FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The James Beard Foundation Announces Fifth Year of its Women in Culinary Leadership Program

~ Top industry leaders across the country paired with 15 recipients for paid mentorship initiative ~

New York, NY (August 16, 2017) – The James Beard Foundation (JBF) is pleased to announce the 15 recipients of its 2017 Women in Culinary Leadership (WCL) Program, an accelerated, learning-by-doing mentorship initiative. Since launching in 2012, WCL has provided mentorship opportunities for over 42 women in the culinary industry.

More than 65 applicants with a background of two years or more in hospitality and the culinary arts, entered to participate in the eight-month mentor/grantee program with top industry leaders. The program, spearheaded by Rohini Dey, JBF trustee, and Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation, aims to build in-depth skills in the kitchen, restaurant management, and hospitality fields.

“By creating this program five years ago to break through the barriers of the ‘gastro ceiling,’ the goal has been to build women's operational skills, financial literacy, confidence, and networks in the field,” said Dey. “In using a hands-on approach both in front and back of the house, the WCL provides recipients with the experience to excel in their chosen occupation alongside culinary leaders. Empowering women on a grassroots level to create tangible progress is more vital now than ever before; especially given the glacial change in women's leadership across all arenas, whether political or the boardroom or culinary.”

The 2017 Women in Culinary Leadership Program pairs the following grantees with these restaurant industry leaders:

1. **Sierra Carver, Shelby, OH** – Will complete a Chef program overseen by David Kinch*, Manresa, Los Gatos: [https://www.manresarestaurant.com/](https://www.manresarestaurant.com/)

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4. **Miranda Langlet, Austin, TX** – Will complete a Chef program overseen by Shelley Lindgren, A16, San Francisco: [https://www.a16pizza.com/](https://www.a16pizza.com/)

5. **Marketa Lucas, Charlotte, NC** – Will complete a Chef program overseen by Paul Fehribach, Big Jones, Chicago: [http://bigjoneschicago.com/](http://bigjoneschicago.com/)

6. **Nalini Mehta, Atlanta, GA** – Will complete a Chef program overseen by Kim Bartmann, Bartmann Restaurant Group, Minneapolis: [http://www.bartmannngroup.rocks/](http://www.bartmannngroup.rocks/)


8. **Erika Murphy, Spokane, WA** – Will complete a Chef program overseen by Tom Douglas*, Tom Douglas Restaurants, Seattle: [https://www.tomdouglas.com/](https://www.tomdouglas.com/)


14. **Hailey Vinter, Omaha, NE** – Will complete a Chef program overseen by Sarah Robbins, 21C Museum Hotels, Louisville: [https://www.21cmuseumhotels.com/](https://www.21cmuseumhotels.com/)


“It has been very rewarding to watch the growth of our Women in Culinary Leadership Program, but our industry still has a long way to go to help women thrive in leadership roles,” said Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation. “It is more important than ever to bring
attention to the need for even more opportunities, which is why we recently launched the
Women’s Entrepreneurial Leadership Program.”

The Women’s Entrepreneurial Leadership (WEL) program, taking place September 10 to 15, is a
new initiative to help female chefs and owners grow their businesses by cultivating women’s
leadership in the culinary industry. For more information about the WCL and WEL programs,
please visit: https://www.jamesbeard.org/women-leadership-programs.

*James Beard Award Winner

About the James Beard Foundation

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.