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Empowering Women: Applications Open for James Beard Foundation 2017 Women in Culinary Leadership Program *~ 19 Top Industry Leaders to Mentor/20 Positions Available; Deadline to apply is March 12 ~*

New York, NY (February 7, 2017) –The [James Beard Foundation \(JBF\)](#) is accepting applications for its **2017 Women in Culinary Leadership (WCL)** program. Launched in 2012, the WCL program was spearheaded by Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation, and Rohini Dey, JBF trustee and founder/owner of Indian-Latin Vermilion Restaurants in NYC and Chicago. The goal of this intern mentorship program is to help aspiring chefs and restaurateurs build in-depth leadership and management skills either in the kitchen, or in restaurant management and hospitality. WCL has grown consecutively over the last four years, and for the class of 2017 there are 20 positions offered by 19 mentors.

“Our Foundation is committed to correcting the gender imbalance in the restaurant/culinary industry by cultivating, training and supporting women throughout their professional culinary careers,” said Ungaro. “The WCL program has experienced tremendous growth in four years and we’re proud to have 19 distinguished mentors signed on for our 2017 program.”

“We created the WCL program to shatter the ‘gastro-ceiling.’ This program is about giving women the skills to lead, the confidence to speak up, and the impetus to dream bigger,” said Dey. “Our fundamental goal is to help more women stay the course, build grit, aspire for scale, lead kitchens, and become preeminent restaurateurs. Watching our mentees develop over the course of their programs has been immensely gratifying, and so has their job placements with mentors, validating the success of this model. We hope the industry will join us in spreading the word about this unique opportunity to all young women, especially given how timely this need is.”

Women with a background in hospitality or the culinary arts and at least two years of relevant work experience are encouraged to apply for a chance to participate in an eight-month mentor program with top industry leaders. Apart from financially sponsoring his or her candidate, the mentor designs a development trajectory at inception, which evolves depending on the mentee’s performance and ability. Monthly written reports and calls with the James Beard Foundation are an additional forum to evaluate progress and to provide feedback and coaching to maximize the learning experience.

Mentees also learn from each other during monthly check-ins and from the extended WCL network. The highlight of the mentee experience is a one week stage at the James Beard House where they either cook with multiple renowned chefs, or work closely with the JBF staff. In addition, mentees

are encouraged to enroll for financial literacy and business planning courses at a Women's Business Center in their city.

The deadline to apply is Sunday, March 12, and candidates will be expected to start their intern program by June 30. Candidates may apply for the following 2017 Chef/Back-of-house or Hospitality/Front-of-house programs:

1. **José Andrés** — Think Food Group, Washington, D.C. (Chef Training)
thinkfoodgroup.com
2. **Kim Bartmann** — Multiple Restaurants, Minneapolis, MN (Hospitality Training)
smallbusinessrevolution.org/story/tiny-diner
3. **Elizabeth Blau** — Andiron Steak & Sea; Buddy V's Ristorante; and Honey Salt, Las Vegas (Hospitality Training) elizabethblau.com
4. **Elizabeth Blau** — Andiron Steak & Sea; Buddy V's Ristorante; and Honey Salt, Las Vegas (Chef Training) elizabethblau.com
5. **Kevin Boehm and Rob Katz** — BOKA Restaurant Group, Chicago (Hospitality Training)
bokagr.com
6. **Kevin Brown** — Lettuce Entertain You Restaurants, Chicago (Chef Training)
leye.com
7. **Rohini Dey** — Vermilion Restaurants, Chicago (Chef Training)
thevermilionrestaurant.com
8. **Tom Douglas** — Tom Douglas Restaurants, Seattle (Chef Training)
tomdouglas.com
9. **Paul Fehribach** — Big Jones, Chicago (Chef Training)
bigjoneschicago.com
10. **Gina and Linton Hopkins** — Restaurant Eugene Group, Atlanta (Chef Training)
restauranteugene.com
11. **Cindy Hutson** — Ortanique; Zest Restaurant; and Zest MRKT, Miami (Chef Training)
ortaniquerestaurants.com
12. **Matt Jennings** — Townsman, Boston (Chef Training)
townsmanboston.com
13. **David Kinch** — Manresa, Los Gatos, CA (Chef Training)
manresarestaurant.com
14. **Shelley Lindgren** — A 16, San Francisco (Chef Training)
a16pizza.com
15. **Ti Adelaide Martin** — Commander's Palace, New Orleans (Hospitality Training)
commanderspalace.com
16. **Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger** — Border Grill, Los Angeles (Chef Training)
bordergrill.com
17. **Anne Quatrano** — Bacchanalia; Floataway Cafe; and W.H. Stiles Fish Camp, Atlanta (Chef Training) starprovisions.com
18. **Sarah Robbins** — 21c Museum Hotels, Proof on Main, Louisville, KY (Chef Training)
21cmuseumhotels.com
19. **Avery Ruzicka** — Manresa Bread, Los Gatos, CA (Baker Training)
manresabread.com
20. **Stephen Starr** — Starr Restaurants, Miami; NYC; Philadelphia; or Washington, D.C. (Chef Training) starr-restaurant.com

Twenty-eight Women in Culinary Leadership positions have been offered over the past three years, and of those candidates who have graduated, most have received job offers from their mentors. Recipients have trained and worked in various positions, including the kitchen line, inventory, sourcing, cost control, new menu development, marketing and promotion, event planning, catering, floor management, and more.

Arranged mentorships must be taken at times mutually agreed upon by the applicant and hosts. All mentorships must be completed within one year after they are awarded. Mentees will receive a weekly payment of \$600. In addition, mentees will have the opportunity to work alongside guest chefs cooking at the historic James Beard House for one week.

Applicants must be at least 21 years of age, and have at least two years of experience in the hospitality industry. Deadline for submissions is Sunday, March 12. To download the application, please visit: jamesbeard.org/education/women-culinary-leadership-program.

In addition to the WCL program, the James Beard Foundation will be accepting applicants to the first class of the Women in Entrepreneur Leadership (WEL) program beginning February 15. WEL comprises an annual fellowship for a class of up to 20 women to attend a five-day entrepreneurship/leadership training program that will run from September 10 to 15, 2017, developed with and hosted at Babson College. Targeted to women chefs/owners of one restaurant or food business, the curriculum will address advanced business and finance concerns related to entrepreneurship and expansion, as well as provide gender-specific training and leadership development. An emphasis on work/life balance and other cultural issues will also be part of the program. For more information about how to apply to the WEL program, visit: jamesbeard.org/women-in-entrepreneur-leadership-program.

About the James Beard Foundation (JBF)

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation celebrates, nurtures, and honors chefs and other leaders making America's food culture more delicious, diverse, and sustainable for everyone. A cookbook author and teacher with an encyclopedic knowledge about food, the late James Beard 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. For more information, please visit jamesbeard.org. Get food news, recipes, and more at the James Beard Foundation's [blog](#), or subscribe to the free digital newsletter [Beard Bites](#). Follow [@beardfoundation](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#), and Snapchat. Watch the James Beard House Kitchen Cam, James Beard Awards, and more on the Foundation's [Livestream](#) channel. Find more JBF-related video on the Foundation's [YouTube](#) channels.