

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Contact: Diane Stefani or Maggie Beaudouin

Diane@rosengrouppr.com/Maggie@rosengrouppr.com/212.255.8455



## **Twenty-One Women Receive the James Beard Foundation's 2016 Women in Culinary Leadership Grant**

*~ Award-Winning Chefs and Restaurateurs from Napa to New York Provide  
Mentorship in Kitchen and Restaurant Management Skills ~*

New York, NY (June 8, 2016) – The [James Beard Foundation \(JBF\)](#) has announced the recipients of the **2016 Women in Culinary Leadership Grant**. Over sixty women with a background in hospitality and the culinary arts applied to participate in a six- or twelve-month mentor/grantee program with top industry leaders, and twenty-one have been selected.

Launched in 2012, the Women in Culinary Leadership (WICL) Program was spearheaded by Rohini Dey, JBF trustee and restaurateur, and Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation. The mentoring program for aspiring chefs and restaurateurs aims to build in-depth skills in the kitchen and in restaurant management.

“We created this program to help accelerate women’s careers in the culinary industry, specifically by building their skills both in the kitchen and in front-of-house management,” said Rohini Dey, owner and founder of the Indian-Latin restaurants [Vermilion](#) in New York City and Chicago. “This year 18 mentors will guide the JBF Women in Culinary Leadership grantees through rigorous programs that will include business training in kitchen, floor management, marketing, and entrepreneurship. By staying actively involved in our grantees development trajectory during the training and beyond, our goal is to enable women to break through the gastro-ceiling.”

The 2016 Women in Culinary Leadership Grant Program paired the following grantees with these restaurant industry leaders:

1. **Tracy Austin, Belleville, NJ** – Will complete a six-month, back-of-house program overseen by Cindy Pawlcyn\*, Mustards Grill, Napa: [mustardsgrill.com](#)
2. **Margaret Bondi, Chicago** – Will complete a six-month, front-of-house program overseen by Beth Gruitch and Jennifer Jasinski\*, Rioja, Denver: [riojadenver.com](#)
3. **Alexandria Bowler, Scottsdale, AZ** – Will complete a six-month, front-of-house program overseen by Ti Adelaide Martin, Commander’s Palace\*, New Orleans: [commanderspalace.com](#)
4. **Madeline Brandstetter, Chicago** – Will complete a six-month, back-and front-of-house program overseen by Kevin Brown, Lettuce Entertain You® Enterprises\*, Chicago: [leye.com](#)
5. **Katie Briggs, Upper Black Eddy, PA** – Will complete a six-month, back-of-house program overseen by Erin Shea and Lee Chizmar, Bolete, Bethlehem: [boleterestaurant.com](#)
6. **Samantha Ferguson, Parkersburg, WV** – Will complete a six-month, back-of-house program overseen by Sarah Robbins, 21 C Hotels, Cincinnati, OH & Lexington, KY: [21cmuseumhotels.com](#)
7. **Holly Fierce, Washington, D.C.** – Will complete a twelve-month, back- and front-of-house program overseen by Kim Bartmann, Multiple Restaurants, Minneapolis: [smallbusinessrevolution.org/story/tiny-diner](#)
8. **Kristina Forsberg, Asheville, NC** – Will complete a six-month, back-of-house program overseen by Elizabeth Blau, Elizabeth Blau & Associates, Las Vegas: [elizabethblau.com](#)

9. **Alexandra Gadd, Phoenix** – Will complete a twelve-month, back- and front-of-house program overseen by Rohini Dey, Vermilion, Chicago: [thevermilionrestaurant.com](http://thevermilionrestaurant.com)
10. **Chanel Gaude, New Orleans** – Will complete a six-month, back-of-house program overseen by Paul Fehribach, Big Jones, Chicago: [bigjoneschicago.com](http://bigjoneschicago.com)
11. **Sarah Gonzales, Sacramento, CA** – Will complete a six-month, front-of-house program overseen by John Besh\*, Besh, New Orleans: [chefjohnbesh.com](http://chefjohnbesh.com)
12. **Guadalupe Hernandez, Rye, NY** – Will complete a twelve-month, back-of-house program overseen by April Bloomfield\*, Spotted Pig, New York: [thespottedpig.com](http://thespottedpig.com)
13. **Shelby Manus, Apex, NC** – Will complete a twelve-month, back-of-house program overseen by Cindy Hutson, Ortanique, Miami: [ortaniquerestaurants.com](http://ortaniquerestaurants.com)
14. **Chanell Okoro, Houston** – Will complete a twelve-month, back- -of-house program overseen by April Bloomfield\*, The John Dory Oyster Bar, New York: [thejohndory.com](http://thejohndory.com)
15. **Ranea Orosco, Austin** – Will complete a six-month, back-of-house program overseen by Linton Hopkins\*, Restaurant Eugene, Atlanta: [restauranteugene.com](http://restauranteugene.com)
16. **Kelly Pittman, Waianae, HI** – Will complete a six-month, back- and front-of-house program overseen by Matthew Jennings, Townsman, Boston: [townsmanboston.com](http://townsmanboston.com)
17. **Meaghan Rigali, Bloomington, IN** – Will complete a six-month, back-of-house program overseen by Sam Fox, Fox Restaurant Group, Phoenix: [foxrc.com](http://foxrc.com)
18. **Lilith Smith, Tallahassee, FL** – Will complete a twelve-month, back- and front-of-house program overseen by Rohini Dey, Vermilion, Chicago: [thevermilionrestaurant.com](http://thevermilionrestaurant.com)
19. **Meagan Stout, Denton, TX** – Will complete a twelve-month, back-of-house program overseen by April Bloomfield\*, The Breslin, New York: [thebreslin.com](http://thebreslin.com)
20. **Meadow Swanson, Seattle** – Will complete a twelve-month, back-of-house program overseen by Tom Douglas\*, Multiple Restaurants, Seattle: [tomdouglas.com](http://tomdouglas.com)
21. **Jennifer Thomas, Poughkeepsie, NY** – Will complete a twelve-month, front-of-house program overseen by Kevin Boehm and Rob Katz, Boka Restaurant Group Chicago: [bokagr.com](http://bokagr.com)

“We are delighted to see the tremendous growth our Women in Culinary Leadership Grant Program has achieved in just one year. Thanks to the generosity of the participating restaurateurs and chefs/owners, we’ve tripled the number of experiences offered,” said Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation. “As these 21 talented women embark on our mentoring program, we look forward to helping them achieve their dreams of a successful career in the restaurant world.”

A selection of grantees will also have the opportunity to work alongside guest chefs cooking at the historic James Beard House for one week. For more information about the WICL Grant program, please visit: [jamesbeard.org/education/women-culinary-leadership-program](http://jamesbeard.org/education/women-culinary-leadership-program).

### **\*James Beard Award Winner**

#### **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, 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](http://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 the James Beard Foundation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Livestream](#).