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Corrected Release

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Herndon Career Center to represent Missouri, defend National Championship at 2010 National ProStart Invitational in Overland Park in April

Kansas City, Mo., March 1, 2010 – The Missouri Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (MRAEF) held the annual Missouri ProStart High School Culinary Contest on February 18-19 at East Central College in Union, Mo. Twenty-five high school teams from around the state competed in the contest making it one of the largest state competitions in the country. Over 100 Missouri students demonstrated their culinary skills in a competition as challenging as those held for professional chefs.

Herndon Career Center, Raytown, Mo., won first place in the competition followed by Glendale High School, Springfield, Mo., and Park Hill High School, Kansas City, Mo., winning second and third place respectively. Herndon Career Center will advance to the National ProStart Invitational, to be held in Overland Park, Ks., on April 30, 2010, where the talented team of culinary aficionados will defend its national title awarded last year.

“This is the first time I’ve had a female dominated team with three young ladies and two young men. They each bring a different skill set to the team, and their hard work speaks to their dedication on becoming the first team to repeat as national champions,” says Chef Ben Griswold, instructor and coach of the Herndon Career Center ProStart team. Griswold continues by saying “each team member put in over 25 hours per week of practice to get ready for the Missouri competition and they are willing to go above and beyond that to get ready to compete at the national level.” The Park Hill High School ProStart team consisted of three juniors and one sophomore. “I am extremely proud of my team for their third place finish,” says Nora Whitney, instructor and coach of the Park Hill High School ProStart team. “The competition was difficult for us this year due to having an inexperienced team and due to the competitions recent alignment with national standards.”

Teams of four members from each school were required to prepare a three course meal for two people within one hour using only two butane burners as the cooking source. The appetizer, entrée, and dessert had to

be completed at the exact time in order for the entire meal to have a fresh, beautiful presentation with a palate pleasing taste and aroma. Each student was also required to fabricate a chicken into eight pieces in addition to using their knife skills to cut a variety of vegetables into pieces of exact size and shape. The cut vegetables then had to be incorporated into the final meal preparation.

“The local restaurant community should be very appreciative of the ProStart program as it has helped to develop the award winning talent that is the future of our industry,” says Jason Pryor, chairman of the Greater Kansas City Restaurant Association (GKCRA) and current board of director for the Missouri Restaurant Association (MRA). “The GKCRA is excited to have the national competition in our back yard this year and we will definitely be cheering on our home team.”

Herndon Career Center’s award winning menu included an appetizer of artichoke sashimi with beets, blood orange, pomegranate, pine nuts, chervil, and yuzu, an entrée of wagyu rib eye cap with horseradish, parsley root, romanesco, Nantucket Bay scallops, and blue foot mushrooms, and finally a dessert of pistachio cake with chocolate in textures, almonds, orange and fig pearls, and popping powder. Glendale High School’s menu was an appetizer of shrimp tempura in a honey yogurt sauce topped with roasted walnuts and a pomegranate reduction, an entrée of marinated seared sirloin, Thai fried rice, and seasoned mixed vegetables, and a dessert called Heaven in a Cup, white chocolate almond mousse in a chocolate cone with raspberries. Park Hill High School featured an appetizer of chicken-wasabi dumplings enhanced with sliced Texas wagyu beef, “Shobu-Shobu” style, followed by a pan-seared chicken breast with beech and shitake mushrooms, and ending with a green tea crepe with brandied cherries and mango coulis topped with macadamia nuts.

ProStart is a two year high school Culinary Arts and Restaurant Management program developed by the National Restaurant Association and administered in Missouri by the MRAEF, a 501(c)(3) organization established to support the educational objectives of the MRA. The MRA is a trade association with 1,600 members. It is broken into seven chapters, each with its own officers, board of directors, and budget. The MRA is dedicated to serving the needs of the foodservice and hospitality industry, enhancing and improving its growth and development, assisting and education its members in operating more effectively, improving the political, economic and social environment in which the industry conducts business, for the benefit of its members, patrons, employees and the well-being of the community.

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