

Houston ewiConnect

Working Together is when the Magic Happens!



From Our President

August in Houston is HOT, and EWI was on Fire!!! We have had a fun and exciting month with a lot happening, and there's even more to come! Although the Astros didn't play well, the members who attended the game on the 12th were treated to good food, great swag, and an all-around great time together. We followed that up with one of the most informative programs, Life Flight, hosted by the Memorial Hermann Foundation, just a few days later. There are so many great pictures and information that we didn't want to rush to put them out, so we will include Life Flight in the September Connect. Stay Tuned...

This is such a busy time of year with the ending of summer, our Annual Business Meeting on September 11th, and LCAM right around the corner, coming to Houston on the 17th; we have so much still to do. There will be a work party for Blue Santa on September 30th at their warehouse. If it is anything like our previous community projects, I'm sure we will all have a great time giving back to the community.

I can't say enough how proud I am of the Houston Chapter and all the hard work you have put into this past year to make the Magic Happen and our chapter a shining star! I appreciate every one of you.

Cindy Baker

2024-2025 Officers & Directors

President

Cindy Baker

Black Haw Group

President-Elect

Lily Portales

Hilcorp Energy Company

Secretary

Courtney Castellanos

Lockwood, Andrews & Newnam, Inc.

Director-at-Large B/C/DP

Anna Bryant

HEB

Treasurer

Shari Schiffman

Douglas Elliman Real Estate

Membership Director

Kristin Skille

Experience Houston

Sergeant-at-Arms

Cristina Barron

Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty

Communications Director

Lisa Diaz

Metromarketing Services, Inc.

Fundraising Director

Carole Pitts

Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty

Program Director

Barbara Stokes

Amegy Bank

Save The Date!

September 6th

Work Party @ Cindy Baker's House

September 17th - 20th

2025 LCAM - Leadership Conference and Annual Meeting in Houston

September 30th

Blue Santa Work Party - 5:30 to 7:30

October 14th

Installation of 2025-2026 Board of Directors



Scan For
Event Calendar



REGISTRATION IS OPEN!



REGISTER NOW!

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE & ANNUAL MEETING

HYATT REGENCY HOUSTON WEST
September 17–20, 2025 | Houston, TX



<https://ewiconnect.com/page/lcam2025>

The logo for Houston ewiConnect, with "Houston" in a smaller, orange font above "ewiConnect" in a larger, blue, cursive font.

Houston
ewiConnect

Celebrate!

Representative Birthdays

August

- 02 - LaTonya Perez, Past President
- 10 - Christina Hutchinson
- 12 - Elisa Garcia
- 16 - Katherine Brown, Past President
- 19 - Priscilla Hardy, Past President
- 23 - Carolyn Toriggino
- 27 - Rebekah Wesley, Past President
- 31 - Linda Petticrew, Past President

Member Firm Anniversaries

August

- 2014 ELP Enterprises, Inc.,
dba MC Business Products
- 2023 Experience Houston
- 2024 GGT Worldwide

Membership

Current Membership:

35 Member Firms
41 Representatives
11 Sustaining Members
3 Honorary Members
as of August 27, 2025

Membership in EWI offers unique professional and personal opportunities and networking opportunities and networking benefits for members through:

- Leadership and professional training
- Local-to-global business, community and philanthropic growth and involvement through chapter and corporate activities
- Access to corporate and chapter websites geared to business connections
- Increased networking ability through an international directory that lists major businesses, and decision-makers
- Focused personal and professional development through our quarterly magazine, the Pulse

EWI membership is by invitation only and consists of a variety of companies within the business community. The firm holds the membership and appoints a key individual as a representative. If you would like more information about the Houston Chapter membership process, please visit: <https://ewihouston.org/join>



New Member

The Chifley – A Houston Tapestry Collection Hotel by Hilton



Amanda Billstone
Sales Manager

With more than 30 years in the hospitality industry—and 16 of those focused on business travel and account management—Amanda Billstone is a seasoned sales professional who leads with heart, experience, and an unwavering commitment to service. In her role as Sales Manager at The Chifley, she thrives on building meaningful connections and providing clients with the kind of attention to detail that transforms a simple booking into a lasting partnership.

Amanda is passionate about connecting with others—whether through business or community involvement. She has been a proud and active member of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo for over 25 years, serving on the Judging Contest Committee and, more recently, joining the Armed Forces Appreciation Committee.

Born and raised in El Paso, Amanda now calls Houston home. Outside of work, she enjoys playing tennis, Mahjong, attending concerts, traveling, and spending time with family and friends—including her beloved Bichon-Poodle mix, Izzy.

Amanda brings a thoughtful and relationship-driven approach to everything she does and is excited to be part of a professional women’s community that values connection, leadership, and mutual support.

