

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 23, 2007



Contact: Marshall Weston
(410) 290-6800

HOWARD COUNTY STUDENTS COOK UP NATIONAL AWARD

(Columbia, MD) - The Maryland Hospitality Education Foundation (MHEF) announced today that the high school culinary team from the Howard County Applications and Research Laboratory took 5th place at the National ProStart Student Invitational in Charlotte, North Carolina this past weekend.

The National ProStart Student Invitational provided the stage for 34 teams from across the country to compete against one another in a team culinary competition. Each team had one hour to create an appetizer or salad, an entrée and a dessert to be judged on taste, teamwork, food safety and sanitation, knife skills, proper cooking techniques and menu difficulty. Judges were leading industry professionals and instructors from the top culinary schools in the United States, including a Certified Master Chef.

This was the third time that the Howard County Applications and Research Laboratory and instructor Elaine Heilman have won the Maryland ProStart Student Invitational and gone on to the national competition. Team members Crystal Rivera, Kevin Gonsales, Ryan Meliker, Peter Gallagher and alternate Jason Cohen created a *Maryland, America in Miniature* menu that celebrated Maryland's diverse population. "These students amazed me with their self discipline and work ethic that is rare in people so young," stated Heilman.

Their Italian influenced appetizer was a Lump Crabmeat Stuffed Ravioli and Maryland Rockfish Fingers with an Edamame Succotash served in a Dijon Scented Marinara Sauce. This was followed by a Glazed Pork Tenderloin with Apple Stuffing; Okra, Julienne Carrots and Celery, a Fluffy Potato Pancake Served on a Bed of Seasoned Mustard Greens and Finished with a Grain Mustard Studded Pork Demi-Glaze, showcasing African American cuisine. The menu finished with a dessert of Hispanic flair that included a Cream-filled Chocolate Empanada served with a Warm Fresh Berry Compote and Sabayon Sauce and Garnished with Toasted Pistachio Nuts. Marc Dixon, chef from Café de Paris in Columbia, Maryland was the team's mentor who helped the students with menu development and preparation techniques.

For placing 5th in the nation, each student on the team will receive a \$500 scholarship from Coca Cola along with a gift bag worth over \$300 in culinary tools and materials that included an autographed copy of *Baking Fundamentals* by Chef Noble Masi, CEPC, CMB, CHE from the American Culinary Federation. This is in addition to the thousands of dollars in scholarships awarded to them for finishing first at the state competition. Mrs. Mary Day, Principal of the Howard County Applications and Research Laboratory, said that "it was wonderful to see students from three different schools come together under the leadership of an outstanding teacher. Placing 5th in the Nation shows the caliber of students that Howard County is producing." The Howard County Applications and Research Laboratory will also be awarded a \$400 stipend for Ms. Heilman to use in her ProStart program.

The ProStart program is a high school culinary and hospitality management curriculum that also requires 400 hours of paid industry work experience in order to receive a ProStart National Certificate of Achievement. Students completing the ProStart program are qualified to enter the workforce in positions above entry level and are on a fast track to management careers. ProStart is endorsed by the Maryland State Department of Education and also prepares students for post secondary education at culinary schools and hospitality management programs. Marshall Weston Jr., Executive Vice President of MHEF, commented that "It is the partnerships between the industry and education that has helped these students achieve nationally recognized success. The financial support and mentoring of those in the industry are what enabled the Howard County ARL to perform at the highest level."

###

The Maryland Hospitality Education Foundation (MHEF) is a nonprofit organization that works with the Restaurant Association of Maryland to educate the hospitality workforce of Maryland. MHEF offers certifications in food safety and responsible alcohol service along with server and hospitality management training. MHEF also supports the 50 schools in Maryland using the ProStart program, a culinary and hospitality management curriculum for high school students that is endorsed by the Maryland State Department of Education. More information on MHEF can be found at www.mhef.org.