

For Immediate Release

Restaurant Association of Maryland to Team with Local Culinary Competition

RAM and Mason Dixon Master Chef Announce Partnership

Baltimore, MD, February 20, 2015 – The Restaurant Association of Maryland (RAM) and local culinary competition organizer Mason Dixon Master Chef have announced their plans to partner for the mutual goal of showcasing the restaurants and talented chefs of Maryland.

RAM is a 2,000 member statewide trade association operated for the purpose of promoting, protecting and improving the foodservice industry in Maryland. RAM also has an Education Foundation that provides professional training and runs Maryland ProStart, a high school to career program that teaches culinary and management skills.

Mason Dixon Master Chef is the organizer of the only live, local interactive culinary competition of its kind. This summer's Mason Dixon Master Chef Tournament will be the fifth annual competition to pit chef teams from local restaurants against one another in a single-elimination bracket style tournament. The Tournament is designed to showcase local culinary talent, as well as give back to the community, with 10% of the net proceeds of each ticket sold going to Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland (<http://www.mealsonwheelsmd.org>).

"We are very excited to be working with the Restaurant Association of Maryland and their Education Foundation. Our organizations are working toward common goals, and it just makes sense to work together and support each others' efforts", says Mason Dixon Master Chef, CEO Erik Folkart.

"Maryland and the surrounding region have a unique and growing culinary scene", says Alex Cooper, RAM's director of membership & marketing. "What better way to recognize the talents of our greatest chefs than to pit them against each other in front of a live audience? We love how this event gets the talent out of the back of the house and into the spotlight."

The initial field of 16 local chef teams will begin competition on June 15th and will continue throughout the summer on Mondays and Tuesdays until two teams earn their spot in the Sunday, August 16th Final Championship Match. The winner of that match will earn the title of 2015 Mason Dixon Master Chef Champion as well as thousands in cash and prizes. Tickets for all matches are available for purchase now at www.MDMasterChef.com.

Mason Dixon Master Chef will also be participating in the Maryland ProStart Student Invitational (MPSI) events scheduled for February 25 and 26 at the Sheraton Columbia Town Center Hotel. MPSI brings together the state's top high school ProStart students for culinary, management, and cake decorating competitions. People interested in attending the competition and awards reception should visit the RAM web site (<http://www.marylandrestaurants.com/>) for more information and to purchase tickets.

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About The Mason Dixon Master Chef Tournament

This multi-week event is a single-elimination tournament designed to showcase some of the area's finest executive chefs and restaurants. Guests attending this exciting event will be more than just spectators, as they enjoy the unique experience of witnessing two spectacular area chef teams battle it out in the prep kitchen right on the main floor. Each evening two chef teams go head-to-head to prepare an appetizer, entrée and dessert for each of three expert judges, as well as amuse bouche portions of their entrees for a limited number of audience member judges. Their creations are scored on creativity, presentation and taste, and only one chef advances to the next round. At the end of this tournament only one of the 16 competing chefs will emerge as THE Mason Dixon Master Chef! *10% of the net proceeds of each ticket sold directly to Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland. More information available at www.MasonDixonMasterChef.com, on Twitter @MDMasterChef, and Facebook at Mason Dixon Master Chef.*

About the Restaurant Association of Maryland

The Restaurant Association of Maryland (RAM) is a 2,000 member statewide trade association operated for the purpose of helping Maryland restaurants succeed. RAM leads and supports the foodservice industry in Maryland by showcasing member restaurants, offering programs that reduce operating costs and advocating for the interests of foodservice businesses. *More information available at marylandrestaurants.com*

About RAMEF and ProStart

The Restaurant Association of Maryland Education Foundation (RAMEF) serves as the preferred source of education, training, resources and research for the Maryland hospitality industry. As the educational arm of the Restaurant Association of Maryland, RAMEF's mission is improving the hospitality industry through education. The Foundation focuses on providing training and certifications in food safety, responsible alcohol service, management and HACCP writing. The Foundation also manages Maryland ProStart®, a culinary arts and hospitality management program for high school students.

ProStart is a nationwide, two-year program for high school students, developing the best and brightest talent into tomorrow's industry leaders. From culinary techniques to management skills, ProStart's industry-driven curriculum provides real-world educational opportunities and builds practical skills and a foundation that will last a lifetime. *More information available at marylandrestaurants.com*

About Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland

Meals on Wheels' mission is to enhance quality of life through the provision of nutritious meals, personal contact and related services to homebound individuals. Last year, over 740,000 home-delivered meals were prepared and delivered to more than 2,900 homebound clients through the coordinated efforts of Meals on Wheels staff and some 2,000 volunteers. Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland currently serves the following areas: Baltimore City, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard, Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

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