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Food Bank culinary grads honored during commencement ceremony

Milford, Del. (May 23, 2017) – Twelve members of The Culinary School at the Food Bank of Delaware celebrated their achievements today during a graduation ceremony for 13th and 14th classes at the Food Bank's Milford facility.

The graduates were: Logan Chandler, Robert Crain, Teaina Hall, Steven Hammell, Devin Hinkle, Anitra Hughes, DaShawn Jones, Betina Julien, Kelly Long, Timothy McLeish, Joyce Stevens, and Eric Townsend.

Steve Adams, proprietor, Outback Steakhouse, Dover, was guest speaker for the event.

"This industry is not easy. It can be tough, but very rewarding," he told the graduates and guests. "You have to have a passion, but this is the one industry where you can go as far as you take yourself."

Patricia Beebe, the Food Bank of Delaware's President and CEO; Tim Hunter, The Culinary School's Executive Chef; Tish Badamshin, Chef Instructor, and Ruthann Messick, Culinary School Program Manager, each offered remarks as well.

The new graduates expressed gratitude for the opportunities they received during the 14-week program in which they developed their skills and passion for the culinary arts.

"This program has been a great experience, one of the best experiences of my life," said Devin Hinkle.

From proper knife handling techniques to Serve Safe certification and completing a two-week internship, the students are prepared for entry-level jobs in the food industry. All but two students have already landed employment.

The students' tuition was funded through scholarships, the Delaware Department of Labor and Delaware WONDER, a federal grant geared to getting people into the workplace and off SNAP benefits. This employment and training program called Delaware WONDER (Work Opportunity Networks to Develop Employment Readiness) is led by Delaware Health and Social Services Division of Social Services (DHSS), which administers the SNAP Program in Delaware. It offers targeted career tracks in construction, culinary arts, and manufacturing and broad-based job placement.

After the ceremony, graduates served guests a lunch buffet that included pork chops, curry chicken, ribs, pasta, salads, and sides, as well as assorted desserts.

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.

To learn more about The Culinary School at the Food Bank of Delaware, visit www.fbd.org/the-culinary-school.

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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 575 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. The Culinary School at the Food Bank of Delaware, the Food Bank's workforce development arm, provides training for adults interested in careers in the food service industry. For more information about the Food Bank of Delaware, visit www.fbd.org or call (302) 292-1305.