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**JAMES
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FOUNDATION**

Press Contacts:

Karlie Reitano / Mary Blanton Ogushwitz

Susan Magrino Agency

Tel: 212.957.3005

Email: karlie.reitano@smapr.com / mary.blanton@smapr.com

**MATT HALEY, DEDICATED RESTAURATEUR AND PHILANTHROPIST,
NAMED 2014 JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION HUMANITARIAN OF THE YEAR**

New York, NY (February 3, 2014) – The James Beard Foundation announced today that **Matt Haley**, a Delaware-based chef, restaurateur and global philanthropist, has been named the recipient of the 2014 James Beard Foundation Humanitarian of the Year Award. This esteemed award is given to an individual or organization whose work in the realm of food has improved the lives of others and benefited society at large. Matt Haley will be honored at this year's James Beard Awards, the culinary industry's most prestigious recognition program, on **Monday, May 5, 2014** at the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center in New York City.

"We are delighted to announce that Matt Haley has been selected as our 2014 Humanitarian of the Year," said Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation. "Matt has an admirable passion for interweaving his culinary work with philanthropic initiatives," Ungaro noted. "His efforts, both on a local and global scale, are helping to educate disadvantaged children and improve the agricultural conditions of countries around the world. His story and charity are an inspiration and we're excited to see what Matt will continue to do for the culinary world in the future."

"I am incredibly grateful to the James Beard Foundation for this award. It is an honor and a privilege," said Matt Haley. "On behalf of the state of Delaware, the Matt Haley Companies, and all of our community members both in and out of the food and beverage business, we say thank you."

Haley's story of entering into the hospitality industry, during a difficult time for him personally, not only shaped his career but his determination to pursue impactful charity work. Recovering in a rehabilitation facility in his early thirties from drug and alcohol abuse, Haley learned to cook as a vocational skill. When released, this newfound talent allowed him to work his way up through several restaurants and eventually land a management position at a friend's beachfront spot in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. Having developed a passion for the industry, he opened his own eatery, Bluecoast Seafood Grill, in 2001. Over the next decade, Haley opened six more restaurants in Delaware resort towns – Fish On, Lupo di Mare, Matt's Fish Camp, Northeast Seafood Kitchen, Catch 54, and Papa Grande's. In 2009, the restaurants' umbrella company, SoDel Concepts, was named to the *Inc. Magazine* list of the fastest-growing food and beverage companies in the nation.

Haley's charitable inspiration began while serving as a guest chef at a fundraiser in Atlanta, Georgia for disadvantaged Nepali youth. After hearing the story of a specific Nepali child in need of an education, Haley was so moved he decided to fund schooling for the child and her sister on the spot. Maintaining the relationship with the children over the years, he also expanded his work within the Nepal community to include building schools, providing education for orphans, and aiding efforts to develop economic stimulus programs in the region, such as the creation of a coffee farm to encourage sustainability. Additionally, Haley has privately funded disabled women in the country to attend culinary school. To further support the community, in 2011, Haley founded the Global Delaware Fund to provide goods and services to at-risk children and children in challenging circumstances, both in Delaware and globally. Since then, the Global Delaware Fund has raised more than \$250,000 in charitable donations, helping to build a school for 80 children in Nepal. For every dollar spent abroad, the fund gives a dollar to such local associations as the La Esperanza, Delaware Adolescent Program, Inc. (DAPI), Meals on Wheels, Children & Families First, the Delaware Food Bank, the Rehoboth Summer Children's Theatre, and Children's Beach House.

A focal point in Haley's charitable work is his commitment to furthering education, both with food and kids, in his local community and abroad. Haley has partnered with local government leaders including Delaware Governor Jack Markell's committee for early learning initiatives, as well as Delaware Secretary of Agriculture Ed Kee to bring agriculture and nutrition to Delaware's cities through urban gardens, markets and education programs. He is currently working with the Delaware Restaurant Association and Delaware Department of Corrections Commissioner Robert Coupe to develop a program that teaches culinary skills to those who have been incarcerated, so they can transition back into the world with a trade. In November 2013 he traveled to Nicaragua to help raise funds for the Barrio Planta Project, an education initiative created to empower low-income children and adults.

