

Spotless REPUTATION

Chantel Whisenhunt,
Assistant Director of
Housekeeping, helps to
ensure that The Broadmoor
shines on a daily basis. We sat
down with her recently to learn
more about a day in the life of
this amazing head of the house.

Can you tell us a little bit about your position at The Broadmoor and what it is you do?

Absolutely, I have been at the hotel for 19 years, and I actually started off as a Housekeeper. So I trained with the department and worked with rooms for a little bit. Then I was a Guest Rooms Manager for about five years before I moved to public areas. My current role is Assistant Director of Housekeeping here at The Broadmoor.

Is there overlap between the different roles that you mentioned?

Guest Room Attendants are the ones who clean guest rooms. Then on the Public Areas Team we have Housemen and Lobby Attendants. Our Housemen deliver items to the guest rooms—anything the guest needs from a bottle of water to a microwave or a crib... any kind of guest requested items. And our Lobby Attendants take care of the public spaces.

Can you walk us through a typical shift or tell us if you do have a typical day?

Every day is different, something I love about my role. When it comes to Room Attendants, Housekeepers typically start at 7:30am or 8:00am (though in the summertime they may start a little earlier) and work until 4:30pm. Our Public Areas Team starts at different times, some start at 6:30am and work until 3:00pm, whereas our Housemen generally start at 8:00am. We have different hours for different positions. We are responsible for all spaces across our main resort, and we also clean the Pauline Chapel, Cheyenne Lodge, and Mountain Clubhouse, too. So that means we get to go off the main campus and get the luxury of seeing other beautiful areas of the property as well.

Do you even go up to the Wilderness Properties?

We have! Our team has also assisted with the opening and closing of the Wilderness Properties. If they ever need help, we're happy to help!

Housekeeping is one of – if not the most – physically demanding departments in the hotel. What are

some of the challenges that you and your team face?

Whether it's our lobbies or guestrooms, different guests (social vs. business) present different challenges. Typically for a Housekeeper 12-14 rooms is standard, and a challenge would be the condition of the room. Cleaning can take anywhere from 15 minutes to one hour, it depends on how efficient we can be. For our business guests, sometimes it seems they just sleep there and don't touch anything in the room! But then for the public areas, it's different. Then our social guests can seem like the opposite! But it's the repetition, the bending, the making of the 14 beds... And there are so many different types of rooms—there are suites, sofa beds, double beds, queens, kings, etc. So time management while paying attention to details is pretty important.

Do you have an idea prior to going into the room, what kind of a guest has been there?

In our lineups, we talk about groups in house. And if it's a holiday weekend that is full of families, we can prepare, as our Housemen are constantly running with guest deliveries. If anything, our role is physically demanding because we are constantly on our feet. We are constantly going from room to room or from one building to the next doing rounds. Housekeeping is go go go, which is also great because it makes the day go by fast!

If you could tell a guest one thing they could do to make your life/shift easier, what would it be?

If you know you need certain things, then even just requesting ahead of time helps. It can be a challenge when a guest shows up and we don't have anything noted under their reservation, but they arrive and then call to request a rollaway, crib, microwave, fridge etc. Notes on reservations ahead of time help so that we can plan accordingly and know what to expect for our guests. Some holidays we use everything we have! Most have notes on their reservation, but it helps, especially with multiple items. We get odd requests as well. In housekeeping we provide just about everything!

What's one of the worst things you or a staff member has encountered when opening the door to clean a room or an unusual situation in a lobby area?

When we reopened the hotel after the three-month closure in 2020 due to Covid, I was so happy to get that phone call to come back to work. But at the same time I was like "...wow, we have to have a good plan and get people!" We obviously had some staff here taking care of the hotel during those three months, but to get all the guestrooms back in order took a *lot*. We had taken all the bedspreads off the beds and all of the paper products out of the rooms. So getting things back in order along with all the dusting and cleaning in all the public spaces and rooms was a big task. It took some time, but we got it done with some good leaders, planning, and dedicated people who were willing to just stay until it was done. That was the biggest challenge. It took us a good week or so until we actually got it back to where felt it was in the right place.

Speaking of leadership, what are some things you do to motivate your team and help them adhere to our daily standards?

I love doing our lineups. Every day for our lineup, we either have a Forbes standard or a Broadmoor standard up on the big screen tv and we talk about it. I like to role play with the team. I love to inspire and motivate people. If I see you are having a bad day, obviously I will pull you aside to check in, but also if you need that little umph or push, then I love to do that. And when I'm up speaking, I can feel the team's energy, and some days are better than others. So, I think it is really good to push and encourage. Obviously nobody's perfect, and we do make mistakes, but we have to talk about them. We coach, we learn, we move on, and we remember not to make the same mistakes again. We just try to pick ourselves up and learn from them. But we do share and go over them as a team during the pre-shift while reviewing our overall standards.

