

five J1 visa programs: Summer Work Travel, Intern, Trainee, Camp Counselor, and Au Pair. There are 4,000 seasonal employees in OC which fall under the J1 Summer Work Travel portion of the visa. This allows foreign students to spend up to four months living and working temporary jobs in the U.S.

Of course, the political dynamics surrounding the issue are challenging, but it is clear that the Administration intends to make substantial reforms to the program. The American Hotel & Lodging Association has been working with Americans for Cultural Exchange to lobby both the Administration and the Congress to limit the impact of the rumored changes to the J1 program.

Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen and Delegate Andy Harris have all signed on with other politicians to urge the Administration to keep the J1 program in place.

We urge you to visit Americans for Cultural Exchange website (<https://www.americansforculturalexchange.org/>) and utilize its action alert area to share your story on the importance of J1 visas for your business. Senator Cardin says it is best to put a “face to the story” by describing the impact the J1 exchange programs have had “on your life, business, and family.” As an example, Dough Roller Restaurants and Breakers Hotel owner Bill Gibbs wrote about the cultural night he created for his J1 students. “Our (J1) employees celebrate the Fourth of July with us by dressing up and watching the fireworks at night; some have gone to Ravens football games with my family.” Members are also encouraged to call or write the White House and their representatives about this issue.

SUSAN JONES is the executive director of the Ocean City Hotel Motel Restaurant Association.



Michael Birchenall Scholarship Fund

Michael Birchenall was a man of strong conviction and passion. Among his many attributes, Michael is fondly remembered as a man who offered tremendous support, help and encouragement to young people looking to make careers in the foodservice industry. He was always the champion of the bus boy, cook or hostess who was behind the scenes making things run smoothly.

That is why the state restaurant associations in the region are coming together to create the Michael Birchenall Scholarship Fund in his honor. This Fund will help young people who plan to further their hospitality and foodservice education at a post-secondary or culinary school.

Give back to the man who gave so much to our industry. Make a contribution to the Michael Birchenall Scholarship Fund today!

CONTRIBUTION LEVELS

Diamond Level - \$2,500 | Gold Level - \$1,000 | Silver Level - \$500 | Other amounts welcome

CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE AND SENT TO:

Michael Birchenall Scholarship Fund | 6301 Hillside Court | Columbia, MD 21046

Questions can be directed to the Restaurant Association of Maryland (410) 290-6800 or email scholarships@marylandrestaurants.com



Give Us a Taste



Back for an Encore

Rick Ferrante has been involved in the foodservice industry for over 35 years, most recently as national accounts manager with Clemens Food Group, and previously as president of Nick's Sausage Company. The Ferrante family has had the pleasure of developing many great business relationships over the years that have resulted in longstanding friendships, and are extremely proud and eternally grateful to everyone who has played a role in the family's success.

Life changes, opportunities may come and they may pass, but one thing that has never wavered is the passion Rick has for the sausage industry. It is his roots, it is where he started, and it is his opportunity to continue what he has crafted over three decades. As a result, the Ferrantes are extremely proud to present their family-owned Encore Sausage Company. Rick is back for an encore, back to build upon what his family began many years ago.

Rick and his family are excited for the new opportunity at hand and look forward to once again sharing the high aspirations held for this company. Over the years, the Ferrante family has predicated its business upon producing only the finest quality product, supported with the utmost customer service. The Ferrantes look forward to once again earning an opportunity to let the product do all of the talking.

**For inquiries or samples, contact
Encore Sausage Company
at 301-322-2242 or
rick@encoresausage.com**

