



Fundación de Becas para
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Scholarship

Foundation

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Foundation

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Alumni News



José "Peco" Suárez

José "Peco" Suárez at the Helm of the Scholarship Foundation

The Scholarship Foundation is very pleased to announce that José "Peco" Suárez has been unanimously elected to the position of President of the Scholarship Foundation. It is a momentous time for us since we have come full circle by electing one of our first scholarship recipients to take over the helm of the Foundation, fulfilling our mission.

With scholarship assistance, Peco Suárez earned a Master's degree in Hospitality Management with a concentration in Finance at Cornell University in 1996. After completing his studies, he returned to the island to work at the Wyndham El Conquistador where he was quickly promoted to Associate Director of Group Services. In 1999, Peco was named General Manager at the Wyndham Garden Hotel in Mt. Olive, New Jersey – the first scholarship recipient to attain General Manager status. The following year he returned to Puerto Rico as Hotel Manager at the Wyndham El San Juan, a post he held until the summer of 2002.

In 2002, Peco was named Executive Director of the Puerto Rico Tourism Company. He was instrumental in leading the Island's tourism recovery post 9/11. After leaving the Tourism Company in 2004, Peco became Managing Director of one of the largest resorts in the Caribbean, the Westin & Sheraton Grand Bahama Resorts at Our Lucaya in Grand Bahama Island.

In 2006, Peco returned to Puerto Rico as Vice President & Managing Director of International Hospitality Enterprises. He had a leading role in the reopening of La Concha Resort in 2007. He is currently President of International Hospitality Associates and is in charge of the continuing construction at La Concha and the opening of the Condado Vanderbilt Hotel.

In addition to assuming the role of President of the Scholarship Foundation, Peco also serves on the boards of the Puerto Rico Hotel & Tourism Association and the Puerto Rico Convention Bureau.

His goal for the Foundation in 2010 is "to bring the Foundation in to the 21st Century." Plans are underway for the development of a web page where our application form can be accessed and filed, our newsletters can be read, our photos can be seen and the successes of our scholarship recipients can be prominently displayed.

We are very excited about having Peco Suárez as our new President. With his wide range of experiences in the hotel field along with his proven leadership abilities, Peco is the right person to lead the Foundation in the 21st century.

Hugh A. Andrews, Arnold Benus and Larry Sweeney, founders of the Scholarship Foundation for Hotel & Tourism Studies, have resigned from the Board and have become Honorary Members. They will continue to support the Foundation and offer advice and guidance to the new Board members.

In addition to José "Peco" Suárez as President, Jim Finn will be Chairman of the Board, Carl Kortum will be Vice President and Víctor M. Alvear will be Secretary/Treasurer. Hans-Georg Roehrbein, General Manager of the San Juan Marriott Hotel & Stellaris Casino, has joined the Board of Directors, and his experience heading one of the top hotels in San Juan will serve us well.



Our new Board of Directors

Board Grants 10 Scholarships 2010

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that ten scholarships have already been approved for 2010. Of these, four are for Master's degree studies and include Yari González, who will study human resources at Universidad Interamericana; Erick Jiménez in the Executive MBA program at University of Miami in Puerto Rico; Donald Nasr, who is pursuing his degree in Finance at Universidad Interamericana, and Raiza Robles, also at Universidad Interamericana in the International Business Administration program.



Gretchen Mulero

Three scholarship recipients are pursuing Bachelor's degrees in culinary arts and hotel administration. Gretchen Mulero is in her third year at the Culinary Institute of America. Both Angélica Sotomayor and Claudia Soto are at Johnson & Wales University preparing for a professional career in the hotel industry.

Jeffrey Nogueras and Adrihel Rosario are in the Associate's degree program for culinary arts at Johnson & Wales University while Eduardo Ortiz is preparing to become a chef at The Art Institute in Jacksonville, Florida. The Foundation is also planning to grant scholarships for this summer's English Immersion Program at SUNY, Oswego. Students in the hotel administration and culinary arts programs at Universidad de Puerto Rico, Carolina and the José A. (Tony) Santana International School of Hospitality & Culinary Arts at Universidad del Este will be applying for this six-week English Immersion program.

