

CMEx Completes 2026 Leadership Laureates Roster

Seven newly named honorees add strength across aviation, cruise, hospitality, sustainability, destination leadership and media

MIAMI, FL, UNITED STATES, August 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Caribbean Media Exchange (CMEx) has completed its roster of 2026 Leadership Laureates, adding seven respected executives and professionals whose careers reflect leadership, service and a sustained commitment to advancing the Caribbean and its tourism industry.



2025 CMEx Leadership Laureates pictured in Miami last December during the annual CMEx Leadership Awards and Fundraiser.

The latest laureates bring perspectives spanning aviation, cruise tourism, hospitality, sustainability, destination management and media, further broadening the range of experience that will be recognized at the 2026 CMEx Leadership Awards and Fundraiser on Sunday, Dec. 6 at Loews Coral Gables Hotel in the Miami area.

Joining the 2026 roster are:

José Freig, Vice President, International and Inflight Dining Operations, American Airlines

Kelly Meister, Director of Education and Sustainability, Dolphin Encounters Ltd.

Natasha Chalwell, Deputy Director of Tourism, British Virgin Islands

Ralph Taylor, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Arcadia Hotels & Resorts

Robert Meister, Managing Director, Dolphin Encounters Ltd.

Russell Benford, Vice President, Government Relations, Americas, Royal Caribbean

Sarah Greaves-Gabbadon, Journalist and Founder, JetSetSarah.com

"What stands out about this year's laureates is not only the diversity of their professional backgrounds, but the influence they have had within their respective spheres," said CMEx President Bevan Springer. "They have helped open doors, strengthen institutions, build bridges,

champion responsible development and elevate the Caribbean's presence internationally."

The newly announced honorees complete the 2026 Leadership Laureates roster alongside Anne Kalosh, Freelance Journalist; Editor, Seatrade Cruise News; and Senior Associate Editor, Seatrade Cruise Review; Carmen Portela, Justice and Equity Coordinator, GreenLatinos, Puerto Rico; Gercine Carter, Journalist, The Nation Publishing Co. Limited, Barbados; Giora Israel, President, Giora Israel LLC, and Strategic Adviser in Global Cruise Tourism, Port Development and the Blue Economy; Jake Kheel, Vice President of Sustainability, Grupo Puntacana, Dominican Republic; Jennifer Griffith, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Jamaica; and Josef Forstmayr, Managing Director, Round Hill Hotel and Villas, Jamaica, whose selections were announced last week.

From connecting the Caribbean to the world through aviation and cruise tourism to advancing destination development, environmental stewardship, hospitality excellence and Caribbean storytelling, the 2026 laureates underscore the many ways leadership can contribute to the region's progress.

CMEx will make a separate announcement naming the recipient of its 2026 Lifetime Achievement Award.

The CMEx Leadership Awards bring together leaders from tourism, government, media, business and the wider Caribbean community while raising support for the nonprofit organization's educational, media and community initiatives.

The awards luncheon will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

For information on the honorees, sponsorship opportunities and tickets, visit cmexmedia.org.

About Caribbean Media Exchange, Inc.

Caribbean Media Exchange, Inc. (CMEx) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. CMEx's mission is to support and develop the ability of the media, government, the travel and tourism industry and communities to consider the importance of tourism in sustainable development, while lending a hand to the communities involved by sharing relevant expertise, financial and in-kind assistance. For more information, visit www.cmexmedia.org.

Nadia Springer
Marketplace Excellence
+1 201-861-2056
[email us here](#)

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