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Luxury Hotels Provide a Refuge for Residents in Power Outage



Photos courtesy of Sally Sakhai

Sally Sakhai with Avah, 10, Ella, 6, and Aaron, 2

BY MICHELE RAPHAEL

Trousdale Estates residents have been beleaguered by ongoing power outages for the last year and a half, a hot-button issue that's been discussed in heated city

council meetings with Mayor Lili Bosse, councilmembers, and representatives from Southern California Edison. On the morning of Jan. 12, yet another power outage in the neighborhood reached a peak problem, with rain and cold weather making the situation

untenable for many residents. By 4:24 p.m., Bosse, who had expressed her concern in the community's WhatsApp group, offered a compelling solution: discounted, government rates at the city's Waldorf Astoria Beverly Hills, for \$150 a night, and The Beverly Hilton, for \$125 a night.

The Courier also reached out to Beny Alagem, the owner of Waldorf Astoria Beverly Hills and The Beverly Hilton.

"When I received a call from Mayor Lili Bosse and the City Manager Nancy Hunt-Coffey about the need, it was a great honor to be able to serve our residents. Lili always has top thinking of the residents. It's business and government working together for the benefit of the residents," said Alagem.

"Before it got dark, we were going to make sure that anyone that needed a hotel had a hotel," Bosse told the Courier.

It was a luxurious and needed fix for Sally Sakhai and her family of five, including their 2-year-old son.

"It's been difficult to get work done, and the kids become restless and scared in the dark," Sakhai, who owns furniture design and manufacturing company Pangea Home with her husband, Omid, told the Courier. During previous outages, she bought tea

lights to help to illuminate the home and tried to work from a hotspot, which became useless without electricity to keep devices charged. "This time it would have been impossible to stay with the baby, when it's freezing at night," she said.

Texting back and forth with the mayor was comforting, Sakhai added, referring to the messages on the 163-member WhatsApp group. "I cannot say enough about Lili, and as I've told her, my nickname for her is 'Above and Beyond,' because that's who she is. She cares, she's honest and no-nonsense. We needed somewhere to stay, and she secured these rates for us."

Sakhai said the booking process was much easier than she's used to, explaining that when she called the hotel, they simply took her name and set up a room for her family, including a basket for her children with coloring books, crayons, and plush toys. "It was next-level customer service," she said.

Newlyweds Kayla and Brian Gabbay also took refuge at the Waldorf Astoria on the evening of the 12th, after learning about Bosse's offer to residents on the WhatsApp channel. "My husband and I feel so fortunate to be part of a community that is