

# THE STATLER FOUNDATION

2024

## ANNUAL REPORT

*Established  
March 2, 1937 under  
the Last Will and  
Testament of  
Ellsworth M. Statler*



[statlerfoundation.com](https://www.statlerfoundation.com)

**LETTER FROM OUR  
CHAIRWOMAN, DONNA M. GIOIA**



As Chairwoman of The Statler Foundation, I am honored to reflect on our journey, celebrate the work we're doing today, and share our vision for the future.

Founded on the values and legacy of Ellsworth Statler, our Foundation has always remained steadfast in its mission—to support and uplift the hotel industry through education, innovation, and community investment. Over the years, we have proudly funded institutions, empowered students, and backed programs that have transformed lives and strengthened our field.

Today, we continue that work with the same passion and purpose. Whether it's through scholarships that help the next generation pursue their dreams or partnerships with leading hotel/hotel management schools, we are deeply engaged in ensuring the industry thrives in a rapidly changing world.

Looking ahead, our commitment to excellence and equity will guide every step. We recognize the importance of embracing technology and sustainability to meet the evolving needs of the hotel industry. We are excited to explore new opportunities that will not only honor our rich heritage, but also build a more inclusive, dynamic future in the hotel industry.

On behalf of The Statler Foundation Board, thank you to all who support and believe in our mission. Together, we are building a legacy that will continue to inspire and empower for generations to come.

Donna M. Gioia  
Chairwoman  
The S



***MESSAGE FOR THE STATLER FOUNDATION, BUFFALO, NY,  
FROM HONORABLE ACEA M. MOSEY, NEW YORK STATE  
SURROGATE JUDGE, ERIE COUNTY***

As Surrogate Judge of Erie County, I am honored once again to oversee and safeguard the extraordinary legacy of Ellsworth Milton Statler. His vision was simple yet profound: to open doors of opportunity for future generations through education and advancement in the hotel industry. Nearly a century later, his mission continues to resonate deeply—not only in Buffalo, where his roots remain, but across the United States and beyond.

The Statler Foundation stands as a testament to what one person’s foresight and generosity can achieve. Each year, I review the Foundation’s annual accounting and confirm that its trustees remain faithful stewards of Mr. Statler’s intent: to support education, research, and innovation in the hospitality field, while nurturing the next generation of leaders who will shape this vital industry.

This year, I am particularly proud to witness the Foundation’s continued focus on excellence in education and access. Through scholarships, institutional grants, study-abroad programs, and support for workforce training, we see Mr. Statler’s vision realized in countless lives transformed. These investments not only strengthen the hotel industry but also promote diversity, inclusion, and the entrepreneurial spirit that drives our region forward.

As we look to 2025 and beyond, we honor Ellsworth Statler’s enduring belief that hospitality has the power to connect people, bridge differences, and uplift communities. It is my privilege to ensure that his philanthropic legacy continues to thrive and that his remarkable gift to future generations remains protected and purposeful.

Together, we carry forward his mission—ensuring that education remains the open road to success he envisioned so many decades ago.

Hon. Acea M. Mosey  
Surrogate Judge, Erie County

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHT

## SMALL SCHOLARSHIPS

Small Scholarships are given to assist students enrolled in a hotel/hotel management program.

Buffalo State University	\$30,000.00
The Culinary Institute of America	\$26,000.00
SUNY Erie Community College	\$51,000.00
Monroe Community College	\$35,000.00
SUNY Niagara	\$30,000.00
Niagara University	\$25,000.00
Paul Smith's College	\$45,000.00
Total	\$292,000.00

## STUDY ABROAD

Study Abroad grants are given to students attending a hotel/hotel management program in the U.S., with an additional learning experience in another country.

The Culinary Institute of America	\$25,000.00
University of Denver	\$30,000.00
Total	\$55,000.00

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHT

## SCHOLARSHIPS OF EXCELLENCE

Scholarships of Excellence of up to \$25,000 each are given to juniors and above from colleges/universities across the country, who have made a commitment to the hotel industry.

