meet our members

By Dame Dottie Koteski (Philadelphia)

ATLANTA



Jessica Ray has recently transitioned into recruiting with Goodwin Recruiting. She partners with companies to build thoughtful, people-centered teams. Drawing on her culinary background and hospitality experience, Jessica approaches recruiting with a focus on relationships, care, and finding the right fit for each organization.

AUSTIN



Kelli Cordovez is the new Consulting Wine Director for the prestigious Austin Sports Club, part of Lobos Hospitality. The Club is introducing a new concept to Austin where sports, style, and culture converge. Kelli has created an original wine list and is eager to welcome customers to this exciting space.

BIRMINGHAM



Christiana Roussel, food traveler and writer, launched a podcast titled *Red Fox on the Run*. Her first guest, **Tena Payne** of Earthborn Pottery, shared stories about the company's beginnings, the use of her pottery during an Iron Chef competition, and the legacy of having her pottery remain permanently at the James Beard Foundation House.



Jan Walsh launched CleanCooking.com for home cooks. After living an organic lifestyle and writing about it for 20 years, Jan created a website featuring a monthly newsletter, *Clean Eats*, which highlights recipes from chefs and home cooks. The Awards page on the website honors ingredients, foods, and cooking products.

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BRITISH COLUMBIA



Jennifer Massolo, a former South Florida member, returned to British Columbia and rejoined the British Columbia Chapter. With a longstanding career in the beverage industry, Jennifer has partnered with Kimberly van der Slagt to open The Lucky Beaver, Vancouver's newest vintage store.



Leeann Froese, from Town Hall Brands in Vancouver, was named a 2026 Sipfluencer by *Sip Magazine*. She was recognized as the only Canadian among 32 leaders for her decades-long impact in championing and connecting the British Columbia wine industry through marketing, storytelling, and community leadership.

CHARLESTON



Lisa Buzzelli, a Hospitality faculty member at Trident Technical College, received a Community Impact Award from the 2026 Charleston Wine + Food Festival. Lisa's dedication to hospitality education, mentorship, and community service continues to make a lasting impact across Charleston.

Emma Cromedy, the Chief Operating Officer of Carolima's Lowcountry Cuisine, received a Community Impact Award from the 2026 Charleston Wine + Food Festival for her meaningful work and contributions to the Lowcountry's hospitality and culinary community.



Lauren Furey is a private chef and host/producer of ***Now We're Cookin'*** on South Carolina ETV. Season two recently premiered in March. She highlights local ingredients and cooks with a guest on each of the eight episodes. The *Charleston City Paper* just named Lauren the Best Private Chef in the Best of Charleston 2026.



Amethyst Ganaway brought her concept, Bramble, to 73 Spring Street for a month-long residency. The successful pop-up was a heartfelt celebration of Southern cuisine emphasizing Gullah, Geeche, and Lowcountry roots. The "soul-full" environment featured curated art and an all-women crew. **Angela Dupree**, of Hospitality Revival, collaborated to help bring the space to life.



LaTasha Tarvelle, owner/operator of Fermented Vines, has been recognized as the first Black female certified sommelier in the Charleston tri-county area. Fermented Vines, a premier mobile wine bar and educational service, focuses on making wine education and etiquette approachable and inclusive through curated tastings and private events.

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CHICAGO



Mariam Parker has taken on the role of executive director for both the Chicagoland Food & Beverage Network and Bigger Table. The Network's mission focuses on collaboration, support, and engagement with 4,500 industry companies to foster innovation and growth throughout the region. This includes addressing employment, economic development, entrepreneurship, and neighborhood revitalization.



Anupy Singla is reaching a national audience with her new PBS program, *Indian as Apple Pie*, filmed in her Lincoln Park kitchen. The first eight episodes, which began airing on May 2, provide step-by-step guidance for cooks of all skill levels, helping them master essential techniques and ingredients to make Indian cuisine accessible at home.

GREATER DES MOINES



Beth Mensing opened her long-awaited ice cream shop, Scoops by Beth, in the Highland Park neighborhood of Des Moines. Beth's creative signature flavors as well as the classical ice creams are on the menu. Scoops by Beth is also home to a community refrigerator which is sponsored by LDEI Des Moines.

LONDON



Alex Allan received the Nutritional Therapist of the Year (Essex) award in the 2026 Business Excellence Awards from Acquisition International. She was honored for her exceptional services and contributions to raising industry standards. Alex specializes in gut and hormone health, offering personalized support to her clients.



Clare Donovan, founder of Cooking Champions, was named a Big Issue Changemaker 2026 for her work in food and nutrition. Clare and her team at this North London charity earned recognition for creating a supportive space for people facing poverty or loneliness.



Alison Swan Parente MBE, founding trustee of The School of Artisan Food, received the Special Recognition Award at the North Notts Business Women Awards 2026. This award celebrates Alison's achievements and her legacy for vision, integrity, and her steadfast belief in the importance of real skills, education, and opportunity.



