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Press Release

San Francisco Marriott Marquis Leads the Way Toward Zero Waste with Innovative Recycling Program Employing People with Disabilities

The City of San Francisco and Recology to honor San Francisco Marriott Marquis for recycling and composting 85% of its waste through a community partnership with Toolworks, a local non-profit agency that provides job training and employment for people with disabilities.

San Francisco, CA – Every day, more than 150,000 people visit San Francisco. As one of the world’s most popular tourist destinations, San Francisco and its hotels host nearly 6 million individuals each year. These visitors leave more than just their hearts in San Francisco. In addition to their economic infusion into the City, they also leave behind tons of trash.

At the San Francisco Marriott Marquis, a team of Toolworks employees work behind the scenes to sort and process the hotel’s waste generated from 1,500 guest rooms on 38 floors, three restaurants and cafés, and 117,000- square-foot of convention center space. Thanks to a pioneering partnership with Toolworks, these “Zero Waste Facilitators” are preventing valuable materials from ending up in the landfill by making sure everything is sorted in the right place –whether composted, recycled, or donated to shelters for reuse. As a result, the Marriott Marquis recycles and composts 85% of its waste – achieving one of the highest resource recovery rates among U.S. hotels.

“Some might see the trash generated by our tourist economy as a challenge, but in San Francisco we see it as an opportunity for innovators like the Marriott and Toolworks to partner together to help get closer to zero waste and create new green jobs along the way,” said Debbie Raphael, Director of the San Francisco Department of Environment. “If San Francisco is to be the first city in the country to achieve zero waste we need our local office buildings and large apartment complexes that generate significant waste to take note

of this innovative partnership between our non-profit and for profit community.”

Since opening its doors in 1989, the San Francisco Marriott Marquis has partnered with Toolworks and provided housekeeping, custodial, and other workforce opportunities to people with disabilities. In 2009, when San Francisco began requiring all businesses to recycle and compost as part of the City’s zero waste goal, the hotel sought a more efficient process for managing the 20,000 pounds of refuse generated on-site each day. Toolworks staff stepped up to meet the challenge.

In the Marriott’s busy loading dock, green composting and blue recycling bins have replaced landfill dumpsters. On any given day, you might find Toolworks employee London Lacey breaking down boxes or sorting waste into the blue or green bins. An on-site Toolworks job coach stands back and answers any questions that come up.

“I love my job,” says London. “I’ve worked here for over six years and what I love most of all is working with the Toolworks and the Marriott staff.”

The program, which started out as a task for the Toolworks team when they had finished their other duties, is now a seven day a week operation with a dedicated crew.

“We want to make it easy for guests to stay true to their commitment to reduce waste and preserve the earth’s natural resources while traveling,” says Chuck Pacioni, General Manager of the San Francisco Marriott Marquis. “Before Toolworks, we did not have the built-in capacity to manage our waste processing. Now, we are providing productive careers for people with disabilities while improving the efficiency of our operations and our bottom line. It’s a win-win for everyone.”

“We’ve had a great partnership with the Marriott Marquis. They’ve always been forward thinking and have found ways to really integrate our team with their associates,” says Kristy Feck, CEO of Toolworks. “Our clients have multiple barriers to employment, but thanks to the financial grants from San Francisco’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development, we have been able to develop specialized training and supportive services for our clients so they can be successful.”

The Office of Economic and Workforce Development manages a wide range of programs, services and grant opportunities for organizations like Toolworks to help residents gain the job skills they need for employment. Through a partnership, Toolworks is able to leverage state funding awarded to the Office of Economic and Workforce Development that supports training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

“Through the Disability Employment Initiative, the Office of Economic and Workforce Development works closely with community partners such as Toolworks to provide education and employment opportunities for adults with disabilities,” said Michael Carr, Workforce Development Director for the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. “Their partnership is valuable toward further diversifying San Francisco’s workforce. We are proud to work alongside with Toolworks and many of our community partners to ensure residents have access to workforce training and jobs.”

The Marriott was one of the first San Francisco hotels to start employing workforce training staff to serve as back-of-house waste sorters or “Zero Waste Facilitators”. Today, Toolworks partners with a number of properties in San Francisco, including One Rincon Hill, Heinz, and the Hilton Hotel, to hire and train people with disabilities to help keep resources from the landfill. All of the properties with Toolworks-trained

Zero Waste Facilitators are now recycling and composting more and, in turn, seeing cost-savings on their Recology bill.