Cornell University	\$3,492.00
The Culinary Institute of America	\$16,644.00
University of Denver	\$33,246.00
Florida International University	\$4,494.00
Indiana University of Pennsylvania	\$5,342.00
Mercyhurst University	\$16,544.00
Michigan State University	\$10,192.00
Niagara University	\$25,000.00
Paul Smith's College	\$15,010.00
Pennsylvania State University	\$44,643.00
Purdue University	\$5,891.00
Rochester Institute of Technology	\$44,707.00
University of South Carolina	\$18,247.00
Total	\$234,344.00

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHT

## INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS

Institutional grants are given for capital improvements, specialized training, and research to benefit the hotel industry.

Cardinal O'Hara High School	\$90,000.00
Cornell University	\$113,000.00
The Culinary Institute of America	\$100,000.00
SUNY Erie Community College	\$75,000.00
Florida International University	\$20,000.00
Indiana University of Pennsylvania	\$50,000.00
Michigan State University	\$5,000.00
SUNY Niagara	\$29,100.00
Niagara University	\$22,600.00
Pennsylvania State University	\$100,700.00
University of South Carolina	\$113,000.00
Total	\$718,400.00

## SAY YES TO EDUCATION

Say Yes To Education funds are provided to Buffalo Public High School students who move on to attend a Hotel/Hotel Management programs in college/university.

\$48,146.29

**TOTAL FUNDS  
PROVIDED:  
\$1,347,890.15**

# THE STATLER FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP OF EXCELLENCE

The Statler Foundation Scholarship of Excellence, established in 1997, is awarded to third and fourth year students in a college/university Hotel/Hotel Management program. It is based on academic excellence, character, financial need and commitment to the industry. Each scholarship is worth up to \$25,000 for the academic year and may be used for tuition, fees and books.

In 2024 , the Foundation awarded scholarships to students attending Buffalo State University, Cornell University, The Culinary Institute of America, University of Denver, Florida International University, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Johnson & Wales University, Mercyhurst University, Michigan State University, Niagara University, Paul Smith's College, Pennsylvania State University, Purdue University, Rochester Institute of Technology and University of South Carolina.



Indiana University of Pennsylvania students at their hotel simulation desk , funded by The Statler Foundation



# ANIKA YING - 2024 SCHOLARSHIP OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENT - ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Anika Ying, was a third-year Hospitality and Tourism Management student at Rochester Institute of Technology, when she was awarded the prestigious Statler Foundation Scholarship of Excellence for the 2024 – 2025 academic year.

Anika's passion for hospitality began in high school when she secured an internship at a Hyatt Place Hotel during her junior year. There, she shadowed current staff workers and first experienced the ins and outs of hotel operations. Inspired by her coworker's dedication to ensuring that every guest feels welcomed and acknowledged, Anika returned to the hotel for her senior year and, soon after, decided to major in hospitality after graduation. At RIT, Anika continues to excel as a member of the Honors Program while actively contributing to the campus community through volunteer service. She also serves as the Events Coordinator and Department Assistant for the Hospitality Department, where she plays a key role in organizing events that promote the program and engage students. In this role, she manages event logistics, including scheduling, venue reservations, catering coordination, email outreach, budgeting, registration, and post-event feedback collection. Among the major events she helped execute are the Hospitality Innovation Conference, a full-day gathering featuring industry speakers and networking opportunities, and A Day of Hospitality, an immersive event for prospective and accepted students to explore the RIT Hospitality program. Despite the taxing and demanding work needed to execute these events, Anika finds the work rewarding when bringing people together to create meaningful experiences.

Anika further expanded her expertise through an internship at the Statler Hotel at Cornell University, where she had the opportunity to work in both the front and back of the house. Rotating between front desk operations and reservations, she gained experience in guest services, mainly in resolving guest dissatisfaction and utilizing marketing strategies over the phone to sell rooms to prospective guests. Beyond hands-on learning, this internship provided an incredible opportunity to network and collaborate with hospitality students from across the country. Exchanging ideas and engaging with like-minded peers reinforced her passion for the industry and what to expect from future industry leaders.

