



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Culinary School graduates encouraged to continue their hard work**

**Milford, Del.** (Sept. 1, 2015) – Seven members of The Culinary School at the Food Bank of Delaware celebrated their achievements today during a graduation ceremony for the sixth class at the Food Bank's new Milford facility.

The graduates are: Hassan Amenu-El, Benjamin Beyer, Timothy E. Daniels, Vincent L. Davis, Katie Pettee-Fongeallaz, Marquis Johnson and John Shatesky.

Chad Robinson, Milford branch director, praised the graduates and the program.

"It's the crown jewel of what we do here, the epitome of what we do. A second chance is something everybody deserves, and we are proud of you," he said.

Patricia Beebe, the Food Bank's President and CEO, told the graduates, their families, friends and guests that the Food Bank of Delaware is the only food bank in the nation to have two culinary schools, and also holds the distinction of being the first food bank in the country to have the program on site.

"Our graduates show us this is the right thing to do," she said.

Lisa DiFebo, chef/owner of DiFebo's restaurants in Bethany Beach and Rehoboth, offered the keynote address. She employs two graduates of the Food Bank's culinary schools.

"It's about feeding people, making people feel good," she said describing the tough culinary trade. "My job is to push you. The journey is a hard journey, and you either sink or you swim. I'm here to be truthful, to teach you to be leaders, and when you're done in my kitchen, you will be great. All of you have potential to be leaders. I never want you to forget what it's like to be sitting here. It's a tough industry, but don't leave before the magic," she told the graduates.

These students spent the past 14 weeks developing their skills and passion for the culinary arts. From proper knife handling techniques to ServSafe certification and completing a two-week internship, the students prepared for entry-level jobs in the food industry.

Chef Hunter was pleased with this class.

"This is a special group," he said. "I tell them it's not a job, and in this business you've got to want it."

Each of the students took the microphone to thank Chef Hunter and the Food Bank of Delaware after receiving a certificate of completion.

In addition to learning hands-on skills in the food bank's industrial-sized kitchen, the students took field trips, prepared and served for special events, including the graduation luncheon, and more.

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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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**About the Food Bank of Delaware:**

The Food Bank of Delaware distributes millions of pounds of products each year to its network of 620 hunger-relief program partners throughout the state and also provides thousands of meals a month for children through the After-School Nutrition Program, the Summer Food Service Program and the Backpack Program. The Food Bank's hunger-relief programs provide for 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.