



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Adriane De Ceuninck
MICHIGAN RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION
(517) 482-5244

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS STIR UP EXCITEMENT AT MICHIGAN PROSTART® COMPETITION 53 Teams to Compete March 22 & 23 in Lansing

LANSING, MI – Fifty-three teams representing 20 career and technical centers from across Michigan will meet in Lansing on March 22 and March 23 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 Lansing West from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on March 22 and from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on March 23. The general public is welcome at this event.

“The Competition is an outstanding opportunity for high school hospitality students to demonstrate the skills they’ve learned through the ProStart program,” said Brian DeBano, Michigan Restaurant Association President and CEO. “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.”

According to the National Restaurant Association, restaurant industry job growth continues to outpace the gains in total U.S. employment – 2014 was the third consecutive year that job growth topped 3 percent. In Michigan, restaurants are projected to employ 455,000 people by 2025, which equates to 9.5 percent job growth or 39,500 jobs over 2015. Yet restaurant owners report recruiting and retaining employees as a challenge to their business. The ProStart Program is one answer to that challenge as it gives students interested in foodservice careers a head start by teaching culinary techniques and management skills through an industry-driven curriculum. Upon successful completion of the ProStart Program, students receive an industry-recognized certificate – and employers get well-prepared, enthusiastic employees.

Competition Details

On Sunday, March 22, 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, March 23, 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 competition component. Designed to encourage the creation of healthy menu items for restaurants,

students will create a menu and prepare a three-course meal that meets the National Restaurant Association's Kids' Live Well and USDA 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, Diversified Restaurant Holdings, Domino's, DTE, Ecolab, Michael's & Associates, and Valley City Linen.

The winning teams in the culinary and management/entrepreneurship portions are sent to Anaheim, California, from April 18-20, 2015, to compete against other teams from across the country at the 14th 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:

Boyer City Public Schools
Branch Area Careers Center
Calhoun Area Career Center
Capital Area Career Center
Careerline Tech Center
Clare-Gladwin RESD
Gaylord High School
Gratiot Isabella Technical Education Center
Iosco RESA
Lenawee Intermediate School District (LISD) TECH Center
Oakland Schools Technical Campus Northwest
Oakland Schools Technical Campus Southeast
Plymouth-Canton Educational Park
Roseville High School
Saginaw Career Complex
South West Washtenaw Consortium (SWWC) @ Saline
Tuscola Technology Center
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.

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 more than 415,000 people and creating nearly \$14 billion in annual sales.

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