Barbara Segall was recognized as one of the UK's leading women in horticulture. As a writer, editor, and advocate for kitchen gardens, Barbara has inspired generations to grow, cook, and connect with plants—demonstrating that what we cultivate in the garden shapes what we serve at the table.

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NEW ENGLAND



Nancy Matheson-Burns (R),of Dole & Bailey, donated $90K in food to **Jeni Wheeler**'s nonprofit, Family Table Collaborative, helping expand meal distribution across Cape Cod. The contribution will elevate operations for three months, underscoring the power of food rescue, community collaboration, and LDEI connections in addressing nutritional security and reducing food waste.



Maria Speck, award-winning author, is thrilled to announce her new cookbook, *Baking with Ancient Grains—Mediterranean-Inspired Recipes for Living Well*, forthcoming from Chelsea Green. Maria's lifelong passion for whole grains is at the heart of this book, using whole flour, olive oil, and less sweeteners for cookies, cakes, bread and more.

NEW ORLEANS



Chaya Conrad, chef/owner of Bywater Bakery, raised $3,000 to support farmers in Accompong, Jamaica through Amy Sins' disaster relief organization, Fill the Needs. Funds were used to purchase baby chicks from a feed store, benefiting both farmers and local economy. Bywater Bakery was also named 2026 James Beard Award Semifinalist in the Outstanding Bakery category.



Beth D'Addono paid tribute to the LDEI origin story in the spring edition of *Rouse's Magazine*, edited by **Marcy Nathan**, Creative Director of Rouses Markets. The article traces LDEI's journey from **Carol Brock**'s vision to its present-day organization.



Mani Dawes opened Café Malou, a breakfast and lunch spot serving polished comfort food inspired by her grandmother's cooking. The café is uniquely connected to Octavia Books, a cherished local bookstore, through a set of revolving bookshelves.



Mia Devillier, director of operations and partner at La Petite Grocery, along with her husband chef Justin Devillier, is preparing to launch Daughter's Neighborhood Italian in the former Upperline location, a beloved New Orleans restaurant that closed during the pandemic. The new restaurant is scheduled to open in fall 2026.

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NEW ORLEANS



Suzanne Felber was awarded one of three TEXSOM Awards Volunteer Scholarships at the TEXSOM International Wine Awards. Suzanne has volunteered at the competition for over ten years, expanding her knowledge about wines worldwide.



Sophina Uong and local restaurateur Dickie Brennan launched One Kitchen Louisiana, a chef-focused training and mentorship program co-founded by Chef Michel Nischan, executive chairman of Wholesome Wave. Wholesome Wave, established in 2007, addresses nutrition insecurity by organizing, educating, and mobilizing chefs as community change-makers.



Bunny Young, cafe chef at Vaucresson Creole Cafe & Deli, has helped transform the historic Seventh Ward institution into one of New Orleans' most talked-about lunch spots. Her generational approach to Creole cooking has earned recognition from publications including *Times Picayune/Gambit, Eater New Orleans, Axios*, and *New Orleans Magazine*.

NEW YORK



Michael-Ann Rowe, Emmy winner, launched The Fishionista Show on YouTube, filming directly from the Fulton Fish Market Cooperative and Chefs Warehouse Test Kitchen. The show features seafood recipes prepared in ten minutes or less. Viewers are encouraged to subscribe and support her new series.

PHILADELPHIA



Lynn Buono, co-president of Philadelphia's Chapter and founder of Feast Your Eyes Catering, was honored at the C-CAP Philadelphia Annual Gala on April 27. She was recognized for her mentorship, support to the local culinary community, and her professional and personal philanthropic efforts.



Jen Honovic Herczeg publisher, and **Joy Manning** (R),editor of *Edible Philly's* 2025 summer issue, feature the joys of farmers markets, backyard and park grilling, neighborhood gatherings, and Philly-Made food, chefs, restaurants, and places. Also in the summer issue, private chef **Nana Araba Wilmot** highlights Ghanaian flavors, food, and culture.

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PHILADELPHIA



Christian (Nina) Sygnecki, wine director/sommelier at Traino's Wine and Spirits, was cited in a *Philadelphia Inquirer* feature authored by Michael Klein, columnist for the Greater Philadelphia Area food and restaurant scene. He complimented Nina's informative wine tasting, her depth of knowledge, and how helpful her recommendations are for customers.



Nana Araba Wilmot, Michelin-trained chef, has reimaged West African cuisine from her mother, grandmother, and visits to Ghana. She is chef/owner of Georgina's Private Chef & Catering and Love That I Knead Supper Club. Nana competed in Bravo's *Top Chef* Season 23 currently in its *Last Chance Kitchen* phase of the series.

SAN FRANCISCO



Laura Meyer (San Francisco) and **Stephanie Swane** (Seattle) are preparing for the second Fork to Future conference in Berkeley, California, which is dedicated to supporting business growth, fostering ongoing learning, and promoting advancement opportunities for women in the dairy industry. In September, a diverse team of experts will assemble to collaborate and share their knowledge, contributing to the continued progress of women professionals in this field.