

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

March 2, 2015



**CONTACT:**

Diane Stefani/Maggie Beaudouin for the James Beard Foundation

[212.255.8455](tel:212.255.8455)

[Diane@rosengroupr.com](mailto:Diane@rosengroupr.com)/[Maggie@rosengroupr.com](mailto:Maggie@rosengroupr.com)

## **Chefs Heat Up Advocacy Skills at James Beard Foundation's Chefs Boot Camp for Policy & Change**

*~ American chef advocates to convene at the Louisiana home of  
world-famous Tabasco® Sauce ~*

New York, NY (March 2, 2015) – More than a dozen chefs from around the country will convene for the [James Beard Foundation \(JBF\)](#)'s sixth [Chefs Boot Camp for Policy & Change](#) on **Avery Island, Louisiana**, home of the world-famous Tabasco Sauce. The three-day, multi-faceted program, taking place March 15-17, will provide chefs with the policy and advocacy skills they need to be effective champions for their chosen food-system causes. The chefs will participate in an intensive series of workshops programmed in partnership with the Chef Action Network (CAN), and made possible with support from the Osprey Foundation, the Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation and Eric Kessler, JBF Board Member and Managing Director of Arabella Advisors.

“The James Beard Foundation will be providing the chefs with the essential advocacy skills they need to help create a healthier, more sustainable food system,” said Kris Moon, senior director, strategy and development of the James Beard Foundation. “We are encouraged by the influence these chefs can have both nationally and in their local communities, so it is our goal to deliver critical insight and tools they need to take further action. This is especially imperative as chefs across the country are getting more involved in a variety of issues from antibiotic use in animal production to forming local food policy councils.”

The upcoming Chefs Boot Camp for Policy & Change will immerse participating chefs in sessions including:

- **Creating a Fair, Just, Sustainable, Nutritious, & Delicious Food System:**  
Introduction to public policy landscape and why policy matters
- **Why Chefs Matter:**  
Chefs have community, culture, profile, trust, and networks. This session will give examples of chefs in the policy marketplace including PEW (Pew Research Center), Catch Shares, and Nutrition
- **Why Advocacy?:**  
What is advocacy, why do we do it, how do we do it, what to expect. Chefs change menus and raise awareness about causes
- **Using their Voice for Advocacy:**  
Discuss examples of successful advocacy by chefs and how to use social media for advocacy

Participating chefs for this Boot Camp include:

- Victor Albisu, Washington, D.C.

- John Besh, New Orleans, LA
- David Carson, Atlanta, GA
- Asha Gomez, Atlanta, GA
- Michael Leviton, Boston, MA (Returning Alumnus)
- René Loux, Los Angeles, CA
- Emily Luchetti, San Francisco, CA (Returning Alumnus)
- Jud McLester, Chicago, IL - Tabasco Exec. Chef
- Kevin Mitchell, Charleston, SC
- Seamus Mullen, New York, NY
- Jamie Simpson, Milan, OH
- Bill Telepan, New York, NY
- Christian Thornton, Martha's Vineyard, MA
- Lee Anne Wong, Honolulu, HI
- Sherry Yard, Los Angeles, CA

**“Sometimes there really are too many cooks in the kitchen, but there are never too many chefs in power to make social and food policy change.”** – Chef Hugh Acheson, Boot Camp Alumnus, in video (link [here](#)) of JBF’s Chefs Boot Camp for Policy & Change

The Chefs Boot Camp for Policy & Change, which was launched at the James Beard Award-winning Blackberry Farm in Walland, Tennessee, in July 2012, is conducted under the direction of JBF Award-winning chef and founder of Wholesome Wave, Michel Nischan, and James Beard Foundation trustee and founder of Arabella Advisors, Eric Kessler. At each Boot Camp, chefs receive policy and advocacy training from industry and political experts consisting of classroom work, mock interviews, hands-on activities that engage the chefs with local natural resources, a collaborative dinner cooked by the attendees, and strategic brainstorming about effective action points and next steps.

The 360-degree approach to educating and activating these powerful change makers on important food issues is made possible through CAN’s continuous support services for Boot Camp alumni, including campaign development, speech writing, media skills and training, policy research, and preparation for visits with policy makers and other leaders, as well as ongoing regional policy salons. To date, more than 60 chefs have taken part in the Boot Camp program.

The Chefs Boot Camp for Policy & Change is part of the James Beard Foundation's broader Impact Programs to encourage dialogue between diverse stakeholders in the food system while providing an opportunity for chefs to help influence food decisions for the larger American population. Other programs include conducting a national dialogue on food-system issues at regional salons in cities around the country; the annual JBF Food Conference, which brings together a diverse group of food-system thought-leaders; the annual Leadership Awards, which recognize visionaries helping to create a more healthful, sustainable, and safe food world; and the JBF Culinary Labs, which engage chefs in hands-on opportunities around food systems issues.

More than 550 chefs have applied to the Chefs Boot Camp for Policy & Change program since it launched. Participants are selected to represent regional and topic interest diversity, with consideration given to the voice that each chef has within their local community and on a national level.

A full list of chefs who have attended the four previous Boot Camps can be viewed at [jamesbeard.org/education/bootcamp](http://jamesbeard.org/education/bootcamp).

Follow hashtag #ChefsLead on Twitter to track the chefs’ progress and for additional information, view the Chefs Boot Camp for Policy & Change video feature on JBF’s [YouTube channel](#). To apply or fund future Chefs Boot Camps for Policy & Change, please visit [jamesbeard.org/education/bootcamp](http://jamesbeard.org/education/bootcamp).

#### **About the James Beard Foundation (JBF)**

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation celebrates, nurtures, and honors 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 JBF 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, JBF 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 products, and foster an interest in American culinary culture and history through international programs and initiatives. One such project is the next world's fair, Expo Milano 2015, for which the James Beard Foundation is co-leading the effort for the State Department to design and produce the USA Pavilion, a global gathering of 147 countries addressing the challenges of how we will feed ourselves in the future. The pavilion, whose theme will be "American Food 2.0: United to Feed the Planet," will showcase America's contributions to global food security and gastronomy. For more information, please visit [jamesbeard.org](http://jamesbeard.org). Find insights on food at the James Beard Foundation's blog [Delights & Prejudices](#). Join the James Beard Foundation on [Facebook](#). Follow the James Beard Foundation on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).