

# Southern Hospitality

Katy resident  
Lea Dender-Holton  
wins \$10,000 and  
Hilton Hotels'  
top award for  
customer service



Celebrating the award with her sons,  
James (left) and Rian (right)

*Story and Photography by Katrina Katsarelis*

**G**oing the extra mile for her guests at the Hampton Inn in Katy is something Lea Dender-Holton does every day. But it's not every day she gets a phone call from Hilton corporate announcing she has been selected as one of the CEO's Warmth and Light Award winners and will be receiving \$10,000. Lea has worked at the Hilton franchise for seven years and is currently the general manager and director of franchise development for Kievans Hospitality.



Lea Dender-Holton with Hampton Inn colleagues Kim Remlinger (left) and Stephanie Hayes (right)

### Honoring Each Guests' Unique Needs

Lea says she makes it a point to honor each guest's unique needs and has gone to extreme measures for her customers. She has fostered pets of guests who found their way to the Hampton Inn after being displaced by a hurricane. She has also raced to the airport to deliver a forgotten computer to a customer. And she even organized a charity drive, collecting baby items for a needy guest - an expectant mother who was down on her luck. "Being in the hospitality industry gives me the opportunity to carry out proudly the desires of Conrad Hilton, founder of Hilton Worldwide," Lea says.

### Celebrating with Friends and Family

At a recent ceremony held at Hasta la Pasta, Hilton Worldwide's CEO Christopher Nassetta sent a heartfelt video message congratulating Lea for demonstrating exceptional customer service and hospitality at Katy's Hampton Inn. Lea says she is thrilled to be recognized by Hilton as one of only 10 recipients each year worldwide. She is grateful for the the monetary award, as well. "I'm going to use it to get caught up, which is always a struggle when you're a single mom," she says. Lea is also taking a little time for herself - a weeklong cruise with her two best friends. "This award really confirms for me I'm where I belong in my career and doing what I am supposed to do," she shares. KM

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1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

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