



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS STIR UP EXCITEMENT AT MICHIGAN PROSTART® COMPETITION 52 Teams to Compete March 23 & 24 in Lansing

LANSING, MI – Fifty-two teams representing 18 career and technical centers from across Michigan will meet in Lansing on March 23 and March 24 for the annual Michigan ProStart® Competition. Hosted by the Michigan Restaurant Association Educational Support Foundation (MRA ESF), the student competition will take place at the Crowne Plaza West Lansing from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on March 23 and from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on March 24. The general public is welcome at this event.

“ProStart students are learning to form a career path from their passion for the culinary arts. This competition represents the culmination of countless hours of preparation throughout the school year,” said Brian DeBano, Michigan Restaurant Association President and CEO. “The competition is an outstanding opportunity for high school hospitality students to demonstrate the skills they’ve learned through the ProStart program.”

On Sunday, March 23, students will compete in the ServSafe “Jeopardy!” style knowledge bowl sponsored by the Van Eerden Foodservice Company. This question-and-answer event tests the participants’ knowledge of critically important issues of food safety and sanitation. The culinary competition will also take place on Sunday and is sponsored by Sysco of Michigan. This portion of the competition challenges students to execute perfect knife cuts, develop a three-course meal in one hour (using only two butane burners), and cost-out the meal for menu pricing – all while being evaluated by industry professionals on their sanitation, teamwork, organization, and taste.

On Monday, teams will complete in the management/entrepreneurship portion of the competition, sponsored by Gordon Food Service. Students demonstrate their knowledge of the industry by developing a restaurant proposal, delivering a verbal presentation, and applying critical thinking skills to challenges that restaurant managers face in day-to-day operations. Also on Monday is the nutrition/marketing competition component, sponsored by PepsiCo. Designed to encourage the creation of healthy menu items for restaurants, students will create a menu that meets the National Restaurant Association’s Kids’ Live Well menu criteria.

Industry professionals as well as leading college and university instructors observe and rate all portions of the competition. Additional ProStart Competition sponsors include: Ashby’s Sterling Ice Cream, Coca-Cola, DTE, and Valley City Linen.

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The winning teams in the culinary and management/entrepreneurship portions are sent to Minneapolis, Minnesota, from May 3-5, 2014, to compete against other teams from across the country at the 13th Annual National ProStart Invitational. The national competition is hosted by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation. In addition, more than \$500,000 in scholarships to help the students pursue careers in the foodservice industry will be shared by the Michigan winners.

Schools participating in the Michigan Competition:

Boyne City Public Schools
Branch Area Careers Center
Calhoun Area Career Center
Capital Area Career Center
Careerline Tech Center
Clare-Gladwin RESD
Downriver Career Technical Consortium (DCTC) @ Riverview
Gaylord High School
Genesee Area Skills Center
Iosco RESA
Laneswee Intermediate School District (LISD) TECH Center
Oakland Technical Southeast
Plymouth-Canton Educational Park
Roseville High School
Saginaw Career Complex
South West Washtenaw Consortium (SWWC) @ Saline
Van Buren Technology Center
West Shore ESD

ProStart is a nationwide, two-year high school program that unites the classroom and industry to develop the best and brightest talent into tomorrow's restaurant and foodservice leaders. In Michigan, 68 high schools and career centers use the ProStart curriculum with nearly 5,000 students participating. For more information about ProStart, contact Amanda Smith at 800.968.9668, visit michiganrestaurant.org/prostart, or find us on Twitter and Facebook.

The Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) is the recognized leader of Michigan's hospitality industry, providing essential services to the foodservice community. Founded in 1921, the MRA represents nearly 4,500 Michigan foodservice establishments. The industry plays an integral role in Michigan's economy, employing almost 400,000 people and creating more than \$13.4 billion in annual sales.

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