



MPI Announces 2017 RISE Awards Recipients

DALLAS, June 20, 2017 — Meeting Professionals International (MPI) proudly announced the recipients of this year's RISE (Recognizing Industry Success and Excellence) Awards during the association's 2017 World Education Congress (WEC) in Las Vegas. The recipients were selected for exceptional achievements in the meeting and event industry and honored today at the annual MPI RISE Awards Presentation and Luncheon.

This year, the RISE Awards feature seven awards in two categories: individual achievement and community achievement. Recipients are recognized for innovation, global transferability, impact and influence within the industry, and will join the MPI Community of Honorees, a group composed of past MPI award winners and distinguished leaders.

"We extend our sincerest congratulations to the 2017 RISE Awards recipients," said Paul Van Deventer, president and CEO of MPI. "The accomplishments of these exceptional leaders and chapters are remarkable in their own right. It is my hope their stories will inspire others to pursue their goals and make a difference within our industry."

The **RISE Award for Young Professional** was presented to Natalie Beiro of the MPI Potomac Chapter. Beiro is a campaign manager for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society in Washington, D.C. She started her career with Omni Hotels & Resorts, quickly being promoted to sales manager and named "Manager of the Year" by the Omni Shoreham Hotel in 2014. Soon thereafter, Beiro received the Rising Star Award from her MPI chapter. She has eagerly taken on leadership roles with the MPI Potomac Chapter, previously serving as their 2015 chair of the Chairman's Challenge, helping to raise \$5,000 for the MPI Foundation, and currently is their director of member recruitment. Beiro also founded the Hart School Alumni Network, connecting hospitality, sports, and recreation students with alumni and faculty for her alma mater, James Madison University, and volunteers with the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

The **RISE Award for Meeting Industry Leadership** was presented to Colleen Rickenbacher, CMP, CSEP, CPC, CTA, CPECP of the MPI Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter. Rickenbacher has more than 40 years of experience in the meeting and event industry and her impact can be felt globally. She has authored five books, presented over 2,000 speeches to audiences around the world, worked with Visit Dallas (formerly the Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau) for 20 years, and has received many accolades celebrating her achievements. Rickenbacher is active on many industry boards and has been a member of the MPI and MPI Foundation boards. She was inducted into the Events Industry Council Hall of Leaders in 2016 and continues to be a dedicated mentor to many.

The **RISE Award for Member of the Year** was presented to Ginny Fountain, CMP, CMM of the MPI Carolinas Chapter. Fountain has been a member of MPI for 17 years. She served as president of her chapter twice, once stepping in to fill an unexpected gap without hesitation. Fountain gives back to fellow members through her facilitation of CMP study groups along with several other leadership roles she has held with her chapter. Since 2002, she has received six awards for her outstanding contributions to MPI and is also heavily involved with other organizations such as the Rotary Club, United Way, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Girl Scouts.

The **RISE Award for Educational Programming** was presented to both the MPI Dallas/Fort Worth and MPI Northern California chapters for advancement in education and professional development of its members through innovative programming with their respective mentoring and CMP education initiatives.

The MPI Dallas/Fort Worth Mentor Café helped reenergize the chapter's mentoring program, providing opportunities for the exchange of ideas and knowledge sharing, while allowing natural mentor/mentee relationships to develop. With a new, more casual approach, members were invited to network without commitment prior to each chapter meeting and given a topic to focus their discussions. Participation in the Mentor Café has more than doubled over the past two years.

The MPI Northern California Chapter's CMP University (CMPU) is an extensive education program modeled after university extensions format and run by volunteers. In 2016, the CMPU presented 11 sessions developed exclusively by the chapter and launched an online community with materials, discussions, and study groups for participating students. To date, 175 chapter members have received their CMP after completing the program – 18 of which were earned in 2016.

The **RISE Award for Marketplace Excellence** was presented to the MPI Northern California Chapter for its Annual Conference and Expo (ACE). Last year marked the 28th anniversary of the show, which attracted more than 1,200 industry professionals. Additionally, in 2016, the chapter partnered with ConvoSpark to deliver an interactive expo floor plan, creating more efficient interactions between suppliers and planners and increasing the satisfaction and relationships of its attendees.

The **RISE Award for Industry Advocacy** was presented to the MPI Texas Hill Country Chapter for its Global Meetings Industry Day (GMID) initiatives in 2016. The chapter held a three-prong event celebrating GMID to help raise awareness and show the value of the industry in a fresh and influential way. This inaugural event was held at the Texas Capitol in Austin, involved collaboration among many industry partners, and included signing of a proclamation, a rally and march with more than 200 participants, and a high-level panel of Meetings Mean Business Coalition leaders, which was also live-streamed to broader audiences.

“The MPI RISE Awards highlight the amazing talent we have in our global meeting and event industry. This year's recipients have all demonstrated that with hard work and creativity you can make dreams come true – not tomorrow but now, because when we meet, we change the world,” said Dr. Krzysztof Celuch, Chair of the MPI RISE Awards Judging Panel.

For more details on the MPI RISE Awards and this year's recipients, visit www.mpiweb.org/RISE.

About MPI

Meeting Professionals International (MPI) is the largest meeting and event industry association worldwide. The organization provides innovative and relevant education, networking opportunities and business exchanges, and acts as a prominent voice for the promotion and growth of the industry. MPI has a global community of 60,000 meeting and event professionals including more than 17,000 engaged members and its Plan Your Meetings audience. It has more than 90 chapters and clubs in 19 countries. “When we meet, we change the word.” www.mpiweb.org