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

~ Seeking candidates for the inaugural Women in Entrepreneur Leadership and the 2017 Women in Culinary Leadership programs ~

New York, NY (January 19, 2017) – The [James Beard Foundation](#) (JBF) announced the launch of the [Women in Entrepreneur Leadership \(WEL\)](#) program today. Complementing the Foundation's existing [Women in Culinary Leadership \(WCL\)](#) program, which supports young women at the start of their careers, WEL is designed for female chefs/owners interested in growing and expanding their businesses. 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 JBF Women in Entrepreneur Leadership program officially kicks off with a special event at Tiburon Tavern (Tiburon, CA) on Thursday, January 26, called "[Women in the Kitchen](#)." The event will celebrate JBF's work in advancing women in the culinary industry. The walk-around tasting will feature food from JBF Award-winning women chefs and restaurateurs from across the country, including **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). Tickets to the event are available at jamesbeard.org/events/women-in-the-kitchen.

"Our Foundation is pleased to offer this new program to women in the industry, developed with Babson College, America's leading entrepreneurial school," said Susan Ungaro, President of the James Beard Foundation. "Although women have made inroads in culinary education, professional kitchens and restaurants, the ratio of women to men across the spectrum from line cooks to chefs/owners remains low*. We want to get the word out to qualified candidates everywhere that the application process for both these initiatives will open next month."

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.

*According to the 2015 U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, some 59% of all foodservice employees are women, but only 19.5% of chefs or head cooks are female.

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](https://twitter.com/lodgeattib) or Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LodgeatTiburon>.