Member Firm Spotlight



Grit Productions & Expositions is a unique leader in the event industry offering a robust suite of turnkey services, including General Services Contractor, General Session production, video production, content creation, live event & off-site event production, meeting planning logistics, Grit Studio, and event freight shipping.

Our teams' "Grit Mindset" is passion for what we do and perseverance to deliver excellence to our clients and each other. We are single-source providers of services and equipment while distinctively bringing a creative approach resulting in increased event production value by removing layers of vendors, delivering streamlined communications, and simplified invoicing.

Grit strives to impact our community where we live, work, and meet in these areas: giving back of time and treasure, sustainability and contribution to the event industry and its future generation.

VOLUNTEER WITH US



CONNECTIONS | CAREERS | COMMUNITY

AND LET'S MAKE A LASTING IMPACT

RSVP by September 25th
Elisa Garica - elisa.garcia@houstonfirst.com



*Working Together is when the
Magic Happens!*

JOIN US

5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

SEPTEMBER 30TH

1400 Lubbock St.
Houston, TX 77002

*Parking limited, please
carpool if possible.*

Meeting Recap

July 10, 2025

Scholarship Night

EWI of Houston proudly celebrated its 2025 scholarship recipients at this year's Scholarship Night, honoring students selected through our ASIST, EWISP, and Past Presidents' programs. Each award was introduced by our scholarship chairs and accompanied by heartfelt video messages from the winners, reminding us all why this work matters.

In a touching tribute, President Cindy Baker announced that the first-place ASIST scholarship will now bear the name of the late Marji Zamora, and presented the inaugural award in her honor.

Held at Amegy Bank, the evening featured a warm welcome, beautiful inspiration, and generous support from sponsors including H-E-B, who provided the evening's centerpieces which were later raffled off as door prizes. Guests enjoyed charcuterie, wine, and a chance to connect with this year's outstanding students.

Thank you to everyone who helped make The Magic of Education a night to remember. Your commitment fuels the mission and creates opportunities that last a lifetime.





Lisa Anheiser, Guest; Maria Linares, Opportunity Scholarship Winner, Adrianna Linares, Guest; Mary Margaret Carroll, Sustaining Member



Carole Pitts, Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty



Mau Ton, Guest; Cindy Baker, Black Haw Group; Tina Ly, Cherry York Scholarship Winner



Cindy Herndon, ASIST Judge; Debra Jaime, The Rose; Anna Bryant, HEB



Taiwo Ajiboye, Guest; Kehinde Ajiboye, Adelaide DeBow Scholarship Winner



Joseph Morkos, Guest; Melvina Morkos, Louis Bart Scholarship Winner



EWISP Scholarship Winners, Judges, Committee Members



ASIST Scholarship Winners, Judges, Committee Members

Houston EVIConnect



Debra Jaime, The Rose; Cindy Baker, Black Haw Group;
Nickolas Taylor, ASIST 1st Place Winner & Family;
LaTonya Perez, The Rose



Patti Strawther, James J. Postl Interests; Kehinde Ajiboye,
Adelaide Debow Scholarship Winner ; Taiwo Ajiboye, Guest;



Dorothy Gibbons, Debra Jaime, Maria Linares, Scholarship Winner;
Kathia Sanchez, Annette Washburn Scholarship Winner; Shannon
McNair, LaTonya Perez, The Rose



Celene Buffington, Guest; Carolyn Noack, Past President;
Linda Petticrew, Shell; Lisa Noack, Guest



Shari Schiffman, Douglas Eliman;
Cristina Barron Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty



Barbara Stokes, Amegy Bank; Melvina Morkos, Louis Bart
Scholarship Winner; Joseph Morkos, Guest; Linda Petticrew, Shell



Patti McLean, Daikin Comfort Technologies, NA;
Kristin Skille, Experience Houston



Lily Portales, Hilcorp; Rosalind Moore, The Corinthian;
Lisa Anheiser, Guest



Past Presidents with Harmony James, Past Presidents
Scholarship Winner



Antoinette James, Guest; Bill Stokes, EWISP Judge;
Harmony James, Past President's Scholarship Winner



Anna Bryant, HEB



Harmony James, Past Presidents Scholarship Winner;
LaTonya Perez Past President, The Rose

Houston
EVIConnect



**A BIG THANK YOU TO
MEMBER FIRM DAIKIN &
REPRESENTATIVE PATTI MCLEAN!**

The EWI of Houston Chapter had the wonderful opportunity to attend the Astros game in the Daikin suite on August 12th and were joined by Daikin Comfort Technologies CEO Saturo Akama. It was a fantastic evening filled with exciting baseball, great company, and plenty of laughter. Members enjoyed networking in a relaxed setting while cheering on the Astros and indulging in delicious food and drinks. We are grateful to Patti McLean and Daikin for their generous hospitality and support of our chapter—it was truly a night to remember!



