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:

2. **Margaret Bondi**, Chicago – Will complete a six-month, front-of-house program overseen by Beth Gruitch and Jennifer Jasinski*, Rioja, Denver: riojadenver.com
10. **Chanel Gaude, New Orleans** – Will complete a six-month, back-of-house program overseen by Paul Fehribach, Big Jones, Chicago: bigjoneschicago.com
13. **Shelby Manus, Apex, NC** – Will complete a twelve-month, back-of-house program overseen by Cindy Hutson, Ortanique, Miami: ortaniquerestaurants.com
15. **Ranea Orosco, Austin** – Will complete a six-month, back-of-house program overseen by Linton Hopkins*, Restaurant Eugene, Atlanta: 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
17. **Meaghan Rigali, Bloomington, IN** – Will complete a six-month, back-of-house program overseen by Sam Fox, Fox Restaurant Group, Phoenix: 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
20. **Meadow Swanson, Seattle** – Will complete a twelve-month, back-of-house program overseen by Tom Douglas*, Multiple Restaurants, Seattle: tomdouglas.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.

*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. 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.