



Mentoring Tomorrow's Leaders

BY MARSHA PALANCI
(NEW YORK)

Since its inception eight years ago, the Legacy Awards Luncheon has become one of the most highly anticipated programs at our Annual Conference. Adding something new to this year's luncheon, long-time supporter, **Amy Hoopes** of Wentle Family Estates kicked off the festivity with a lively tutorial on the artistry of Chardonnay winemaking.

Co-Chairs **Becky Paris Turner** (B.C.) and **Shara Bohach** (Cleveland) explained the concept behind the awards and how winners were selected. They also thanked the Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts for being our key sponsor for the past five years. As explained by their Executive Director Todd Schulkin who was in attendance, "Being a mentor came naturally to Julia, and it's wonderful that through our support of LDEI's Legacy Awards, we can continue to help foster that essential professional value."

This year, six awards were given out for one-week apprenticeships working with host Dames: four in the U.S., one in Canada, and one in the U.K. The 2016 recipients—all entrepreneurs—consist of a farmer, a magazine publisher, a chocolatier, a wine sales representative, and two chefs. Here are highlights of each winner's presentation.

The first of three culinary winners was Jane Copeland, chef/owner of Lift Breakfast Bakery in North Vancouver, BC. Jane's



whirlwind week experiencing behind-the-scenes of the grocery, catering, baking, and brewing world of Chicago was curated by **Debra Sharpe** of Goddess and Grocer, **Ellen King** of Hewn Bakery, and **Julie Chernoff** of Make it Better Media. They, along with many other chapter members, generously shared their expertise and instilled in her a can-do confidence for her start-up business. During her speech, Jane discussed gender issues for women in professional kitchens. Lamenting the disproportionate number of female executive chefs, she added more hopefully, "Women tend to bring a totally different energy and perspective to their work and generate a healthy balance." These practices can make it a better work place for both men and women.

Sue Snape, chef/owner of Leaf and Loaf in Marietta, Georgia, was hosted in Washington, D.C., by America's organic pioneer **Nora Pouillon**. Sue received hands-on experience at Restaurant Nora, the nation's first certified, organic restaurant. Sue also worked the land at Sunnyside Farm, where according to her video report, Nora ran her ragged. Working on a farm was "tough on the body of a 46 year old." But the hard work resulted

in a stronger connection with Nora's farm-fresh locavorism and organic activism. Sue has already put into practice some of her new knowledge in her role as chef, as well as in classes she teaches for children and the homeless.

Sunita de Tourreil from Palo Alto, California, traveled to London to work with yet another pioneer, **Chantal Coady**, O.B.E. She says her first chore with the owner of Rococo Chocolates was to literally "hop onto Chantal's kitchen table to pollinate the flowers of a cocoa plant." Chantal and her team taught Sunita many things about crafting fine chocolates as well as growing cocoa. Additionally, the two like-minded chocolatiers shared their individual insights into the darker social issues of sourcing raw ingredients, such as child slave labor. Sunita's business, The Chocolate Garage, is all about sourcing "happy chocolate" and getting away from oppressive practices. Her key take-away was to "do the scary things that involve risk and to tell the story of the reality on the ground in countries where cocoa is grown."

The Farm-to-Table winner, Jovan Sage, of Brunswick, Georgia, traveled to Vancouver, BC to work the land with **Lee Murphy**, Canada's best known maker of fine preserves and wine. Living on a farm in Georgia, Jovan—who owns the Farmer & the Larder—appreciated seeing the similar challenges both food producers faced. During her week she continually saw the "show of the

power" of women in community. Jovan explained that this positive experience taught her strength, courage, and resiliency. Not only did she rework her business plan upon returning home, but she also chose to view more optimistically the two-week delay in opening her restaurant caused by hurricane Matthew. "Failure or natural disaster isn't the end but rather the beginning," she said.

The winner of the wine award was Staci Mickelson of St. Paul, Minnesota, and she was hosted at Chateau Ste. Michelle by **Kari Leitch**. Staci was also escorted around Seattle by **Cynthia Nims** to visit multiple Dame-owned businesses. Her time at the winery was jam-packed with varied experiences from tasting their entire wine portfolio, to meeting with marketing people, and even attending a Frankie Valli concert. What impressed her the most, however, was Chateau Ste. Michelle's program for women employees—WOW—where women support other women to encourage career development. "The women shared with me various skills and techniques to professionally confront industry (male) egos," Staci said. "I learned strategies in overcoming challenges unique to women such as being called pet names." What the women also taught Staci was to always bring things back to a business focus and carry oneself with professionalism and integrity.

Stephanie Jane Carter, publisher and editor-in-chief of *Edible New Orleans*, spent her time in New York at *Family Circle* under the inspiring tutelage of **Regina**

Peace Through Food Diplomacy

BY MARGARET HAPPEL-PERRY
(NEW YORK)

Maria Gomez Laurens, LDEI's 2016 president (and daughter of a diplomat) set the stage for a dynamic and thought-provocative two hours on achieving peace through food and its cultural heritage. Her summary: admiration, respect, and honoring each culture is key.

