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**NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION RECOGNIZES
EXCEPTIONAL RESTAURATEURS AS 2016 INDUSTRY AWARD WINNERS**
- Recipients Crafted Careers of Advancement and Community Service -

WASHINGTON, D.C. – March 8, 2016 –The National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF) announced today its 2016 Restaurant Neighbor, Faces of Diversity and Ambassador of Hospitality award winners. The winners will be honored at a gala on April 12, 2016, during the National Restaurant Association’s annual Public Affairs Conference in Washington, D.C.

Divided into three groups, the awards elevate philanthropic initiatives, celebrate diversity and recognize exemplary leadership. Nominations for the 2016 awards were accepted through Fall 2015. Industry leaders convened earlier this year to review hundreds of applications and select eight winners for the three categories.

“The abundant opportunity for advancement and philanthropic engagement within the restaurant industry is apparent in the 2016 Industry Award recipients. This is an industry for people of all backgrounds and abilities,” said Rob Gifford, executive vice president of the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation. “The desire to achieve the American Dream and better their communities is why these restaurateurs are being honored today, and we look forward to all they will continue to accomplish within their careers and for their communities.”

Extended profiles and photos of the 2016 Restaurant Neighbor, Faces of Diversity and Ambassador of Hospitality award winners will be available at <http://www.nraef.org/Build-Talent/Industry-Awards>.

American Express’ Restaurant Neighbor Awards

For nearly 20 years, the Restaurant Neighbor Award, developed in partnership with American Express, has highlighted outstanding charitable service and philanthropy in the hospitality industry. Recipients of the 2016 Restaurant Neighbor Award receive a \$10,000 contribution to continue supporting their charitable initiatives. The winners are:

- **Carr’s Steakhouse (Mayfield, Ky.):** Carr’s Restaurants have been a community pillar in rural Mayfield, Ky. for more than 60 years. Since the steakhouse’s inception six years ago, employees have worked to help their neighbors and better their community by organizing numerous events. Fundraising efforts, which raised roughly \$50,000, have allowed children in their community’s school district to enroll in youth sports. Their pinnacle event

last year was raising funds to keep the local movie theater alive. They served a free meal to the community in exchange for donations to the movie theater and raised thousands of dollars to keep the establishment in business.

- **Gregg's Restaurants & Pubs (East Greenwich, R.I.):** For the past 20 years, Gregg's Restaurants & Pubs have worked with non-profit groups to support families, the homeless, the forgotten and the elderly. Through an annual event called the Giving Tree, employees, customers, friends, family and vendors have distributed more than 325,000 Christmas gifts to those in need in the community over the past two decades. Other charitable initiatives include Gregg's Giving Cake, which donates a portion of cake proceeds to Hasbro Children's Hospital; Cake for the Cure, which supports the Gloria Gemma Breast Cancer Resource Foundation; and the Rhode Island Community Food Bank which Gregg's has supported through monetary donations for the past seven years.
- **Cornerstone Humanitarian: Harald Herrmann, President, Darden Specialty Restaurant Group (Orlando, Fla.):** Harald Herrmann opened the flagship Yard House in 1996, years after he launched his restaurant industry career as a part-time dishwasher during high school. Feeling a need to give back to the community, Herrmann began his largest philanthropic initiative, Round It Up America, in 2009. The program enables guests to round up their check total, donating the extra change to a charity of the participating restaurant's choice. Yard House alone has raised more than two million dollars through Round It Up America and approximately \$3.2 million has been raised in total since 2009.
- **Firehouse Subs (Jacksonville, Fla.):** For more than 10 years, Firehouse Subs has played a role in fundraising to increase the safety of communities in 44 states and Puerto Rico. In 2005, they established Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation and have granted more than \$17 million to 1,250 fire, police, EMS and public safety organizations in over 1,000 communities. The programs supported by the Foundation provide life-saving equipment, prevention and safety education, public safety scholarships, military support and disaster relief.