La Concha Resort Hosts the Christmas Lunch for Students

On December 28th, Level 25 Restaurant at La Concha Resort hosted the 2009 Christmas lunch for our current scholarship recipients. Chef Jeanette Barrios made sure that all of the returning students were treated to a "criollo" menu featuring sancocho, serenata, chicharrones de pollo, sorullitos de maíz, alcapurrias, arroz mamposteo, perrito, pollo and other local favorites. Plaza Cellars delighted the palate with delicious white and red wines to accompany the menu.



Frances Matos, Donald Nasr and Gretchen Mulero

Attending this event were scholarship recipients Erick Jiménez, Frances Matos, Gretchen Mulero, Donald Nasr, Raiza Robles and Adrihel Rosario, along with Board members Jim Finn, Raúl Bustamante, José "Peco" Suárez, Luis Rodríguez, Ana María Viscasillas, José Campo and Dr. José Santana. Foundation mentors Enrique Piñero and Maricarmen Borges also enjoyed a delicious lunch and camaraderie with our scholarship recipients. It was a great way to celebrate the holidays and catch up on all of the news from our stateside students.

THE VIEW From MY CORNER

News from the Executive Administrator



Frances Matos



Efraín Cruz



Jorge Rivera Nieves and Chef Piñero



Jennifer Daubón



Chef Ricardo Castro and the cast of Cirque du Soleil

We are very grateful to Plaza Provision Company for providing a home for the Foundation for almost fifteen years. However, due to a shortage of office space at Plaza Provision Company, the Foundation has moved its offices to the Astor Building at 1018 Ashford Avenue in the Condado. When the need for a move became apparent, Arnold Benus & Peco Suárez graciously offered to provide a new home for the Foundation. Our new direct line is 787-977-3393 and the fax is 787-724-1949. For the time being, our email address continues to be Fundacion@plazaprovision.com. We are currently developing a web page which will include access to our application form, list of requirements, newsletters, photos and a new email address. I will keep you posted when it is up and running.

Gretchen Mulero graduated from the Associate's degree program in culinary arts at the Culinary Institute of America in winter 2009. She has returned to the CIA to complete her studies for a Bachelor's degree in culinary arts management. Frances Matos graduated last fall from the Master's degree program in hotel administration at Florida International University. She is a management trainee at La Concha Resort and is thoroughly enjoying her new experience. She not only has an excellent academic record but has had extensive experience both in Puerto Rico and in Florida.

Scholarship recipient Donald Nasr, who is studying for a Master's degree in finance at Universidad Interamericana, was just named "Employee of the Year 2009" at the San Juan Marriott & Stellaris Casino Hotel, where he works as Senior Casino Auditor.

In December 2009, Sheila Provenzano completed her Master's degree in Integrated Marketing Communications from Roosevelt University in Chicago. She is now working in sales from her Chicago office for the Conrad Condado Plaza Hotel and the El San Juan Hotel.

Former culinary scholarship recipients Efraín Cruz and Jennifer Daubón participated in Puerto Rico's Master Chef competition at the Ritz-Carlton in December. Efraín, Executive Chef at La Gran Meliá, was runner-up to Chef Ariel Rodríguez. Jennifer has her own restaurant, Juanita Banana, on the beautiful island of Culebra. Congratulations to both!

Chef Enrique Piñero has launched his cookbook entitled, "Chef Piñero y Su Alta Cocina" while Chef Ricardo Castro, Director of Culinary Arts at The Art Institute in Tampa, and his students, prepared a lovely cake for the Cirque du Soleil reception.

Please mark your calendars:

May 24, 2010

"12 Chefs...6 Vinos... 1 Cena" at the Caribe Hilton

This year's event will mark a return to elegance with a theme from the golden era of cruising, featuring the Captain's Gala evoking the Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, the Titanic and the Normandie.

June 14, 2010

17th Annual Luis Torregrosa Inter-Casino Golf Tournament