



March 4, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter of recommendation for Deborah LaHaela on the basis of my experience working with her over the past 5 years in her role at HelmsBriscoe. Ms. LaHaela has been a strategic partner for our department at Harvard Medical School and has been responsible for contracting 3 international programs and 2 domestic programs, contracting over \$360,000 in hotel sleeping room revenue. Additionally, she has single-handedly sourced domestic and international hotels for Harvard Medical School events, which involved creating and submitting requests for proposals based on the unique requirements of each of our scientific conferences. Furthermore, Ms. LaHaela organized and executed site visits to several international destinations, including airport transfers, transportation between each venue, arranging meetings with key personnel at multiple properties, and curating the experiences of important aspects of each location, such as on-site restaurants and spa at hotels, tours of off-site points of interest for our group. Her attention and care for details and our best interests has consistently been unsurpassable. Throughout the planning of each program, she created well-organized and streamlined reports of hotel proposals, to make it understandable and easy for the us as the client to evaluate and select the best option for the needs of each event.

One aspect that has been particularly impressive throughout my interactions with Ms. LaHaela over the years has been her ability to engage in the ongoing negotiations of hotel contract terms to mitigate risks to Harvard Medical School and achieve the best outcomes for our programs. She not only takes the time to understand the important hot buttons and requirements of our events, but she is able to then skillfully and successfully negotiate concessions to meet our needs and shape the conditions to our benefit. She is continually recommending creative strategies to reduce cost, minimize risk and achieve favorable terms for Harvard Medical School.

I would be remiss if I did not also comment on Ms. LaHaela's demeanor, character and work ethic. Over the course of our interactions, she has been extremely patient with the often changing needs and priorities of our programs, including throughout the upheaval and uncertainties of COVID. Ms. LaHaela has demonstrated professionalism, integrity and tenacity, to represent our priorities in negotiating with each property, while at the same time building strong relationships with our hotel partners. For example, we had to revise our contracts with a property overseas twice during COVID, due to the necessity of postponing our event, and this also involved rewriting the agreement's verbiage in several sections. Ms. LaHaela painstakingly reviewed each section and made recommendations that helped us to smoothly and efficiently reach an agreement with the property and ultimately hold a very successful event. I should note that she was always available and readily responsive with a cheerful and optimistic attitude, despite the fact that postponing of our events meant she did not receive any commission for almost 2 years.

As an event planner and project manager, the services and expertise that Ms. LaHaela has provided is without question truly invaluable, as she has saved countless hours by acting as the go-between with hotels and other vendors. Her correspondence is always polite, professional and prompt. As a result of her broad experience and expertise, Ms. LaHaela is able to provide

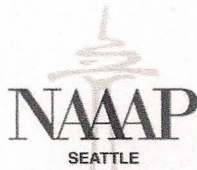
insights and suggestions on hotel contracts and events coordination that we otherwise would have been oblivious to, thus saving our department thousands of dollars and making her indispensable on multiple levels.

I cannot offer enough praise for Ms. LaHaela nor a higher recommendation to any organization in their consideration of employing her services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Samantha Lemos". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Samantha Lemos  
Executive Coordinator  
Department of Biomedical Informatics  
Harvard Medical School  
[samantha\\_lemos@hms.harvard.edu](mailto:samantha_lemos@hms.harvard.edu)



Stefani Sugihara  
NAAAP – Seattle

September 14, 2013

Reference for Deborah LaHaela  
HelmsBriscoe

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter of reference to share the professional qualities and experiences of Deborah LaHaela. Deborah played a critical part in securing a venue for the National Association of Asian American Professionals' 2013 Gala & Scholarship Celebration. As the Gala Chair, I had the pleasure of working closely with her on this event and I was tremendously impressed with her impeccable communication skills and work ethic.

Deborah took the time to listen to our requirements and provided us with several fantastic options to choose from. Not only did we fall in love with the selected location, but she also did an excellent job of negotiating an extremely reasonable price for the room fee/food & beverage minimum. I know the Board was very impressed and pleased with how quickly everything came together.

Having Deborah's assistance has saved me a lot of time and stress and, I must say that, I've really enjoyed not having to do all of the leg work myself this year. I highly recommend her services to anyone planning an event and I look forward to utilizing her expertise again in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stefani Sugihara".

**Stefani Sugihara**  
Gala Chair | NAAAP- Seattle



July 30, 2013

Helms Briscoe

20875 North 90th Place

Scottsdale, AZ 85255, USA

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing to let you know about our delightful experience working with Deborah LaHaela. My business partner and I run a an event for moms called MamaCon. MamaCon is very much like a business conference - we have speakers, a trade show, keynote, mini-spa services and lunch.

We are launching our third event in May 2014. For the last two years we've held the event at the Hilton in Bellevue Washington for which we negotiated the contract ourselves. For 2014, we knew we needed to change the venue and find a better arrangement all around and we enlisted Deborah to help.

What a difference she made for us! She explained where we went wrong in our negotiations with the hotel so we understood how she would handle it differently. She was able to shine a light on the industry in a way that opened our eyes and made us very happy to have her take on the hotel negotiations.

Deborah quickly assessed our very specific needs and with in a very short period of time found the perfect hotel which fits every requirement we have. She handled all of the conversations with the hotel sales staff and was completely transparent with us about how the conversations were progressing.

She saved us so much time, anguish and money - the cost is 1/2 of what we were paying - it is amazing. We had a completely stress free, easy, simple and fun experience working with her and cannot say enough good things about her professionalism, knowledge and highly recommend her for anyone who is planning an event and needs help with finding the perfect venue.

Sincerely yours,

Amy Lang