



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Tracy Kosbau
Wisconsin Restaurant Association
800-589-3211

Local Chef Honored with Salute to Excellence Award

Abbey J. Steffen, Executive Chef at Republic Chophouse in Green Bay, is honored as the Mentor of the Year as part of the 2010 Salute to Excellence Awards, presented by the Wisconsin Restaurant Association Education Foundation (WRA EF).

Chef Steffen has been instrumental in working with juniors and seniors as part of the Pulaski High School culinary arts program, helping to strengthen the ProStart[®] program in Wisconsin. ProStart[®] is a college prep, two-year curriculum designed to teach high school students the skills needed for a career in the restaurant and foodservice industry. As part of the program, Chef Steffen helped coach Pulaski's student culinary team in preparing for Wisconsin's ProStart[®] Invitational culinary competitions held during the Wisconsin Restaurant Expo. In 2010, Chef Steffen's leadership helped the Pulaski student team become state champions at the Wisconsin ProStart[®] Invitational Culinary Competition.

"Chef Steffen has demonstrated amazing dedication to the foodservice industry," says Susan Quam, Executive Director of the WRA Education Foundation. "Her support of the ProStart[®] program and her mentorship of high school students, in particular, really makes a difference."

Chef Steffen's commitment to students and the foodservice industry makes her a well-deserved recipient of this award. The Wisconsin Restaurant Association and Education Foundation honors Chef Abbey J. Steffen as Mentor of the Year for her compassion for young people and her spirit of giving.

Each year, the WRA EF recognizes five individuals and one company for dedication and commitment to education in the restaurant industry as Salute to Excellence honorees. Other 2010 Salute to Excellence honorees include: Joe Muench (Maxie's Southern Comfort and Blue's Egg, Milwaukee), Bill Griesemer (Waukesha County Technical College, Pewaukee),

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Gerry Fritsch (Sun Prairie High School), Steve Davis (Ardy & Ed's Drive In, Oshkosh) and LoDuca Bros., Inc. (New Berlin). Each honoree creates opportunities for people interested in foodservice industry careers. They have worked in a variety of roles, in different parts of the state, but they share an enthusiasm and optimism for the future of the restaurant industry.

The Salute to Excellence awards are presented at the 2010 Celebration of Excellence on Sunday, October 10 at the Sheraton Hotel in Madison. More information on the event is available at www.wirerestaurant.org.

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The WRA Education Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that has been in existence since 1987 and is one of the nation's largest state restaurant association foundations. The WRA EF vision is to advance professionalism through education, scholarships and community involvement to ensure the future success of the foodservice industry.

The ProStart[®] program, administered by National Restaurant Association Solutions, LLC and state restaurant associations, is a college prep, two-year curriculum designed to teach high school students the skills needed for a career in the restaurant and foodservice industry. Students also have the opportunity to participate in paid internships where industry managers mentor them.