



**MAINE RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION PRESENTS \$10,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS
TO SEVEN MAINE STUDENTS PURSUING CULINARY ARTS EDUCATION**

Augusta, ME – Dick Grotton, President and CEO of the Maine Restaurant Association (MeRA), announced today that scholarships have been awarded to seven aspiring culinarians. The scholarships were presented to Maine students by the MeRA Education Foundation at its Fourth Annual Scholarship Luncheon held on June 16th.

Since 1985, MeRA has awarded tens of thousands of dollars in financial aid to several dozen culinary students from across the Pine Tree State. This year, \$10,000 was awarded through the MeRA Education Foundation with the generous contributions of several Maine businesses.

“We’re proud to continue our tradition of publicly recognizing and supporting the educational pursuits of culinary students from our state,” noted Grotton. “These young people represent the future of the restaurant industry in Maine.”

MeRA Education Foundation President, Mike Carney added that “this year’s scholarship recipients represent a diversity of experience both in the classroom and in the workplace. They’ve all got great potential, a strong work ethic, and developing talent. Each one of them is sure to go far, and it’s nice that we can support their efforts.”

Among the seven scholarships presented on June 16th was an award from the MeRA Education Foundation’s Russ Casey Scholarship Fund which was named for a former sales manager of the Jordan Foods Corporation who lost his life to a brain tumor in the mid-1980s. The 2009 Russ Casey scholarship was awarded to Jordan McLaughlin of Medway, Maine who is seeking his degree in culinary arts at Southern Maine Community College.

US Foodservice sponsored a scholarship through the MeRA Education Foundation which was awarded to Kristi Boyle of Holden, Maine who will be entering her second year of culinary arts studies at Eastern Maine Community College in the fall. This is Boyle’s second scholarship through the MeRA Education Foundation.

Three scholarships were presented and sponsored by Maine Beverage Company including an award to Courtney McLaughlin of Houlton, Maine who will begin her culinary training at Washington County Community College in the fall. Jennifer Betit of Hallowell, Maine will complete her final semester at Southern Maine Community College with the assistance of Maine Beverage Company’s financial award. The scholarship marks Betit’s second award through the Foundation. And, fourth-time scholarship recipient Chad Westleigh of Poland, Maine will enter his senior year at Johnson & Wales University in Rhode Island studying culinary arts and foodservice entrepreneurship with the assistance of Maine Beverage Company’s award.

Additionally, two MeRA-member restaurants sponsored scholarships. DiMillo’s Floating Restaurant awarded Ashely Chase of North Berwick, Maine a scholarship to assist with her studies at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York and a final scholarship sponsored by the owners of Pat’s Pizza-Yarmouth and Grill 233 was granted to Courtenay Kinney of Kennebunkport, Maine who will enter her second year at the New England Culinary Institute in Montpelier, Vermont in the fall.

The event's keynote address was delivered by Christian Gordon, Executive Chef of the Sea Dog restaurant in South Portland, Maine. Gordon, who was recently named 2009 Chef of the Year by MeRA, shared with the scholarship winners his advice and wisdom gained from years of experience in the Maine restaurant industry.

The MeRA Annual Scholarship Luncheon, held at the Downtown Freeport Hilton Garden Inn, was sponsored by the New England Coffee Company and PFG-NorthCenter.

"Our scholarship recipients this year brought impressive accomplishments and dreams to the table," said Carney. "This year, we awarded students who demonstrated their commitment to have successful careers in the field. From a working mother to a 'first-in-the-family' student seeking higher education, we salute each Maine student's dedication and determination to make their own dreams a reality in the culinary profession."

For further information about the Maine Restaurant Association and the Maine Restaurant Association Education foundation, visit www.mainerestaurant.com.

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