Professional Development

In Case You Missed It!

The replay link can be found on the EWI Corporate website at www.ewiconnect.com under Professional Development Webinars.

August Professional Development Webinar: Having Hard Discussions with Charles Heasley

Charles Heasley is passionate about leadership development. A former police sergeant, he founded Blue Lion Leadership, helping hundreds of leaders each year boost results and reduce workplace issues. He holds a Master's in Executive Leadership from Liberty University, where he's a doctoral candidate, and is a certified coach and emotional intelligence practitioner. Charles is also a husband, cat dad, guitarist, and red wine enthusiast.



EWI of Houston

Mission Statement

EWI of Houston aspires to be the premier business organization of choice for member firms and their key individuals. Recognized by the Houston community as an avenue to achieve personal and professional excellence, every activity of the Houston Chapter will fulfill at least one of the objectives of the EWI Mission Statement.

Our Strategic Goals

- To strengthen, expand, and broaden membership.
- To provide member firms with meaningful benefits.
- To actively promote education for all representatives
- To achieve a high level of community visibility through service.

Our Mission

EWI brings together key individuals from diverse businesses for the purpose of promoting member firms, enhancing personal and professional development, and encouraging community involvement.

Our Vision

To enhance professional growth and development within a diverse group of women while empowering them to make a difference as they inspire others.

Corporate Office

225 Michigan Street, PO Box 1933
Grand Rapids, MI 49501
Direct: (262) 269-5625
ewi@ewiconnect.com
www.ewiconnect.com



Leadership

Board of Directors



President
Cindy Baker
Black Haw Group LLC
cindyb@blackhawgroup.com



President Elect
Lily Portales
Hilcorp Energy Company
lily.portales@hilcorp.com



Secretary
Courtney Castellanos
Lockwood, Andrews &
Newnam, Inc.
CNCastellanos@lan-inc.com



Treasurer
Shari Schiffman
Douglas Elliman Real
Estate
Shari.Schiffman@elliman.com



Sergeant at Arms
Cristina Barron
Martha Turner Sotheby's
International Realty
cristina.barron@sothebys.realty



Membership Director
Kristin Skille
Experience Houston
kls@experiencehouston.com



Program Director
Barbara Stokes
Amegy Bank
barbara.stokes@amegybank.com



Fundraising Director
Carole Pitts
Martha Turner Sotheby's
International Realty
Carole.Pitts@sothebys.realty



Communications
Director
Lisa Diaz
Metromarketing
Services, Inc.
lisa@sirenlis.com



Director at Large
Anna Bryant
HEB
bryant.anna@heb.com



Advisor
LaTonya Perez
The Rose
lperez@therose.org



Advisor
Rebekah Wesley
Jackson and Company
rebekah@jacksonandcompany.com

Leadership

Committee Chairs



Asist Committee Chair
Debra Jaime
The Rose
djaim@therose.org



Bylaws Committee Chair
Cindy Joutraw
CenterPoint Energy, Inc.
cindy.joutraw
@centerpointenergy
.com



Courtesy Committee
Chair
Lily Portales
Hilcorp Energy Company
lily.portales
@hilcorp.com



EWISP Committee Chair
Linda Petticrew
Shell Energy Resources
Company
linda.petticrew@shell
.com



Hospitality Committee
Chair
Cristina Barron
Martha Turner Sotheby's
International Realty
cristina.barron
@sothebys.realty



Member/ Retention
Committee Chair
Lily Portales
Hilcorp Energy Company
lily.portales
@hilcorp.com



Nominating Committee
Chair
LaTonya Perez
The Rose
lperez@therose.org



Philanthropy Committee
Chair
Elisa Garcia
Houston First
Corporation
elisa.garcia
@houstonfirst.com



Professional
Development
Committee Chair
Barbara Stokes
Amegy Bank
barbara.stokes
@amegybank.com



Public Relations/ Social
Media Committee Chair
Lisa Diaz
Metromarketing
Services, Inc.
lisa@sirenlis.com



Strategic Planning
Committee Chair
Kay Bart
Skerl & Associates
kbar@bartcohou.com



Web Committee Chair
David Jones
D. Jones Photography
studio
@djonesphoto.com

Communications

Connect with EWI Houston!



<https://www.facebook.com/EWIHouston>



<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12076399/>



<https://www.instagram.com/ewihouston/>



<https://ewihouston.org/index.php>

To volunteer to help the communications team with EWI Connect, social media, and PR outreach, contact Lisa Diaz, Communications Director, at lisa@sirenlis.com.