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Are guests pretty understanding? How do they let you guys know about an issue? Do they call?

For the most part. They usually call the office to ask for a manager if there is an issue. Recently we haven't had any! Sometimes when we have a lot of social guests they want to get into the room right away. But on big turn days that's a challenge, and we say sorry, but 4:00pm is check in. Even if we are running 100 miles an hour, we tell the team don't forget standards. No matter how many rooms you have or how fast you're going or what is going on, the standard is the standard. We really stress that importance.

Obviously we take great pride here in providing "above and beyond" service; can you tell us a situation where you or someone on your staff in either area has gone above and beyond?

Sure, Rafael Lara is one of our Lobby Attendants for public areas, and once he actually noticed a flame in one of the stand up heaters in the guest pull up area. The bellman did not know how to use a fire extinguisher, so he showed the bellman how to put the flame out. Things could have been a lot worse had he not intervened! And then actually a few weeks later he also saved a guest dog, which was attacked by a deer as they were walking around the lake. Rafael got in between the dog and the deer, scaring the deer off to save the dog. That guest returns every year with her dog and always asks for Rafael. We nominated him for Employee of the Month and for Colorado Lodging Association awards.

As far as Housekeepers and rooms, we always just try to make memories. Sometimes we make towel animals to make it more personable. We have Broadmoor memory boxes with little things that a guest typically won't ask for but could add a little touch. For example, if we notice there are kids in the room, we might leave a coloring book for them.

How does your team know when or what to leave for a guest?

We always say, try to be your own detective. If you know the guest is here for an anniversary, we have anniversary

cards that we can write in. It is really about getting to know your guests. The relationships between our guests and our housekeepers is unbelievable. We always remind our housekeepers to pay attention in the rooms because those little touches they add go such a long way and make a big difference.

Groups and guests come back year after year, and you remember things about them. Is there a system in place that helps remind you of what they needed as a guest?

Really, it's just the culture here at The Broadmoor—it is so family oriented and that carries over to how we view and take care of our guests. I look at Housekeeping as my second home! I just try to inspire my team; we've been through a lot together. Our department started performing together at the Employee Talent Show in 2016, and once we did that the first time, we were like, we have to do this every year!

Did you practice on the weekends?

We practiced every day! We practiced for 15-20 minutes every morning right after pre-shift, and then again at the end of the day for another 30 minutes. Everyone was excited and pushed themselves! Two years ago, we even sang with the Christmas chorus during White Lights weekend, and we appeared on Fox21 News! It's like we're all family. The relationships that people build with one another is just so important. I'm from Hawaii and another word for family is *Ohana*, which also means no one gets left behind. In Housekeeping, we don't leave anyone behind. We finish and help each other, and that's the mentality we teach people here. When in a building turning rooms, we don't ever just leave when we're done. We check it and connect with a manager first—we make sure that we finish and all leave together. We work as one unit, and that's very, very important.

You have longevity in your department, which speaks volumes and means you guys are doing something right!

Yes, a lot of our employees have been with us 10+ years...20 and even 30 years!


Can we speak a little to the diversity of your department too? We were so impressed to observe that after you spoke in lineup you had someone translate into Spanish as well.

Yes, we have so many different nationalities in our department, and a lot of our employees are Spanish-speaking, so we translate. If we need anything translated besides Spanish, we also have people who can help with that. We have people from all over the world in our department. I love seeing people from different countries and different states come together.

Is there anything else that you'd like us to know about you or your staff and what you do for the resort?

If you ever want to see some awesome stretching, come on down to Housekeeping lineup! And when we talk about guests who come back year to year, I wanted to also callout two ladies in our department because they are amazing: Chong Shen and Kum Suk Schen. They have both been here 27-33 years, and there are some families they have taken care of for 20+ years. Chong actually recently retired just last year, but she came out of retirement just to take care of returning guests who requested her for the short period they were here—talk about dedication and commitment! I just wanted to highlight them because when the guests come back and expect their incredible service, they both step out of their comfort zone and come in to take care of them for the duration of their stay, assisting with whatever they need. Kum Suk was also nationally ranked as one of the best Housekeepers. So we're very proud of her!

Also, our mission statement is something we recite every day: we are the best housekeeping department by providing exemplary service with superior accommodations. We respect and value others. We share information and listen with a positive attitude. We create Broadmoor memories.

 *Chantel Whisenhunt is currently sweeping guests off their feet daily at our resort with the amazing Housekeeping Team. She can be reached at cwhisenhunt@broadmoor.com.*