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James Beard Foundation Hosts Fifth Chefs Boot Camp for Policy & Change

Culinary Leaders Gather to Learn Advocacy Skills Through the Lens of Access and Affordability of Food

New York, NY (August 14, 2014) – More than a dozen chefs from around the country will convene for the [James Beard Foundation \(JBF\)](#)'s fifth **Chefs Boot Camp for Policy & Change** at **21c Museum Hotel** in Bentonville, Arkansas from September 7 to 9, for a multi-faceted program that will teach policy and advocacy skills through the lens of access and affordability of food. The three-day intensive series of workshops, conducted in partnership with the Chef Action Network (CAN), and with support from the Osprey Foundation, the Walton Family Foundation, and JBF board member Eric Kessler, is designed to provide chefs with the tools they need to be effective advocates for food-system issues they believe in.

"We look forward to continuing the relationship we forged almost two years ago with Downtown Bentonville Inc. to bring attention to its vibrant food scene, as well as to mutually supporting the innovative work of their local chef community and our Foundation," said Kris Moon, senior director, strategy and development, of the James Beard Foundation. "What started as a partnership to increase membership for both nonprofits has blossomed into numerous joint programs, including this Boot Camp. We are also thrilled to be working with 21c Museum Hotels again, who hosted our May 2013 Boot Camp at their flagship Louisville property."

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

- ***Creating a Fair, Just, Sustainable, Nutritious, and Delicious Food System:*** Topics include an introduction to the public policy landscape and why policy matters.
- ***Why Chefs Matter:*** Examples include chef advocacy work with programs like the PEW Charitable Trusts campaign to phase out antibiotics overuse in animal production; Catch Shares, a method of managing fisheries to make them sustainable and to restore fish populations; and hunger and childhood nutrition initiatives.
- ***Policy Briefing on Access and Affordability:*** Discuss the importance of and how to impact policy.
- ***A is for Advocacy:*** How advocacy campaigns work; why we need them; how to build them.

The intensive program will also feature content expertise from K. Rashid Nuri, one of the country's foremost minds on urban farming; a visit to Ewe Bet Farms, a lamb farm in Cave Springs, Arkansas; and a tour of the

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, which has an impressive collection of American masterworks spanning five centuries, ranging from the Colonial era to the current day.

“Since its inception at the first Boot Camp, the mission of the Chef Action Network, as well as the James Beard Foundation, has been to harness the passion chefs have to create positive change in the food system, not only for our generation but for generations to come,” said Katherine Miller, Executive Director of Chef Action Network.

Participating chefs for this Boot Camp include:

- Hugh Acheson, Atlanta
- Ashley Christensen, Raleigh, NC
- Erika Davis, Atlanta, GA & Nassau, Bahamas
- Case Dighero, Bentonville, AR
- Scott Drewno, Washington, D.C.
- Dan Kluger, NYC
- Anthony Lamas, Louisville, KY
- Jordan Lloyd, Easton, MD
- Bill Lyle, Bentonville, AR
- Matt McClure, Bentonville, AR
- Thomas McNaughton, San Francisco
- Rob Nelson, Bentonville, AR
- Holly Smith, Seattle
- Ana Sortun, Boston
- Digby Stridiron, Christiansted, U.S. Virgin Islands
- Eric Wadlund, Palm Springs, CA

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 through the lens of a specific food-system topic. Each session includes 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 50 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 program 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; and the annual Leadership Awards, which recognize visionaries helping to create a more healthful, sustainable, and safe food world.

More than 480 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.

To keep abreast of the Foundation's work within the food system and the chefs' progress during Chefs Boot Camp for Policy & Change, follow hashtags #JBFLeads and #Chefslead on Twitter and visit the James Beard Foundation's blog at jamesbeard.org. To apply or fund future Chefs Boot Camps for Policy & Change, please visit jamesbeard.org/bootcamp.

About the James Beard Foundation (JBF):

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 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 initiative is the next World's Fair, for which the James Beard Foundation is co-leading the effort for the State Department to design and produce the USA Pavilion at Expo Milano 2015—a global gathering of 147 countries addressing the challenges of how we will feed ourselves in the future. The Pavilion will showcase America's contributions to global food security and gastronomy in a pavilion themed American Food 2.0: United to Feed the Planet. For more information, please visit 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](#).