Outrigger Receives VASH Award

When illness, injury, crime, or other adversity strikes someone while traveling, it can be terribly frightening and disorienting. When this occasionally happens to guests at Outrigger and OHANA Hotels & Resorts, we try to do everything we can to assist the traveler and his or her family. But there are sometimes limits as to what an individual hotel or company can do. So we are lucky that we have the Visitor Aloha Society of Hawaii (VASH) to help out when needed.

Established in November 1997, VASH, a nonprofit organization, is the brainchild of the Rotary Club of Honolulu. Over the years, through community partnerships with police, the fire department, other government agencies, hospitals, and businesses, VASH has assisted thousands of visitors to our state.

I am proud to say that Outrigger has been a supporter of VASH from its inception, when we provided the young organization with its very first office – rent-free – at the Coral Seas and Edgewater Lanais hotels, which once stood about where the Holokai Grill at Waikiki Beach Walk* is now located. Today, Outrigger’s recently retired Chief of Security, Warren J. Ferreira, continues to serve as a Vice Chair and Board Member of VASH.

Over the years, VASH has grown and now assists several thousand visitors each year. There are other VASH organizations on the Big Island, Maui, and Kauai. They provide information, assistance, and coordination with the many resources that people experiencing some kind of trouble may need to turn to. VASH-Oahu has expanded the scope of its services to include assistance with bereavement when there is a death of a visitor. VASH also calls on visitors who are hospitalized.

Last week, VASH celebrated its 10th anniversary with a luncheon at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Entertainment legend Danny Kaleikini served as emcee and Mayor Mufi Hannemann was the keynote speaker. Honolulu City Councilman Charles Djou was also in attendance along with many other dignitaries.

On this special occasion, VASH Board Member Tina Yamaki presented the Outrigger Enterprises Group with the “Decade of Aloha Award” for its ongoing commitment and support of the organization and its mission. Jerry Dolak of our Safety and Emergency Planning Department accepted the award and said, “Outrigger has always supported VASH; it has been a win-win situation for all of us.”

It’s not all about dollar signs and numbers; we want our visitors to know we care about them and are here to help when the need arises. By supporting VASH, we show our aloha, and that speaks volumes when someone returns home.

I am extremely proud of our commitment to this outstanding organization.