PepsiCo Foodservice's Faces of Diversity Award

The Faces of Diversity Award, sponsored by PepsiCo Foodservice, honors diverse members of the industry. These are individuals who have achieved success in the face of adversity, and who embody the American Dream. The 2016 Faces of Diversity Award went to three restaurant entrepreneurs. The winners are:

- **Archna Becker, Founder/Owner, Bhojanic (Atlanta):** Archna Becker arrived in the U.S. from India at the young age of 11. Three years later she began her career in the restaurant industry as a drive-thru worker at a quick service restaurant. She continued to work various industry jobs for another decade before pursuing a career as a business executive. Becker soon realized her passion was in cooking, opening a catering business in the early 90s and a full-service restaurant a few years later. Today, Becker continues to give back to her community, by serving on the Georgia Restaurant Association Board. She employs more than two dozen Bhutanese refugees and has an intense training program to help them learn English and facilitate their transition to the U.S.

- **Taylor Hoang, Owner, Pho Cyclo Café; Founder and Executive Director, Ethnic Business Coalition (Seattle):** Taylor Hoang is an entrepreneur and leader in the Asian and business communities of Seattle. She is the Executive Director of Ethnic Business Coalition, a nonprofit committed to the long-term growth, sustainability, and success of immigrant and minority-owned small businesses in Washington. Her commitment to Seattle's minority community is unwavering and she consistently volunteers, mentors and advocates for aspiring entrepreneurs in the Asian community. As an outspoken advocate for ethnic business, Taylor was awarded the 2015 Crosscut Courage Award for Business, which honors local leaders whose personal and professional dedication is making the region more vital, equitable and inclusive. Taylor also operates five retail restaurants, Pho Cyclo Café, which she started at the age of 28, and a successful catering business, Lavender Jade Catering. Taylor also started a mortgage brokerage firm specializing in securing loans for minorities while attending University of Washington and created several businesses in Vietnam, including one to help small coffee farmers facilitate international export.
- **Titus Perkins, Executive Kitchen Manager, Ralph Brennan Restaurant Group (New Orleans, La.):** Raised by his handicapped grandmother from the age of nine, and becoming a father at age 16 did not stop Titus Perkins from becoming a community leader who now spends time mentoring and encouraging the young men and women he hires to make a positive impact on their communities. The path to his current role as executive kitchen manager at the Ralph Brennan Restaurant Group began with a job at the New Orleans Fair Grounds during high school, and soon after as a dishwasher at Ralph Brennan's BACCO. A quick learner, Perkins advanced through the ranks, mastering all the kitchen positions. He was also a general manager for the Sonic Corporation for one year, before landing his current position. Through hardship and adversity, Perkins was able to achieve his American Dream by establishing a career that allows him to support his family and give back to the community.

Thad and Alice Eure's Ambassador of Hospitality Award

The Thad and Alice Eure Ambassador of Hospitality Award, sponsored by Ecolab, is bestowed upon someone who could be viewed as a pivotal piece in the evolution of the restaurant industry.

Ted Fowler, Director, Investor's Management Corporation, has been named the 2016 Ambassador of Hospitality winner, in recognition of his extraordinary achievement and leadership in the restaurant and hospitality industry. Fowler's dedication to career is apparent with one glance at his work history: he has accumulated 43 years of experience in the foodservice industry. His work started with Golden Corral in 1977, an organization he continued to benefit by serving as CEO from 1989 through 2014. During that time he was able to grow the company to the largest buffet chain in the country with 500 restaurants generating \$1.8 billion in sale. Fowler's vision is what made him the inspiration for the Golden Corral Operating Partner Program, which provides the opportunity for the general manager in every restaurant to franchise his or her own restaurant. This empowering attitude is why he was integral in leading the company to serve more than four million free meals and **raise** \$10 million for the Disabled American Veterans as part of the company's annual Military Appreciation Night for the past 15 years. He has won numerous awards throughout his career, including the highly coveted IFMA Silver and Gold Plate Awards, MUFSSO Operator of the Year and Restaurateur of the Year, and the North Carolina Distinguished Service Award.

About the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation:

As the philanthropic foundation of the National Restaurant Association, the NRAEF exists to enhance the restaurant industry's service to the public through education, community engagement and promotion of career opportunities. The NRAEF works to attract, develop and retain a career-oriented professional workforce for the restaurant industry. In 2016, the restaurant and foodservice industry is projected to provide a record 14.4 million jobs, making it the nation's second largest private sector employer. For more information on the NRAEF, visit NRAEF.org.

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