

2022 James Beard Awards

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JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION® CELEBRATES 2022 LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNERS

NEW YORK, NY (June 12, 2022) – The James Beard Foundation® recognized and celebrated the 2022 James Beard Leadership Award winners at an invite-only ceremony and luncheon in Chicago on Sunday, June 12, 2022. The five 2022 winners were announced on March 16. The full list of 2022 Leadership Awards winners can be found below and on the James Beard Foundation [website](#).

Held at The Dalcy in Chicago's Fulton Market District, the winners were honored today during a ceremony and luncheon hosted by James Beard Leadership Award winner **Bryant Terry**, author, activist, publisher, and chef-in-residence at the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco.

"The pandemic and challenges of 2020 brought many longstanding issues in our food system to the forefront. As we build back and look to address barriers to creating a healthier and more equitable food culture, it is more important than ever to highlight changemakers already paving the way," said **Clare Reichenbach, chief executive officer of the James Beard Foundation**. "I am honored to congratulate this year's Leadership Awards winners."

"I am honored to host this year's Leadership Awards ceremony and recognize these visionary leaders," said **Terry**. "Through their tireless work, this year's winners have changed the way we think about food and community in this country. Thank you for your dedication and for the positive impact you have made to our food system."

"The Leadership Awards are an important opportunity to raise awareness of critical issues in our food system—and to spotlight changemakers doing the hard work of solving problems related to sustainability, food justice, and public health," said **Soleil Ho, chair of the Leadership Awards committee**. "By highlighting these winners, we hope more are inspired to learn, get involved, and affect change in their own communities."

"The Leadership Award winners are true trailblazers who exemplify the Foundation's mantra of Good Food for Good," said **Kris Moon, president and chief operating officer of the James Beard Foundation**. "We are honored to be able to shine a spotlight on their impactful work and we congratulate them for their vision, creativity, and commitment to creating a more sustainable and equitable food system for all."

The ceremony was followed by a luncheon for 150 guests featuring a menu from Erik Bruner-Yang (Foreign National, Maketto, and Power of 10 initiative), CJ Jacobson (chef partner of Aba in

Chicago and Austin and Ēma in Chicago) and Eric Santoyo (executive chef of Aba and The Dalcy in Chicago).

Visual media assets from this year's Media Awards available on request.

The James Beard Awards, considered to be among the nation's most prestigious honors, recognize exceptional talent in the culinary and food media industries, as well as a demonstrated commitment to racial and gender equity, community, sustainability, and a culture where all can thrive.

2022 James Beard Leadership Award Winners

The James Beard Foundation's Leadership Awards spotlight the important and complex realms of sustainability, food justice, and public health. They raise awareness of these timely issues by celebrating the visionaries responsible for creating a healthier, safer, more equitable, and sustainable food system. An overview of the voting process can be viewed [here](#). Eligibility and categories for the James Beard Foundation Leadership Awards can be found [here](#).

Erika Allen, Co-founder and CEO of Operations, Urban Growers Collective

Erika Allen is an urban agriculturalist and social change artist. She is co-founder and CEO of operations for Urban Growers Collective, a Black- and women-led nonprofit farm in Chicago working to build a more just and equitable local food system, as well as co-owner of Green Era Sustainability Partners, a nonprofit whose mission is to create more sustainable communities by supporting local food production through better management of biodegradable waste and access to soil. Erika is passionate about social justice, food security, and community development, and uses her experience as a visual artist to support individuals and organizations in their vision for social and economic change.

Irene Li, Co-founder, Mei Mei Dumplings and Prepshift

Irene Li has spent years driving the restaurant industry forward through sustainable, ethical sourcing of ingredients and fair and progressive employment practices. She is co-founder of Mei Mei in Boston and Prepshift, a tool that helps restaurateurs build happy and informed teams, as well as Project Restore Us, a nonprofit whose mission is to restore food security by providing accessible, nutritious, culturally appropriate, and affordable groceries to families in the greater Boston area. She is an Eater Young Gun, Zagat 30 Under 30 honoree, and Forbes 30 Under 30 honoree, as well as a six-time James Beard Foundation Rising Star Chef of the Year semifinalist.

