



Hotels Continue Hospitality Tradition in Extraordinary Times

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PHOTO: Aerial view of Central Park in New York City. (photo via Predrag Vuckovic/E+)

Many hotels in the United States and around the world closed to guests for the foreseeable future during March 2020 because of significant drops in demand related to the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).

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While it might make sense for hotels to close when their revenue streams dry up, the work that hospitality professionals do continues to command value in the midst of a viral outbreak. Hospitality workers are—first and foremost—caretakers of people. They look after their people, ensuring they're fed, secured, entertained, informed, and comfortable.

When Anchorage, Alaska received a shelter in place order from the mayor in mid-March, the Hotel Captain Cook, a member of Preferred Hotels & Resorts, was ready to extend hospitality. The hotel is still open to overnight guests (Anchorage is a crew change point for many intercontinental cargo airlines), but with few guests in the hotel had a surplus of many items.

Nearby Covenant House Alaska is a shelter for over a hundred homeless youth who also needed to shelter in place in compliance with the mayor's order, which ultimately taxed the shelter's resources. The Hotel Captain Cook donated rollaway beds, bedding, and toiletries to ensure the kids would be comfortable, even partnering with a local moving company to get the goods to the shelter.

Other hotels opened their doors to medical personnel.

In Chicago, Sophy Hyde Park, which is also a member of Preferred Hotels & Resorts, has closed to the general public and is now offering guest rooms to the staff at the nearby University of Chicago Medical Center.

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“The Sophy Hyde Park will offer up to 90 of its 98 rooms, hotel spokesperson Gayle Conran said. “It’s really the closest hotel—only about a mile away—so medical staff won’t have to drive him. Just put your head on a pillow and get a good night’s sleep.”

In New York City, the epicenter of the U.S. outbreak, medical personnel will be staying upmarket.

The Four Seasons New York, which TravelPulse last year identified as the [city’s most expensive luxury hotel](#), will also open its 350 guest rooms to medical workers. The hotel is located on 57th Street in Manhattan, near several area hospitals, and closed to regular guests earlier this month.

Ty Warner, chairman of the hotel’s corporate owner, said the decision was easy after a call by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo during a press conference for hospitality providers to open their doors.

“Our health care workers are working tirelessly on the front lines of this crisis. Many of those working in New York City have to travel long distances to and from their homes after putting in 18-hour days. They need a place close to work where they can rest and regenerate,” Warner said.

Two other midtown luxury hotels are also part of the city’s recovery plan. The St. Regis New York and The Plaza have offered rooms for medical personnel, as well as for non-critical hospital patients who can be treated offsite, leaving hospital beds available for COVID-19 cases.

The American Hotel & Lodging Association has also introduced the “Hospitality for Hope” initiative, which works to connect member hotels with local, state, and federal officials. Government agencies and other organizations needing relief can rely on a searchable database of hotels that have indicated an interest in pitching in.

Conrad Hilton’s famous mission to “fill the world with the light and warmth of hospitality” is a source of guiding inspiration for many in the hospitality industry. While COVID-19 has brought travel and tourism to a near-standstill, many hotels across the country to continue to fulfill their hospitality missions to those in extraordinary need.