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Food Bank's Culinary School graduates bask in success; start new careers

Milford, Del. (January 9, 2018) – Nine members of The Culinary School at the Food Bank of Delaware celebrated their achievements today during a graduation ceremony for 16th and 17th classes at the Food Bank's Milford facility.

The graduates were: Matthew Cannon, Christopher Colburn, Susanne Gayle, Michael Green, James Jenkins, Will Keyser, Kenneth Proano, Deborah Reilly and Keith Weims. All of these graduates successfully passed the ServSafe® exam.

Phillip Kizer, a Culinary School alumni and chef at the Barnes Museum in Philadelphia, was guest speaker for the event. His brother, Will Keyser (brothers, but last names have different spellings), was in this graduating class. He urged the new graduates to work hard and deal with the challenges in the culinary field to achieve their goals.

"Stay hungry and you shall succeed. The sky's the limit," he said.

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

"This is a challenging program," said Hunter. "Not everyone completes the program, you should be proud of your accomplishments today. It is now up to you to determine your success. You have the knowledge and tools to succeed in this next step of your careers."

Those attending the ceremony enjoyed a buffet luncheon prepared and served by the students. The menu featured shrimp bisque, chicken cordon bleu, fish and chips, ribs, a tossed salad, vegetables, and a dessert assortment.

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.

"I am really honored for this. I have a passion for cooking. I had one heck of a struggle, but I fought through all that. Pursue your dreams," said Matthew Cannon.

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. Students spent the past 14 weeks developing skills inside and outside the kitchen. They learned proper knife handling as well as industry workplace skills to move into an entry level position in the food service industry.

Some of the students' tuition was funded through 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.

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.

The next class of The Culinary School in Newark begins Monday, January 22. To learn more about the program, 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 536 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.