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James Beard Foundation Launches New Leadership Initiative for Women to Target Gender Imbalance in the Restaurant Industry

~ Women in Entrepreneur Leadership Program Kicked Off with a Special Event at Tiburon Tavern on January 26 ~

Tiburon, CA (January 27, 2017) – Last night the [James Beard Foundation \(JBF\)](#) officially launched the [Women in Entrepreneur Leadership \(WEL\)](#) program with a special fundraiser at **Tiburon Tavern** (Tiburon, CA). Titled “[Women in the Kitchen](#),” the walk-around tasting celebrated JBF’s work in advancing women in the culinary industry, with dishes prepared by JBF Award-winning women chefs and restaurateurs from across the country.

Female chefs and restaurateurs in attendance, who created the menu of food and drink, included **Host Executive Chef Mo L’Esperance** (Tiburon Tavern); **Kim Alter** (Nightbird, San Francisco); **Kathleen Blake** (The Rusty Spoon, Orlando); **Duskie Estes** (Zazu & Black Pig Meat Co., Sebastapol, CA); **JBF Award Winner Joyce Goldstein**; **JBF Award Winner and Board Chair Emily Luchetti** (The Cavalier, Leo’s Oyster Bar, Marlowe, and The Park Tavern, San Francisco); **Pam Mazzola** (Prospect Restaurant, San Francisco); **Nicole Pederson** (Found Kitchen and Social House, and the Barn, Evanston, IL); **Gayle Pirie** (Foreign Cinema, San Francisco); **Jenn Puccio** (The Cavalier, Leo’s Oyster Bar, Marlowe, and The Park Tavern, San Francisco); and **Mixologist Alicia Walton** (The Sea Star, San Francisco).

The Women in Entrepreneur Leadership (WEL) program is a new leadership initiative for women designed for female chefs/owners interested in growing and expanding their businesses. WEL complements the Foundation’s existing [Women in Culinary Leadership \(WCL\)](#) program, which supports young women at the start of their careers. These two initiatives intend to help correct the gender imbalance in the restaurant/culinary industry by cultivating, training and supporting women throughout their professional culinary careers.

“The James Beard Foundation is grateful to EDENS for initiating the Women in Entrepreneurship Leadership program, Tiburon Tavern for hosting the kickoff event, and Babson College for developing the fellowship curriculum,” said Mitchell Davis, Executive Vice President of the James Beard Foundation. “Our Foundation has been at the forefront of the gender imbalance issue since 2012 when JBF President Susan Ungaro and JBF Trustee Rohini Dey developed the Women in Culinary Leadership (WCL) intern mentorship program. The WEL program is a natural offshoot because it targets women who are already in the culinary industry and looking to take the next major step for their business.”

During the evening, Davis announced the inaugural advisory committee for these JBF women leadership initiatives (WEL and WCL). The group of advisors include:

- Elizabeth Blau, Founder and CEO, Blau and Associates
- James Beard Award Winning Chef Traci Des Jardins
- Rohini Dey, JBF Trustee and Founder/owner of Indian-Latin Vermilion Restaurants in NYC and Chicago
- Ahmass Fakahany, Chief Executive Officer/Owner, Altamarea Group
- Ruth Gresser, Chef/owner, Pizzeria Paradiso
- Carla Hall, Chef and television personality
- Dr. Deborah Harris, Associate Professor of Sociology, Texas State University
- Pamela Hinckley, CEO, Tom Douglas Restaurants
- Josh Kulp, Co-owner, Honey Butter Fried Chicken
- James Beard Award Winning Chef Tony Mantuano
- Jodie W. McLean, CEO, EDENS
- Cindy McLoughlin, JBF Trustee and Partner with CohnReznick
- Melissa Musiker, Director, APCO Worldwide
- Richard Perlman, Chairman, Compass Partners LLC
- JBF Award Winning Chef and Trustee Anne Quatrano
- Jessamyn Rodriguez, Founder and CEO, Hot Bread Kitchen
- Juliana Stone, Vice President at The Elliot Group

“Every beginning chef or restaurateur needs mentors. I had several mentors who helped me immensely and guided me through the various stages of my career,” said Emily Luchetti, JBF Award Winner and Board Chair. “While chefs develop cooking techniques and the skills required to make delicious food on their own, more often than not they are not educated on the ins and outs of running a restaurant or food business. It is especially difficult for chefs to find mentors since they spend the majority of their time in the kitchen. That’s where the James Beard Foundation’s WEL and WCL programs come in. I’m so thrilled to be a part of these programs and play mentor for young women in the industry, as so many women and men did for me.”

About the Women in Entrepreneur Leadership (WEL) Program

The James Beard Foundation will be accepting applicants to the first class of the Women in Entrepreneur Leadership Program (WEL) on February 15, 2017. The program was initiated by JBF supporter Jodie W. McLean, CEO of EDENS, one of the nation’s leading private retail real estate companies, and supported by a grant from WCR – Women Chefs and Restaurateurs, a Founding Partner of the WEL program. 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.

In addition to the Babson curriculum, JBF's Women in Entrepreneur Leadership Program will administer a group of mentors who agree to provide expertise and career development support to the participants on an ongoing basis once they leave the program. Occasional in-person meetings and webinars will be held throughout the year in order to grow the network of women leaders across the country.

About the Women in Culinary Leadership (WCL) Program

JBF's Women in Culinary Leadership (WCL) intern mentorship program, which was launched in 2012, will also be accepting applicants for the 2017 program as of February 1. The program was developed with JBF Trustee Rohini Dey, founder/owner of Indian-Latin Vermilion Restaurants in NYC and Chicago. Women with a background in hospitality or the culinary arts are encouraged to apply for a chance to participate in an eight-month mentor program with top industry leaders. The goal of the mentoring program for aspiring chefs and restaurateurs is to help build in-depth leadership and management skills in the kitchen or in restaurant management and entrepreneurship.

For more information about these two programs, the qualifications needed, and how to apply, please visit jamesbeard.org/women-leadership-programs.

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.

About The Lodge at Tiburon:

Across the spectacular San Francisco Bay, The Lodge at Tiburon is a sublime escape from the bustle of the city. Only steps away from the Bay docks, The Lodge is a quaint retreat nestled among the cafés, boutiques and galleries of Tiburon and is adorned with relaxing décor and an inviting ambiance. Premium guest experience is delivered through exceptional guest services and amenities that The Lodge has to offer. Amenities such as the fully functional business center, poolside fire pit and Tiburon Tavern allow guests to enjoy their stay whether it's for business or pleasure. This hidden retreat offers quintessential Northern California experience at its best. The Lodge at Tiburon is managed by MetWest Terra Hospitality, whose other Bay Area Collection properties include: Toll House Hotel, Hotel Abri, and Casa Madrona Hotel and Spa. For reservations and additional information, please visit <http://lodgeattiburon.com/> or call 800.762.7770. To follow more of The Lodge at Tiburon's promotions join us on Twitter: [@lodgeattib](#) or Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LodgeatTiburon>.