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## **Baltimore County Students Manage Their Way To National Award**

### *Carver Center for Arts and Technology Place 4th in National ProStart Invitational*

(Columbia, MD) - The Restaurant Association of Maryland Education Foundation (RAMEF) announced today that the high school hospitality management team from the Carver Center for Arts and Technology in Baltimore County took 4th place at the National ProStart Invitational in San Diego, CA this past weekend.

The National ProStart Invitational provided the stage for 31 high school teams from across the country to compete against one another in a hospitality management competition. Teams were given a “case study” that involved several problems and situations that might arise in the hospitality industry on any given day. After 30 minutes of preparation, the team then had to make a presentation to judges on how they would handle those situations. Judges then scored their presentations based on how the team addressed customer relations, inter-departmental communications, staffing and labor, sanitation, safety and organization. Teams also competed against one another in a knowledge bowl, answering questions about hospitality management, culinary arts and food safety. Judges included hospitality industry professionals and instructors from post secondary schools with hospitality management programs. Over 1 million dollars in scholarship money and national bragging rights were on the line for the top finishing teams in the competition.

This was the second year in a row that the Carver Center and instructor Bette Mullins had won the Maryland ProStart Student Invitational and earned the right to represent Maryland in the national competition. Team members Brina Furman, Rachel Sherman, Brenna Hoffman, Tara Lewis, and Thomas Burch each earned a \$500 scholarship from both McCormick and Whole Foods Market for winning the state competition, along with several scholarship awards from numerous post secondary institutions. “These students put in hours and hours of work to prepare for the national competition,” stated Mullins, “I am extremely proud of their 4th place finish and they exceeded all my expectations.”

For placing 4th in the nation, each student on the team will receive a \$500 scholarship from the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation and the Coca Cola Company along with a gift bag worth over \$200 in culinary tools and materials. This is in addition to the scholarships awarded to them for finishing first at the state competition.

“This is the best finish for any Maryland team in the National ProStart Invitational” commented Marshall Weston Jr., Executive Vice President of RAMEF. “Having the highest score in the knowledge bowl competition is what propelled this team to 4th in the nation. This group highlights the caliber of students we have in the ProStart program in Maryland.”

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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.

Weston added 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 Carver Center for the Arts to perform at the highest level.”

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The Restaurant Association of Maryland Education Foundation (RAMEF) is a nonprofit organization that works with the Restaurant Association of Maryland to educate the hospitality workforce of Maryland. RAMEF offers certifications in food safety and responsible alcohol service along with server and hospitality management training. RAMEF also supports the 80 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. Scholarships to students and industry professionals are also managed through the Foundation. More information on RAMEF can be found at [www.ramef.org](http://www.ramef.org).