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**The Culinary School at the Food Bank of Delaware
celebrates completion of 28th class**

Newark, Del. (March 13, 2012) – A graduation ceremony was held this morning at the Food Bank of Delaware to celebrate the accomplishments of eleven students from The Culinary School at the Food Bank of Delaware.

Under the instruction of Food Bank of Delaware Chef Instructor Mark Saunders, students have spent the past 14 weeks developing their skills in the culinary arts. From proper knife handling techniques to braising and food safety skills, the students are prepared for entry-level jobs in the culinary arts. A significant portion of their training included preparation of several large catering jobs for the food bank's new catering business, Culinary Catering: Catering for a Cause and a two-week internship at local food service companies. In addition to culinary skills, the students also spent time developing skills in conflict resolution, anger management, interviewing, resume writing and more.

Four graduates were among the first to complete the program as part of a new partnership with the Criminal Justice Council. Last November the Food Bank of Delaware was awarded a three-year grant from the Criminal Justice Council, totaling \$205,470 to train 42 students.

Keynote speaker Judge Charles Tolliver encouraged students to try new things and always ask for help, "there is nothing wrong with asking for a hand; as long as you are trying someone will always help you."

"I liked the life skills as it taught me the value of hard work, ethics and how to work as a team member," said graduate Andre Stevenson. "Most of all, I enjoyed the student cooking competition, opening our bistro to the public for lunch and being part of the new culinary catering business. All of this training helped me land a fulltime career at Hersha Hospitality's new Sheraton Hotel on Airport Road in New Castle as a banquet server and a prep cook."

Following the graduation ceremony, students showed off their newly-developed skills and prepared lunch for all. Guests enjoyed stuffed tilapia, curried chicken and jasmine rice, scalloped potatoes, assorted desserts 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 between seven and 10 million pounds of food and grocery products each year its network of 475 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 or call (302) 292-1305.