Mónica Ramírez, Founder and President, Justice for Migrant Women

Founder and president of Justice for Migrant Women, Mónica Ramírez is a long-time advocate, organizer, social entrepreneur, and attorney fighting to eliminate gender-based violence and secure gender equity. For over two decades, she has fought for the civil and human rights of women, children, workers, as well as for Latinx and immigrant communities. She has been awarded the Harvard Kennedy School's inaugural Gender Equity Changemaker Award, the Feminist Majority's Global Women's Rights Award, and was included on Forbes Mexico's 2018 list of 100 Powerful Women, among other distinctions.

Mavis-Jay Sanders, Director of Culinary Development and Education, Drive Change

Mavis-Jay Sanders is the director of culinary development and education at Drive Change, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to support formerly incarcerated young people through quality employment in the food and hospitality industry. Mavis-Jay—a James Beard Chef's Boot cCamp alumnae and an advisory committee member of the James Beard House Fellows program—is a chef who believes in sustainably raised and thoughtfully prepared ingredients, as well as a racial equity advocate who has dedicated her career to fighting for food justice in Black and low-income communities.

Emerging Leadership: Understory, Oakland, CA

The Leadership Committee may select an additional winner to highlight a person or collective who is at the beginning of their career, but already doing significant work.

Understory—developed by Understory Worker Collective and the nonprofit, Oakland Bloom—is a worker-cooperative restaurant, bar, and shared kitchen based in Oakland, California. Understory is a non-traditional restaurant space and community hub that is collectively run with Oakland Bloom, offering affordable kitchen space, free and sliding scale food distribution, mutual aid, business training, and mentorship programs for immigrant, refugee, and historically marginalized communities. The collective's values include uplifting communities of color, building economic sustainability, and supporting environmentally and racially just food systems, amongst others.

Read more about the Leadership Awards ceremony and the winners [here](#).

The 2022 James Beard Awards are the first in two years, after a hiatus during which the Awards underwent a full [audit](#) of its policies and procedures, continuing the work to remove bias, increase transparency and accessibility, and make the program more aligned with the Foundation's mission and values. James Beard Awards policies and procedures can be viewed [here](#).

The 2022 James Beard Awards are presented by Capital One, the official credit card and banking partner of the James Beard Foundation. The James Beard Awards are proudly hosted by Choose Chicago and the Illinois Restaurant Association and presented in association with Chicago O'Hare and Midway International Airports, as well as with the following partners: Premier Sponsors: Acqua Panna® Natural Spring Water, American Airlines, the official airline of the James Beard Foundation, BentoBox, S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water; Supporting Sponsors: All-Clad Metalcrafters, Moët & Chandon, Skuna Bay Salmon, Valrhona; Reception Sponsors: Ecolab, Kendall College at National Louis University, Lavazza, Windstar Cruises, the official cruise line of the James Beard Foundation; Additional Support: Château d'Esclans, HMSHost, National Restaurant Association, The Spire Collection, VerTerra Dinnerware. Intersport is the Official Broadcast Partner of the 2022 James Beard Awards.

For more information about the James Beard Foundation Awards, visit jamesbeard.org/awards. For up-to-the-minute news about the Awards follow @beardfoundation on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and keep an eye out for posts using #jbfa.

About the James Beard Awards

The James Beard Awards recognizes exceptional talent and achievement in the culinary arts, hospitality, media, and broader food system, as well as a demonstrated commitment to racial and gender equity, community, sustainability, and a culture where all can thrive. Established in 1990, the James Beard Awards are among the nation's most prestigious honors recognizing leaders in the culinary and food media industries. The Awards are overseen by the Awards Committee. Each Awards program (Books, Broadcast Media, Journalism, Leadership, and Restaurant and Chef) has its own subcommittee members who volunteer their time to oversee the policies, procedures, and selection of judges for their respective program. All James Beard Award winners receive a certificate and a medallion engraved with the James Beard Foundation Awards insignia. For more information, subscribe to the [Awards Digital Newsletter](#).

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 **Open for Good Campaign**, **Chef's Bootcamp for Policy and Change**, **Beard House Fellows**, **Legacy Network**, **Scholarship Programs**, **Smart Catch**, and **Women's Leadership Programs**. 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](#).

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