JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION® ANNOUNCES 40 FELLOWS FOR 2022 FALL AND 2023 WINTER COHORTS OF WOMEN’S ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

NEW YORK, NY (September 12, 2022) – The James Beard Foundation® today announces the 40 fellows participating in the 2022 fall and 2023 winter cohorts of the Women’s Entrepreneurial Leadership (WEL) Program, taking place virtually from September-December 2022 and January-April 2023, respectively.

Now in its sixth year, the James Beard Foundation’s flagship Women’s Entrepreneurial Leadership Program (WEL) is an advanced educational and networking program for women restaurant owners looking to expand and grow. This year WEL expands to two cohorts for the fall and winter—providing additional opportunity for women from across the country to receive critical leadership and business training.

Created in conjunction with Cornell University, each 10-week virtual program is open to 20 participants. The curriculum includes gender-specific training and leadership development, as well as advanced business and finance concepts. Following completion of the program, participants join a powerful community of WEL alumnae, with regular opportunities to connect with each other and the Foundation.

Since the founding in 2017, WEL has empowered 105 women owning over 130 businesses across 32 states. To date, 71% of program participants have successfully raised funding for their business, reaching a combined total of $10.5 million in investment after finishing the program. In addition, upon completing WEL, many alumnae have increased employee wages, added new benefits, and gained valuable skills in articulating goals and creating long term business plans. Access a directory of WEL alumnae here.

“Closing the gender ownership gap is at the center of our mission towards gender equity, and we are proud to scale up our WEL program to two cohorts this fiscal year,” said Clare Reichenbach, CEO of the James Beard Foundation. “Expanding this unique educational opportunity will allow more women and non-binary hospitality entrepreneurs to develop knowledge and networks to grow their businesses—whether it is increasing the top and bottom line of their existing operation or expanding to multiple locations or concepts.”

The 2022-2023 Women’s Entrepreneurial Leadership Fellows are:

- **Fall Cohort Data**
  - Span 12 states and 56 total businesses
- **Fall Fellows**
  - **Jaja Chen**: Cha Community, Jaja Chen, LCSW, PLLC (Waco, TX)
  - **Marian Cheng**: Mimi Cheng's (New York, NY)
  - **Olivia Esquivel**: Southern Pressed Juicery (Greenville, SC)
  - **Linda Ford**: Living Kitchen Farm & Dairy, FarmBar, il seme (Depew, OK)
  - **Dora Hererra**: Yuca’s Hut, Yuca’s Pasadena (Los Angeles, CA)
  - **Kasama (June) Intrachat**: OTUS Thai Kitchen & Coffee (West Hollywood, CA)
  - **Liz Kincaid**: Tarrant's Cafe, Tarrant's West, Max's on Broad, Bar Solita (Richmond, VA)
  - **Tina Long**: The Butcher’s Daughter, De Buena Planta, and Only The Wild Ones (NYC and Los Angeles)
  - **Meagan Nash**: Handle, HSL (Park City, UT)
  - **Sophina Uong**: Mister Mao (New Orleans, LA)
  - **June Rodil**: Montrose Cheese & Wine, Rosie Cannonball, MARCH, The Marigold Club (Houston, TX)
  - **Marilyn Schlossbach**: Langosta Lounge, Pop’s Garage, Asbury Park Yacht Club, Saltwater Market, The Whitechapel Projects, The Cocoa Boat, Oshin Oil, Two River Mushroom (Asbury Park, NJ)
  - **Barbara Sibley**: La Palapa Cocina Mexicana, La Palapa Taco Bar Gotham West Market, La Palapa Taco Bar Urbanspace Vanderbilt (New York, NY)
  - **Sugar Sungkamee**: Jitlada (Los Angeles, CA)
  - **Tonya Thomas**: H3irloom Food Group and Nostalgia Baking Company (Baltimore, MD)
  - **Rosa Thurnher**: El Ponce, Tiendita, La Palapa, & Sirena Tierra (Atlanta, GA)
  - **Suzanne Vizethann**: Buttermilk Kitchen LLC (Atlanta, GA)
  - **Sarah Wasson**: Mulvaney’s B&L (Sacramento, CA)
  - **Andia Xouris**: Andia’s Ice Cream (Morrisville, NC)
  - **Kristina Zhao**: Sichuan House, DASHI Sichuan Kitchen + Bar (San Antonio, TX)

- **Winter Cohort Data**
  - Span 16 states and 56 total businesses
  - Average revenue was over $2.5M
  - Average years in business is 11
  - Businesses employ ~50 people on average

