers … Domo Arigato, Fa’aafetai, Kamsahamnida, Mahalo, Mauruuru, Salamat, Si Yu’us Ma’a se, Thank You, Tika Hoki, Vinaka Vakelevu, and Xie Xie!

Have a great week! You’ve earned our respect and admiration.  

1 All Star Comics, 1941
2 Action Comics, 1938

More photos on pages 3, 4, 5 and 6
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Digging in! Mary Lou Casilla, Yeu Hing Shiu, Ho Soon Kang, Ai Jin Li, Florencia Silapan and Jun Ling Lu

Mary Rose Tabion, Wai Choi Ho, Grace Mello, Primie Marzan and Divina Garcia

Amy Lee, Agatha Kim, Hak Soon Song, Siu-Lan Fong and Feng Zhen Chen

Nanee Oh, Yuan Ni Lin, Divina Garcia, Primie Marzan and Kim Xiao

Yan Ni Lin, Lai Chee Lum, Jun Ling Lu, Ai Jin Li and Susanna Wong

Donna Leong, Qi Qi Tong, Dr. Chuck Kelley and Nora Weatherwax
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Mili Rock, Alan White, Myra Kuboyama, Marlou Infante, Bruce Tawanuu, Bill Comstock, Mark Paz, Mark Ramos, Ronald Ucol, Donna Leong, Mark Pascua, Mercy Valdez and Jo-Ann Yonamine

Sitting: Benedicta Pascua, Agripina Agapas, Cecilia Ferrer, Cons Gampong, Pilarita Calumpit. Standing: Primo Agasid, Chuck Shishido, Mila Javier, Clara Han and Revinia Cabbab

Sitting: Yuk Doong Chee, Joyce Su, Shu Qin Lei, Jing Yun Wu, My Be Ho, Standing: Ruthann Yamanaka, Shu Wen Chen, Elaine Lo, Rosie Rosete, Jie Zhen Li and Mei Qing Tan

At the barbecue: Gan Fie Su, Primo Agasid and Xin Giang Zhou

Lai Hung Wong, Shin Ling Vat, Chuck Shishido, Lin Heung Lo and Alicia Li

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Sitting: Fu Hua Chen, Hanna Liang, Charlie Kuan, Xue Cong He, Joanna Lee and Diana To. Standing: Siu Hing Lee, Yue Ling Xu, Bill Comstock, Barry Wallace, Herminia Aghayani, Bruce Schneider, Shao Huan Liu, Jenny Wu and Alan White.

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Cho Ji Pae, Hipolita Rosete, Ester Viloria, Ruthann Yamanaka, Donna Leong, Alan White, Espirita Sumibcay, Benefrida Antonio, Esmeralda Ancheta and (back) Eleira Maluyo

Zhi E Liang, Estella Lau, Julia Liang, Ruthann Yamanaka, Alan White, David Carey, Donna Leong, Zhi Mei Liang, Tracy LQ Xu and Shao Yuan Mai

Yat Sam Yip, Espirita Sumibcay, Ligaya Martin, Cynthia Feng and Sigfredo Raquinio

Clarita Esmeralda, Loida Manuel, Emilia Mangaoang, David Carey, Espirita Sumibcay, Ruthann Yamanaka, Yin Fong Lam, Jae Sil Lee and Gui Yu Chen

Elpidio Oviedo, Demy Tamayo, Marylene Lagasca, Alan White, Sigfredo Raquinio, Ruthann Yamanaka, Creilda Justo and Nieves Libed

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Editor-in-Chief: Richard Kelley
Supervising Editor: Pila Hanson
Senior Editor: Kathy Foley
Proofing Assistant: Char Luning
Contributing Writers: Employees of OEG

Visit us online at: www.saturdaybriefing.outrigger.com
Submissions to Kathy Foley at kathysb@outrigger.com, via interoffice mail to OEH/HR or by phone at (808) 921-6957.

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