

# JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION

## Chipping Away at the “Gastro Ceiling”

Brittany Walker, of Accokeek, Md., has just received a James Beard Foundation “Women in Culinary Leadership” (WCL) Program grant for 2017. The WCL Program is an accelerated, learning-by-doing mentorship initiative. Since launching in 2012, WCL has provided mentorship opportunities for over 42 women in the culinary industry, paired with top industry leaders from across the country. One of fifteen 2017 awardees, Walker will complete a chef program overseen by James Beard Award Winner Jose Andrés of Think Food Group in Washington D.C. The other grantees will work



Susan Ungaro, JBF president  
(photo: Ken Goodman)

with mentors at top restaurants from New York to Atlanta to Chicago, Minneapolis, New Orleans, and more.

The program, spearheaded by Rohini Dey, JBF trustee, and Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation, aims to build in-depth skills in the kitchen, restaurant management, and hospitality fields. “By creating this program five years ago to break through the barriers of the ‘gastro ceiling,’ the goal has been to build women’s operational skills, financial literacy, confidence, and networks in the field,” said Trustee Dey. JBF President Ungaro noted, “It has been very rewarding to watch the growth of our Women in Culinary Leadership Program, but our industry still has a long way to go to help women thrive in leadership roles. It is more important than ever to bring attention to the need for even more opportunities.”

JBL has also launched the Women’s Entrepreneurial Leadership (WEL) Program to increase opportunities for women and in the food and hospitality industries. The inaugural class of 21 women for this week-long class, taking place September 10-15 at Babson College, includes three local chefs: Suzanne Simon (Chaia - Farm to Taco), Amy Brandwein (Centrolina), and Shannan Troncoso (Brookland’s Finest Bar & Kitchen). For more information, go to: [www.jamesbeard.org/women-leadership-programs](http://www.jamesbeard.org/women-leadership-programs).

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## Call for Proposals

The American Culinary Federation (ACF), the leading membership organization for chefs and culinary professionals in North America, will host three professional development events in 2018:

- ChefConnect: Charlotte, February 25-27, 2018, Charlotte, North Carolina;
- ChefConnect: Newport Beach, March 18-20, 2018, Newport Beach, California; and
- Cook. Craft. Create. ACF National Convention & Show, July 15-19, 2018, New Orleans, Louisiana.

The ACF is currently seeking culinary influencers and industry leaders to present educational sessions, demonstrations, and hands-on workshops at all three events. Topics can range from innovative trends and techniques to skills development, baking and pastry, health and wellness, culinary management, educator development, and more. The deadline for proposals is September 30, 2017. For more information, visit [www.acfchefs.org/presenter](http://www.acfchefs.org/presenter).

## THE INDUSTRY GIVES BACK...



## Leesburg’s Wine Kitchen Gives Hope

The Wine Kitchen, known for its farm-to-table fresh menus and abundant and exclusive wine listings, held a special evening in August to benefit local Mobile Hope. Mobile Hope is a non-profit organization that supports Loudoun County children and young adults (24 years of age and younger) who

are precariously housed, homeless, or at risk, and provides essentials like clothing, emergency food, housing referrals, and life counseling and emotional support services. After the benefit, the Wine Kitchen gave Mobile Hope a check for \$2,000.



Co-owners Jason Miller and Michael Mercer offered special tastes from the kitchen as featured wine specials for the event. “Michael and I were excited to open our restaurant to the community and give back to such a worthy cause,” said co-owner Jason Miller. “While Loudoun County has been recognized as the richest county once again, it is important that we all recognize the need of those less fortunate and give back.” In addition to the benefit, the Wine Kitchen also donates a portion of all weekday lunch proceeds — through its Lunch for Health initiative — to the Loudoun Free Clinic to support health care services for Loudoun County residents who would otherwise do without. Now, that’s a fine wine!



Photo: Cuba Libre

## A Rum Competition to Help our Own

Cuba Libre Restaurant & Rum Bar and The Cocktail Nation will host a fundraising cocktail competition to benefit CORE — Children of Restaurant Employees — on Tuesday,

FSM NEWS cont. pg 3

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