- **Winter Fellows**
  - **Supunika (Sabrina) Chutima**: Lotus of Siam, Lotus of Siam Flamingo (Las Vegas, NV)
  - **Ali Cohane**: Persephone, Picnic, Coelette (Jackson, WY)
  - **Sarah Combs**: Mountain Laurel Catering & Events, Grateful Endeavors, Moon Peak Productions (Harrisburg, PA)
  - **Kate Fournier**: Thompson House Eatery (Jackson, NH)
- **Christine Ha**: The Blind Goat LP, Anchovy Group Corporation (Houston, TX)
- **Gina Hopkins**: Hopkins and Company, C. Ellet's Steakhouse, Holeman and Finch Asheville, Holeman and Finch Atlanta, The Buttery ATL, Holeman and Finch Bottle Shop, H&F Burger (Atlanta, GA)
- **Jan Hori**: Hawaiian Pie Company (Honolulu, HI)
- **Karma Lee**: Bobae Coffee & Tea Woodinville, Bobae Coffee & Tea Kirkland (Woodinville, WA)
- **Carrie McCabe-Johnston**: Nightingale, Mortimer's Bar, Dusty's Bar, Tilt Pinball Bar, Bonafide Hospitality (Minneapolis, MN)
- **Winnette McIntosh Ambrose**: The Sweet Lobby, Souk by The Sweet Lobby (Washington, DC)
- **Mawa McQueen**: Mawa's Kitchen, McQueen Hospitality Group, The Crepe Shack, Mawa's GrainFreeNola (Aspen, CO)
- **Bonnie Morales**: Kachka, Kachka Lavka, Kachka Spirits (Portland, OR)
- **Judy Ni**: baology, Roux (Philadelphia, PA)
- **Mahina Reppun**: Not Waving But Drowning Restaurant Group LLC dba, Morning Glass Coffee (Honolulu, HI)
- **Lela Singh**: Teaism Dupont Circle, Teaism Lafayette Park, Teaism Penn Quarter, Teaism Tea Shop in Penn Quarter (Washington, DC)
- **Kristin Smith**: The Wrigley, Faulkner Bent (Corbin, KY)
- **Kali Solack**: Cafe Regina (San Juan, PR)
- **Lisa Tran**: Tan Cafe & Delicatessen, Tan Tan Foods (Beaverton, OR)
- **Brittney Valles**: Gogo's Tacos, Guerrilla Cafecito, Guerrilla Tacos, Tiago Coffee (Los Angeles, CA)
- **Kayia Yalcin**: Fishnet (Baltimore, MD)

Visual media assets of the WEL Program can be found at the following links, including correct attribution:

- 2022-2023 WEL Cohort Headshots
  - Fall 2022 Headshots
  - Spring 2023 Headshots
- WEL Program Selects available here (photo credit included in photo file)

“*We received more than 200 applications for WEL, from all around the country,*” said Anne E. McBride, PhD, **vice president of programs**. “*Applicants are shortlisted using a rigorous scoring rubric for each element of the application. Then, a committee comprising WEL alumnae, members of the Women’s Leadership Programs Advisory Committee, and our CEO, review and select the final cohorts. The strength and scale of a participant’s existing business, and a sharp vision for growth, are key elements to successful applications.*”

WEL—part of the Foundation’s wider Women’s Leadership Programs—supports the Foundation’s mission to celebrate, support, and elevate the people behind America’s food culture, while pushing for new standards in the restaurant industry where all have the opportunity to thrive. For more information, please visit: [https://www.jamesbeard.org/leadership](https://www.jamesbeard.org/leadership).
The WEL program was initiated with founding support from JBF supporter Jodie W. McLean, CEO of EDENS, one of the nation’s leading private retail real estate companies. The Foundation’s wider Women’s Leadership Programs are sponsored by Appleton Estate Jamaica Rum, Bobbie, Bumble, Distinguished Vineyards & Wine Partners, Enroot, KitchenAid, and S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water.

The James Beard Foundation’s impact programs are supported by Capital One, the official credit card and banking partner of the James Beard Foundation; American Airlines, the official airline of the James Beard Foundation; and Windstar Cruises, the official cruise line of the James Beard Foundation.

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About the James Beard Foundation
The James Beard Foundation (JBF) celebrates and supports the people behind America’s food culture, while pushing for new standards in the restaurant industry to create a future where all have the opportunity to thrive. Established over 30 years ago, the Foundation has highlighted the centrality of food culture in our daily lives and is committed to supporting a resilient and flourishing industry that honors its diverse communities. By amplifying new voices, celebrating those leading the way, and supporting those on the path to do so, the Foundation is working to create a more equitable and sustainable future—what we call Good Food for Good™.

As a 501c3 non-profit organization, JBF brings its mission to life through annual Awards, industry and community-focused initiatives and programs, advocacy, and events. Current programs include the Chef Bootcamp for Policy and Change, Beard House Fellows, Legacy Network, Scholarship Programs, Smart Catch, Women’s Leadership Programs, and Open For Good Campaign. In addition, JBF celebrates the chefs and local independent restaurants at the heart of our communities with numerous events and partnerships nationwide throughout the year—including the Taste America culinary tour, JBF Greens events for foodies under 40, the soon-to-open Pier 57 Market Hall, food festivals, and more.

For more information, subscribe to the digital newsletter Beard Bites and follow @beardfoundation on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn.

For industry leaders and employees, subscribe to JBF’s Industry Support Newsletter or access a range of resources on our Industry Support page, including published reports, a Virtual Education Library, and monthly Chefs Connect events.

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