



*A culinary leadership program from
The Culinary Institute of America and Hormel Foods*

For Immediate Release

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Top Chefs Across America Selected for New Culinary Program from The Culinary Institute of America and Hormel Foods *Innovation-Focused Program Begins in October*

AUSTIN, Minn. – (Sept. 18, 2008) – Dennis Goettsch, vice president of marketing for the foodservice division of Hormel Foods Corporation (NYSE: HRL), and Dr. Victor Gielisse, associate vice president of The Culinary Institute of America (CIA), are pleased to announce the 16 chefs selected for the inaugural class of the Culinary Enrichment and Innovation Program (CEIP), a new innovation-focused program created to build future culinary leaders.

CEIP is the result of a landmark partnership between Hormel Foods and the CIA, the world’s premier culinary college. The 18-month program consists of four rigorous three-day sessions, held at the CIA’s Hyde Park campus in New York. Participants will gain expert culinary perspectives on creativity, innovation, leadership and management in the culinary arts. This program is the first of its kind in the industry, addressing the specific needs of high potential chefs at the experience level of five or more years.

The CEIP chefs represent 11 different states and all areas of commercial and non-commercial foodservice – from multi-unit restaurants to universities, from the Pentagon to hotels, and from care facilities to a casino. Many of the chefs are responsible for menu development, scheduling, staff management, back-of-the-house operations, training, purchasing and vendor relations. All share a passion and commitment to their profession.

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31-year-old **Denise Baron**, the Culinary Director of Burtons Gill in North Reading, Mass., took a year to travel through Mexico and Central America, learning conversational Spanish to better communicate with her employees. In the process, she volunteered on a farm in Ecuador, learned to make the local drink, “cheecha,” and, when eating in an Argentine Steakhouse in Bolivia, found herself in the kitchen, “throwing down” at the sauté station because the cook had cut his finger.

At 27, **Travis Brust** has already been in the field for 15 years. He is now the Executive Sous Chef at the historic Williamsburg Inn in Williamsburg, Va. His professional maturity is respected by those who work alongside him and his passion, he explains, comes from “the growth and successes of those apprenticing and learning under my direction.” Brust’s classic tale of chef expertise under pressure concerns a tented event for 425 guests. When a rainstorm developed, Brust and his fellow chefs were plating up while standing in five inches of water, and running food with umbrellas. The meal – and chefs – received a standing ovation.

James Lynch, Executive Chef at ACTS Retirement-Life Communities/Granite Farms Estates in Media, Pa., oversees the production of 1,200 meals a day for residents aged 65 and older. He cites a resident with special needs as his biggest fan – “my creativity makes her day.” Lynch, who is 32, was selected last year from among 5,000 employees in five states as an ACTS Retirement-Life Communities President’s Award winner.

Michael Edwards started as a dishwasher at age 16. Now 36, he is a Culinary Specialist First Class for the U.S. Navy at the Pentagon. He lists his biggest challenge to date as cooking and living aboard an aircraft carrier. After working 16-hour days, he would deep clean the kitchen from floor to ceiling, and once a week clean at least 24 ovens. Edwards believes that chefs from around the world should take a stand against hunger, increasing awareness and addressing needs.

Greg Masset began his foodservice career at the young age of 14 in Yakima, Wash., owing to the fact that his family’s home – a 1910 farmhouse – was also a restaurant. (The family lived upstairs, and the restaurant was the dining room on the main floor.) Now 34, Masset is the Executive Chef at the Yakima Country Club. His specialty is Cassoulet.

Joel Hetrick is the 25-year-old Sous Chef at the Classic Residence by Hyatt in Glenview, Ill. Hetrick hails from a military family; both grandfathers were cooks during WWII. He also is the lead singer in a Southern rock band called The Steel Chops. “Music and food just seem to go together for me.”

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The 16 participants will gather for the first session of the Culinary Enrichment and Innovation Program (CEIP) on Tuesday, Oct. 28. The focus for this first session will be flavors and the senses, flavor synergies and technology. As part of this course, the chefs will tour local farms with the CIA's Paul Wigsten, who will discuss the business principles of successful local sourcing. The chefs also will spend time in the kitchen, using authentic ingredients, equipment and cooking methods to prepare dishes from regions all over the globe.

"We are already impressed by the culinary and business achievements of these talented chefs," Goettsch said. "The goal of CEIP is to deliver a learning experience that will move these chefs to the next level in their careers by strengthening their leadership abilities and urging them to embrace innovation in the culinary arts." For more information on the program, the students and the sessions, visit www.ceipinfo.com.

CEIP Inaugural Class, 2008-2010

Jonna Anne	Campus Auxiliary Services, SUNY Geneseo; Geneseo, N.Y.
Denise Baron	Burtons Grill; North Reading, Mass.
Amy Bishopric-Miller	Blue Trout Grill; Keene, N.H.
Travis Brust	Williamsburg Inn; Williamsburg, Va.
Eric Cartwright	Campus Dining Services, University of Missouri; Columbia, Mo.
Thomas Dickhans	Hormel Foods Corporation; Austin, Minn.
Michael Edwards	U.S. Navy, the Pentagon; Arlington, Va.
William Geller	Classic Residence by Hyatt; Lantana, Fla.
Daniel Hernandez	Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; Fort Worth, Texas
Joel Hetrick	Classic Residence by Hyatt; Glenview, Ill.
James Lynch	ACTS Retirement-Life Communities/Granite Farms Estates; Media, Pa.
Jose Carlos Magalhaes	UFood Grill Restaurants; Newton, Mass.
Greg Masset	Yakima Country Club; Yakima, Wash.
Tim Recher	Hilton Alexandria Mark Center; Alexandria, Va.
Erik Rickard	Harrah's Casino; Maryland Heights, Mo.
Christian Watson	Morrison Healthcare; Chicago, Ill.

About Hormel Foods

Hormel Foods Corporation, based in Austin, Minn., is a multinational manufacturer and marketer of consumer-branded food and meat products, many of which are among the best known and trusted in the food industry. The company leverages its extensive expertise, innovation and high competencies in pork and turkey processing and marketing to bring quality, value-added brands to the global marketplace. For each of the past nine years, Hormel Foods has been named one of "The Best Big Companies in America" by Forbes magazine. The company enjoys a strong reputation among consumers, retail grocers and foodservice customers for products highly regarded for quality, taste, nutrition, convenience and value. For more information, visit www.hormelfoods.com.

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About The Culinary Institute of America

Founded in 1946, The Culinary Institute of America is an independent, not-for-profit college offering bachelor's and associate degrees, as well as certificate programs, in either culinary arts or baking and pastry arts. The college has campuses in New York, California, and Texas. In addition to its degree programs, the CIA also offers courses for professionals and food enthusiasts, as well as wine education. For more information, and a complete listing of program offerings at each site, visit the CIA online at www.ciachef.edu.

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