



The Culinary School  
at the Food Bank of Delaware

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Kim Turner  
(302) 444-8074  
[kkostes@fbd.org](mailto:kkostes@fbd.org)

## **Food Bank of Delaware celebrates 12 graduates from The Culinary School**

**Newark, Del.** (March 5, 2013) – Fourteen weeks ago 12 students from a range of backgrounds started their training program at The Culinary School at the Food Bank of Delaware. Today their accomplishments were celebrated at a graduation ceremony held this morning at the food bank's Newark warehouse.

Delaware Health and Social Services Cabinet Secretary Rita Landgraf provided keynote remarks. "Congratulations to the Food Bank of Delaware for developing what has become a community-based food service jobs program," she said. "You are filling a need in our community for more food service employees, and also empowering the people who come through your program to be prepared for full-time jobs."

Under the instruction of Food Bank of Delaware Chef Instructor Mark Saunders, students have spent the past 14 weeks developing their passion for the culinary arts. From proper knife handling techniques to sautéing and food safety skills, the students are prepared for entry-level jobs in the culinary arts. The highlight of their training was preparing and serving gourmet sirloin sliders to attendees at the governor's inaugural ball. Eight of the 12 students have already found employment.

"This is the only class I allowed to walk into the kitchen and touch a knife in the first week," said Saunders. "I didn't have to stand over them; they learned from their mistakes. These students have work ethic. For those that haven't landed jobs, they are right around the corner. This class has the passion."

"During my time in The Culinary School program, I have gained focus of my goals and the determination to achieve them," said graduate Dominique Clark. "This program has given me the tools to successfully start a career in the culinary field."

For graduate Ronald Seeney, the past 18 years of his life has been spent behind bars. Since enrolling in the training program he has learned from his mistakes and has developed his leadership skills.

Following the graduation ceremony, students showed off their newly-developed skills and prepared a "Tour of Italy"-themed lunch. The menu included white bean bruschetta, Italian wedding soup, seafood cannelloni, chicken piccata, orzo pilaf, garlic mashed potatoes and more.

The mission of The Culinary School is two-fold. First students are taught skills that are highly desirable to employers in the food industry and second, these newly-developed skills have the potential to lead to jobs in the industry that provide job security and economic sustainability. Students are referred to the program through the Criminal Justice Council, Delaware Department of Labor, Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and other community-based organizations.

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*The Food Bank of Delaware distributes millions of pounds of products each year its network of 508 hunger-relief program partners throughout the state and also provides thousands of meals a month for children through the After-School Feeding Program, the Summer Food Service Program and the Backpack Program. The Food Bank's hunger-relief programs directly provide for 241,600 Delawareans at risk of going without meals each year. For more information about the Food Bank of Delaware, visit [www.fbd.org](http://www.fbd.org) or call (302) 292-1305.*