In addition to dedicating his time to various philanthropic organizations, Haley makes sure to tie all of his business endeavors to greater charitable efforts. For the past two years the catering arm of his business, Plate Catering, has hosted Farm-to-Table dinners with local organic farms to benefit local charities; his restaurant Lupo di Mare holds a monthly wine club where a portion of the ticket sales go to a local charity; Papa Grande's restaurant helped sponsor a local surf camp organized by Surfers Healing, a foundation for children with autism; and his Northeast Seafood Kitchen works with the Autism Delaware organization to employ people living with autism in the restaurant.

The James Beard Foundation Awards are the nation's preeminent recognition program honoring professionals in the food and beverage industries. The Awards celebrate outstanding achievement in each of the following categories: Restaurants and Chefs, Books, Journalism, Restaurant Design, Broadcast Media, and special achievement awards. The recipient of the Humanitarian of the Year Award is selected by the James Beard Foundation Awards Committee, which consists of the chairperson from each individual Awards program, members of the Foundation's Board of Trustees, and members at large.

On **Wednesday, February 19, 2014**, the Foundation will announce the James Beard Awards Restaurant and Chef Semifinalists at a live press conference in Orlando, Florida, at the East End Market.

On **Tuesday, March 18, 2014**, the Foundation will announce the final nominees for all Award categories during a press brunch at the Publican in Chicago. Nominations will also be announced live via the Foundation's Twitter feed at twitter.com/beardfoundation.

On **Friday, May 2, 2014**, the **James Beard Foundation Book, Broadcast & Journalism Awards Dinner**, an exclusive event honoring the nation's top cookbook authors, culinary broadcast producers and hosts, and food journalists, will take place at Gotham Hall in New York City.

The **James Beard Foundation Awards Ceremony and Gala Reception** will take place at the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center in New York City on **Monday, May 5, 2014**. During the event, which is open to the public, awards for the Restaurant and Chef and Restaurant Design categories will be handed out, along with special achievement awards including Humanitarian of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, Who's Who of Food and Beverage in America, and America's Classics. A gala reception will immediately follow, featuring top chefs and beverage professionals from across the country.

Established in 1990, the James Beard Awards recognize culinary professionals for excellence and achievement in their fields and further the Foundation's mission to celebrate, nurture, and honor America's diverse culinary heritage through programs that educate and inspire. Each award category has an individual committee made up of industry professionals who volunteer their time to oversee the policies, procedures, and selection of judges for their respective Awards program. All JBF Award winners receive a certificate and a medallion engraved with the James Beard Foundation Awards insignia. There are no cash prizes.

The 2014 James Beard Foundation Awards are presented with support by the following partners: Premier Sponsors: All-Clad Metalcrafters, Lenox Tableware and Gifts; Supporting Sponsors: Acqua Panna® Natural Spring Water, Breville, Celebrity Cruises®, The Coca-Cola Company, Delta Air Lines, Lavazza, S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water, Stella Artois®, Valrhona; Gala Reception Sponsors: Ecolab, Pernod Ricard USA, Rums of Puerto Rico; Additional Support: Chefwear, VerTerra Dinnerware, Visit Orlando®.

About the James Beard Foundation

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation's mission is to celebrate, nurture, and honor America's diverse culinary heritage through programs that educate and inspire. A cookbook author and teacher with an encyclopedic knowledge about food, James Beard, who died in 1985, was a champion of American cuisine. He helped educate and mentor generations of professional chefs and food enthusiasts, instilling in them the value of wholesome, healthful and delicious food. Today the Beard Foundation continues in the same spirit by administering a number of diverse programs that include educational initiatives, food industry awards, scholarships for culinary students, publications, chef advocacy training, and thought-leader convening. The Foundation also maintains the historic James Beard House in New York City's Greenwich Village as a "performance space" for visiting chefs. In September of 2012, the Foundation launched the Diplomatic Culinary Partnership with the U.S. Department of State's Office of Protocol and helped create the American Chef Corps as a way to champion American chefs abroad, promote American food