



Maine Restaurants serve great food....We serve Maine's great restaurants

**Maine Restaurant
Association**

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**MAINE RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION TO PRESENT RECORD NUMBER
OF CULINARY SCHOLARSHIPS AT MAY 8TH LUNCHEON EVENT**

Augusta, ME – Dick Grotton, President and CEO of the Maine Restaurant Association (MeRA), today announced that MeRA will award a record number of eight culinary scholarships this year at its Annual Scholarship Luncheon. The event, to be held **Tuesday, May 8th at 12:00 noon** at the Portland Harbor Hotel (468 Fore Street, Portland), is being sponsored by New England Coffee Company & PFG-NorthCenter. Press is welcome to attend.

“We’re excited that this year, we received more scholarship applicants than any other year. This year’s crop of applicants was most impressive. It was an arduous process for our scholarship committee to determine the final winners.” Grotton noted. “These students represent a diversity of backgrounds and talents and reside in all corners of Maine.”

Four culinary scholarships will be presented to aspiring chefs at the luncheon event courtesy of the MeRA Education Foundation Russ Casey Scholarship Fund. Casey, who served as the highly respected sales manager of the Jordan Foods Corporation, was diagnosed with a brain tumor which rapidly took his life. Following his death, the Jordan Family created an endowment fund for worthy students entering the culinary field to remember and honor their valuable employee and friend.

The four Russ Casey scholarships will be awarded to: Nicole Trussell of South China, who plans to study Culinary Arts & Business at Paul Smith’s College in the town of Paul Smiths, NY; Kelly-Jane Arsenault of Gray, who will study Culinary Arts at the New England Culinary Institute; Alexandar Szczesny of Minot, who will attend either Johnson & Wales University or the Culinary Institute of America; and, Lauren Jellison of Brewer, who plans to complete the Culinary Arts program at Johnson & Wales University.

The remaining four scholarships will be generously donated to students at the May 8th luncheon event by four MeRA member restaurants: Gritty McDuff’s; Governor’s Restaurants; 99 Restaurant & Pub; and, DiMillo’s Floating Restaurant (in the name of the late Antonio DiMillo, founder of the landmark DiMillo’s Floating Restaurant in Portland).

These MeRA member restaurant scholarships will be presented to: Erica Brown of Farmingdale, who will attend either the Culinary Institute of America or Johnson & Wales University to study Culinary Arts; Chad Westleigh of Poland, who is entering his second year of the Culinary Arts program at Johnson & Wales; John Costello of Jackman, who will study Hospitality Management at Husson College; and, Megan Moulton, who will attend Southern Maine Community College, the New England Culinary Institute or the Balsams in Dixville Notch, NH.

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“Our scholarship recipients this year bring impressive achievements to the table,” said Grotton. “We have students who have done everything from achieving High Honor Roll ranking at their school and winning baking contests to earning their ServSafe certification and leading line cook brigades. Given their track record so far, our scholarships are bound to prove a solid investment in these students’ culinary ventures down the road.”

For further information about MeRA, or to schedule an interview with MeRA President and CEO Dick Grotton, please contact Jen Beltz at Ph: 207/899-2750 or jen@frontburnerpr.com

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