“We’re able to really see a difference at properties that utilize Toolworks’ crew. Proper sorting results in a reduction in trash allowing for cost savings to the business. Jobs, cost savings and protecting the environment is a win-win-win.” says Paul Giusti, Community and Government Affairs Manager for Recology, San Francisco’s recycling and composting collection company. “Having on-site sorters helps us make sure we are not sending valuable recyclable and organic material to the landfill. We think it’s a great approach and helps us as a city get closer to our collective zero waste goal.”

Hotels like the San Francisco Marriott Marquis are part of a growing trend in the hospitality and tourism industry to adopt sustainable business practices for enhanced customer experience and improved bottom-line performance. Locally, the Hotel Council of San Francisco has made sustainability a key focus of its work with member hotels like the Marriott, helping hotels stay competitive by promoting sustainable practices like Green Business certification, energy efficiency, and waste reduction.

“We are inspired by our members, like the Marriott Marquis, for developing innovative partnerships that result in industry-leading diversion rates,” said Jessica Lum, Manager of Programs and Communications at the Hotel Council of San Francisco and Board Member for Toolworks. “San Francisco hotels are committed to sustainability and share the City’s goal to achieve zero waste.”

To reach its goal of zero waste, San Francisco will need the continued participation of residents and businesses in properly sorting their recyclables, compostables, and trash. Innovative approaches to resource recovery – like Marriott’s partnership with Toolworks – are making a difference and helping large properties in San Francisco better operationalize zero waste into their everyday practices.

The San Francisco Department of Environment offers free waste audits and outreach to hundreds of buildings and businesses throughout San Francisco each year. The Department provides free multi-lingual trainings for employees and apartment building tenants and can help design a successful zero waste program tailored to any business or building’s needs.

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For more information about San Francisco’s zero waste goal and programs,

visit: www.sfenvironment.org/zerowaste

For more information about Toolworks, visit: www.toolworks.org

SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT

The San Francisco Department of the Environment creates visionary policies and innovative programs to improve, enhance, and preserve San Francisco’s urban and natural environment, leading the way toward a sustainable future. By developing wide-ranging environmental programs, fostering groundbreaking legislation, working collaboratively with key partners, and educating the public on comprehensive sustainability practices, the Department makes it easy for everyone in San Francisco to protect their environment. www.sfenvironment.org

SAN FRANCISCO MARRIOTT MARQUIS

Fresh from a complete makeover, the San Francisco Marriott Marquis showcases 1,500 guest rooms and suites, 117,000-square-foot of meeting and banquet space, a fitness center and spa, and M Club Lounge. Crowned by the View Lounge on its 39th story, the hotel also features B55 and Mission Street Pantry as delicious dining options. Its prime SoMa location is just steps away from the Moscone Convention Center, Yerba Buena Gardens and shopping on Union Square and at Westfield San Francisco Center, home to Bloomingdales and Nordstrom. For more information, please call 1-888-236-2427 or visit www.sfmarriottmarquis.com.

TOOLWORKS

Since 1975, Toolworks has been devoted to helping Bay Area people with disabilities connect with the opportunities in their community. Toolworks provides social services to over 500 individuals with disabilities every year, offering employment services, vocational training, and the full range of support that allows individuals with disabilities to live independently. www.toolworks.org

RECOLOGY

Recology is San Francisco's recycling and compost collection company. It is based in San Francisco. Recology is a 100 percent employee-owned company. www.recology.com

HOTEL COUNCIL

The Hotel Council of San Francisco is a non-profit membership-based organization advocating for the economic and social vitality of the hospitality industry in San Francisco. Their membership roster includes over 250 hotels, allied members, and partner organizations. The Hotel Council is dedicated to protecting the San Francisco hospitality industry and connecting its members to support the growth and success of the industry. www.hotelcouncilsf.org

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) supports the ongoing economic vitality of San Francisco. Under the direction of Mayor Edwin M. Lee, OEWD provides city-wide leadership for workforce development, business attraction and retention, neighborhood commercial revitalization, international business and development planning. www.oewd.org