

## **Welcoming Remarks at Shanghai 2009**

**Welcome to the Sixth Annual FTA “A Fall Evening at Shanghai with Very Special Friends”. We gather in New York City, at Beijing and Shanghai and across Asia Pacific to recognize hospitality excellence; in the names of those whom we honor, provide scholarships at schools of higher hospitality education; and make charitable contributions.**

**An industry is only as strong as the wisdom, vision, compassion and actions of its leaders; leaders who define excellence for the benefit of all those who look to them to know the way to realize their dreams and ambitions and not be left behind. In the end we are judged not by whom we include, but by whom we exclude. Great leaders inspire and teach all those who seek to be included, because serving the least of us is truly the highest calling and the only measure of service from the heart.**

**This evening we come together to recognize hospitality industry Operator and Humanitarian Excellence and as well to present our Operator Award. This is truly a very special evening for us all and I thank you for joining us, because as I say at every FTA dinner, YOU are the dinner.**

**But the deeper meaning of why we come together is really at the very heart of why the hospitality industry is so special to those of us who have come to consider it our calling.**

**Hospitality is about service and in particular service excellence and service is truly the highest calling. It is not what we do for ourselves, but what we do for others that is the measure of our worth to humanity. And simply because it is the right thing to do: Not for personal recognition.**

**The truth is that we are free to dwell at any given moment in as beautiful a place as our hearts are open to loving others and our willingness to serve them without regard to our advantage.**

**Life is a series of micro steps from the time we arrive to the time we depart and the quality of our life is but a reflection of the quality of our contribution to the peace and happiness of others. It is not about pleasing ourselves or collecting “things”: It is about serving others and after one’s basic, personal needs are met, allowing what remains of what comes our way to pass through our fingers for the benefit of those less fortunate.**

**I ask everyone to please remember those less fortunate in China and in particular, the children, which is a primary focus of UNICEF in China and the charity to which we will once again contribute a share of the dinner proceeds.**

**Thank you.**