This experience now holds greater significance after receiving the Statler Foundation Scholarship of Excellence as the founders of the organization – established by hotelier Ellsworth M. Statler and his wife Alice S. Statler – helped fund the very hotel she worked at, making this scholarship a meaningful full-circle moment. Anika is incredibly grateful to the Statler Foundation for this generous scholarship, which has provided invaluable financial support. This award helped alleviate the burden of tuition costs, allowing her to focus on her studies and professional development. With this recognition, Anika remains committed to innovation and making a lasting impact on the hospitality industry.



## AVA RANDAZZO - 2024 SCHOLARSHIP OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENT - MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Coming from a large Italian family I have always been surrounded by a strong community and a natural sense toward hospitality—a value I owe to them and implement in my life every day. I spent many summers traveling around Michigan with my family, experiencing the warmth of Midwestern hospitality, making my choice to pursue my education at Michigan State’s School of Hospitality an easy one. Since joining the program, I have become a proud Spartan, deeply involved in student organizations, serving as the Director of Events for the Hospitality and Lodging Club and the Director of Marketing for the Hospitality Association. My goal is to connect with as many students as possible, ensuring they feel just as welcome as I did when I first arrived.

During the Summer of 2024, I had the opportunity to intern in the Rooms Division at Gurney’s Resort in Montauk, NY—an unforgettable first experience working in a hotel. Amidst sold out nights and the unpredictable nature of a Hampton’s summer, my passion to work in hotels remained unchanged. I truly enjoyed familiarizing myself with the guests and doing what I could to make their stay even better than the day before. This past summer, I am continuing my journey in rooms with the Four Seasons in Jackson Hole, WY gaining firsthand experience of the iconic standards that make the Four Seasons one of the leaders in luxury service.

The more I learn about the hotel industry the longer my list grows of properties I aspire to work at and roles I hope to pursue. The Statler Foundation’s support of my education has brought me closer to realizing my aspiration of one day leading my own luxury hotel group, and I am deeply grateful beyond words.



# WHERE ARE THEY NOW? - SCHOLARSHIP OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENTS

## **CHLOE REIFER - THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY - 2022 RECIPIENT**

Chloe Reifer, a recent Penn State alumna, has showcased the transformative power of The Statler Foundation's support. It not only provided assistance in her education, but reinforced her dedication to the hospitality industry, enabling her to emerge as a leader committed to excellence and service.

During her time at Penn State, Chloe pursued a degree in hospitality management, immersing herself in opportunities throughout the school as they arose. She completed numerous internships, including a summer rotational internship with the Four Seasons, learning the components of operations in the luxury sector. She strived to stay involved with extra-curriculars, and took many opportunities to learn about the industry outside of the classroom, representing Penn State at industry events.

In her senior year, Chloe was honored with the Statler Foundation Scholarship of Excellence, a prestigious award established in 1997 to support outstanding students in hotel management programs. This scholarship, based on academic excellence, character, and financial need, allowed her to focus more intently on her studies and professional development. Chloe served as the Secretary of Penn State's chapter of PRLA, along with taking the lead on planning an annual Gala put on by Penn State's meeting and events club. She was also an active member of PCMA, an industry association specializing in meeting planning.

Post-graduation, Chloe has continued to showcase this dedication in her career trajectory. She currently serves as a Sales Manager at the Hyatt Regency Chicago, where she leverages her hospitality knowledge and character in her role managing Business Travel, and handling group business for the Chicago market. Chloe maintains strong ties with her alma mater, reflecting her commitment and appreciation to the Penn State School of Hospitality that shaped her foundational years and success in her career.

Chloe's journey continues to demonstrate the profound impact of scholarships in empowering students to achieve their academic and professional aspirations.

# INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS

## *FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERISTY*

"Our study examined how different generations of luxury hotel guests perceived and prioritized customer-facing technologies. We found that while all generations valued Wi-Fi as the most essential technology, younger generations (Millennials and Gen Z) placed significantly higher importance on innovations like keyless entry, branded hotel apps, smart technology, and contactless services compared to Baby Boomers. Performance ratings for most technologies were generally higher than their perceived importance, suggesting that guests appreciated these features more once they experienced them.

For hotel managers, our findings provided crucial insights for making technology investment decisions. To stay competitive, luxury hotels needed to ensure high-performance Wi-Fi and prioritize emerging technologies that appealed to younger guests. Wireless charging stations and TV concierge services, which were ranked highly by all age groups, presented an immediate investment opportunity. However, hotels catering primarily to Baby Boomers needed to be cautious with investments in wearable tech (e.g. Fitness trackers, RFID bracelets or rings, and wearable payment devices) and cashless tipping, as these were less valued by this group.

Ultimately, we concluded that a one-size-fits-all approach to technology did not work. By aligning offerings with generational preferences, hotels can enhance guest satisfaction, optimize spending on technology, and differentiate themselves in a competitive market."

Photo description: A luxurious hotel room with advanced technology features. The room has a sleek, modern design with ambient lighting, a large smart TV embedded in the wall, a digital touchscreen control panel for lighting and temperature, voice-activated smart assistants, and motorized curtains. The bed is king-sized with premium bedding, and there is a futuristic workstation with a transparent OLED display. A city skyline view is visible through floor-to-ceiling windows.



[reallygreatsite.com](http://reallygreatsite.com)



# INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS

## ERIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (ECC)

Embassy Suites, Buffalo, NY

Our Earn to Learn Model focuses on learning opportunities outside the classroom, partnering with our local hoteliers. The Marriott and Embassy suites embraced our students, and we continue to work with these hotels to train future hospitality employees. Another exciting use of funds was our collaboration with an innovative AI expert who is working with our department to create custom-made programs that help our students better understand industry concepts. These technological advances in our program offerings help expose students to the endless opportunities AI will present in their future career paths.

We asked Jack Mwepu one of our hotel students to explain in his own words what his experience has been like. He has worked several positions at the Embassy Suites and will graduated in May.

“Born into a large family and having spent 14 years in Harare Zimbabwe, before moving to the United States of America, my early life was shaped by challenges that taught me resilience, empathy, and the value of community. Surrounded by diverse cultures, I developed a passion for inclusivity and making a positive impact, particularly for youth and children. My involvement in leadership initiatives, such as being a Peace Dialogue Champion and participating in the Engaging Men through Accountable Practices program, reinforced my commitment to advocacy and creating safe, welcoming environments. These experiences inspired me to pursue a career in hospitality, where I can combine my passion for service with my desire to uplift others.

I chose SUNY Erie Community College (ECC) for its strong focus on practical, firsthand learning in hospitality management. ECC’s Hotel and Restaurant Operations Management program, with its emphasis on real-world experience and industry connections, aligned perfectly with my goals. The college’s supportive environment and opportunities like the Earn to Learn program have equipped me with the skills and confidence to pursue my dream of creating meaningful connections and empowering communities through hospitality.

As part of the Earn to Learn program at Embassy Suites by Hilton in downtown Buffalo, New York, this practical experience allowed me to develop essential skills in guest services, organizational management, and teamwork, significantly contributing to my professional growth.

I managed check-in/check-out processes, addressed guest inquiries, and resolved issues, refining my communication and critical thinking skills to deliver exceptional service. In the fast-paced hotel environment, I learned to multitask, prioritize effectively, and maintain accurate records, enhancing my efficiency and diligence.

Collaborating with the hotel team, I contributed to operational efficiency and customer service excellence, improving my ability to work effectively in a team and support common goals.

I am deeply grateful for the guidance from my team, especially the front desk manager and general manager. Their mentorship, constructive feedback, and encouragement created a supportive learning environment, playing a crucial role in my professional development and success during the earn to learn program.”

# INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS

## UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA



2023 Cohort of students

The Statler Foundation Program to Increase Youth Access to Hotel Education and Careers at the University of South Carolina has been an important initiative in providing underrepresented and underprivileged high school students (grades 9–12) in South Carolina with access to hotel education and potential career pathways within the hospitality industry. The program aims to reach students who may not have previously considered pursuing a college degree or exploring careers in hotels and hospitality.

The program began in 2021 and was expanded in 2023 to serve a larger cohort of students across South Carolina, fostering awareness and providing hands-on experiences to prepare them for future careers. To date, 6 camps have taken place providing over 120 students from multiple middle and high schools opportunities to build connections and learn about hospitality careers and education. The camps gave faculty the opportunity to evaluate current knowledge within these schools regarding the hospitality industry. This research revealed a notable gap in understanding both on the part of students and educators, as well as a lack of resources and guest speakers in the schools to guide students towards careers in the hospitality field.

Through the program, the college has conducted visits to high schools to speak with students directly and expand awareness about the potential of a career in hospitality. Additional youth camps were scheduled for Spring and Summer 2025, with hopes of reaching even more students and teachers, ensuring that students in South Carolina gain exposure to the diverse and rewarding careers within the hospitality industry, thereby contributing positively to the community and encouraging future generations to pursue a career in hotels and tourism.

Dr. Robin DiPietro  
Professor- School of Hospitality and Tourism Management  
Director- International Institute for Foodservice Research and Education

# STATLER FOUNDATION TRUSTEES



DONNA M. GIOIA  
CHAIRWOMAN



ELYSE NEMOIER  
VICE CHAIRWOMAN



JAY C. BAUER  
TRUSTEE



ROBERT M. BENNETT  
TRUSTEE



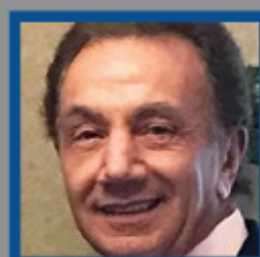
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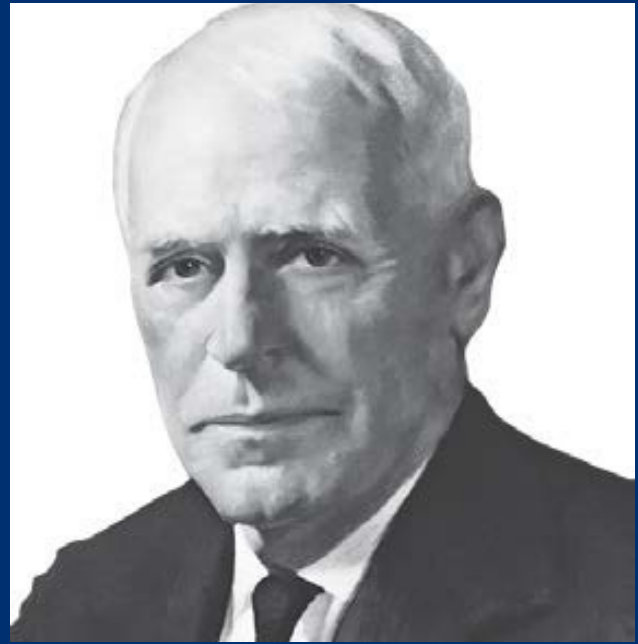


BERNARD A. TOLBERT  
TRUSTEE

We remember with gratitude, Ernestine R. Green, who served as a Trustee until her passing on May 2, 2025



Alice Statler



Ellswo

The Statler Foundation is a private foundation that provides funds to students and institutions that support the hotel industry.

It was created in 1934 through the directives contained in the Will of Ellsworth M. Statler, one of the most creative and resourceful hoteliers in history. For nearly 40 years, Ellsworth Statler's widow, Alice Seidler Statler, served as Chairwoman of the Foundation trustees.

The Statler Foundation trustees continue Mr. and Mrs. Statler's work by awarding over \$1,000,000 annually in grants and scholarships that support the hotel industry.

THE STATLER FOUNDATION  
Kristine K. Dusel, CAP Expert - Administrator  
STATLERFOUNDATION.COM