Roberta Duyff (St. Louis) and **Susan Slack** (Charleston), the dedicated co-chairs of Global Culinary Initiative (GCI), built on this theme as they introduced the morning's two speakers. Johanna Mendelson Forman Ph.D., Scholar in Residence at American University's School of International Service, and Lauren Bernstein LLD, Director, Office of the Chief of Protocol at the Department of State, delineated current philosophy of 'peace through food' initiatives.

Dr. Mendelson Forman is a respected authority in the field of 'conflict cuisine.' Food shortages are among the chief reasons for conflict and invariably lead to the many diasporas that create the borderless kitchen. While food is a soft power it can have a mighty impact. As food tastes migrate, they shape preferences by persuasion. It is one of best forms of foreign policy with a positive image, she averred.

Food experienced in an immigrant restaurant teaches history. Hidden wars and their outcomes are made visible through the taste-impact each immigrant food culture brings to the United States and can lead to their acceptance at the nation's table. There is always a melding of food influences when two cultures meet peaceably. Worldwide, women are peacemakers. Food in Hamburg and Berlin now reflects a Syrian influence; there is a peace-through-food initiative by Muslim and Jewish women in Chicago; refugee food fairs are springing up globally. Food is a counterpoint to anti-immigrant sentiment.

Gastro-diplomacy is the strategy of marrying food knowledge, skill, and respect for food traditions into a unifying force. Through gastro-diplomacy, many 'conflict-nations' have changed their world image. Greece in the Eastern Mediterranean, the cultures of Latin-

America, Thailand, Vietnam, and China are principle examples. Food power is a country's intangible cultural heritage—a 'sneak diplomacy'—used to promote and expand their exports and present a positive image.

Lauren Bernstein oversees the 'soft diplomacy' of food. Chefs meet everyone from world leaders at State dinners to working one-on-one with the citizens of other countries as volunteers under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Culinary Partnership Program.

The subtle official diplomacy of food is underscored by a little-known but significant event that precedes each formal, State Dinner. State lunches are hosted by the Vice-President and the Secretary of State for the visiting president being honored in the evening. These lunches present an opportunity for the chosen chef to prepare the lunch in honor of the visiting dignitary and be introduced to the leader in a less formal setting.

Food lends itself to a myriad of diplomatic food strategies using star chefs. The preparation for a Thanksgiving meal was beamed via satellite TV from Blair House to 75 countries, with the dialogue dubbed later into many languages.

The International Visitors Leadership Program at the State Department enabled 25 people from 25 countries to visit different cities and also meet American chefs, among whom were Michael Chiarello in Napa and Marcus Samuelsson in Harlem. The catalogue of activities goes on: American chefs have made 65 trips in four years with Chefs Mary Sue Milliken competing in a popular festival in Sicily and Art Smith promoting Chefs for Peace and Healthy Eating in the West Bank Kitchen Club in Ramallah.

There is TV programming in Rome, Pakistan, Algeria, and Bahrain, all featuring chefs whose apolitical purpose is to connect and inform, while being culturally aware and ingredient-sensitive to the needs of their audience. Secretary of State John Kerry appreciates the value and achievements of these programs and is now himself an honorary chef. Ten probing questions from the audience encompassing 'peace through food' concluded the session, which could have lasted all day—such was the power and relevance of the information.



Ragone. While there was much to learn for someone who started her magazine only 2 ½ years ago, Stephanie discovered there were many similarities that also confront the "big kids." Being short staffed, pressing deadlines, and dealing with the needs of the sales force were common to both magazines. Stephanie was treated as one of the team by Regina who actually pulled her in to help get out one of the issues, a particularly valuable experience as recounted Stephanie. At *Family Circle* she learned the importance of collaboration and mutual support, both qualities she will take home to her magazine. And, in appreciation for her New York experience, Stephanie plans to help breathe life back into our former New Orleans Chapter. Mentoring, teaching, and nurturing talented young women in wine, food, and hospitality is what the Legacy Awards program is all about. As explained by Co-Chairs Becky and Shara, "Our goal is to empower and invest in tomorrow's leaders." To make sure this continues, they encouraged each chapter to be more proactive saying, "Please take up the challenge for each and every chapter to send us two fabulous applicants for next year's Legacy Awards!"

Marsha Palanci. Winners of the 2016 Legacy Awards, L-R: Legacy Co-Chair Shara Bohach (Cleveland) with winners Stephanie Jane Carter, Jovan Sage, Staci Mickelson, Jane Copeland, Sunita de Turrell, and Legacy Co-Chair Becky Paris Turner (B.C.) Not shown: Legacy winner Sue Coraggio Snape. L-R: Shara Bohach, Becky Paris Turner, and Executive Director Todd Schulkin, Julia Child Foundation. Photo: Lori Willis. Dame Amy Hoopes. L-R: Beth Allen, 2017 LDEI President Stacy Zeigler, Kathy Gold, and Kathi Saks. Photos: Susan Slack.



L-R: GCI committee member Teresa Farney (Colorado), Margaret Happel Perry (author of the GCI review), GCI Co-Chair Susan Slack, speakers Lauren Bernstein and Johanna Mendelson Forman Ph.D., and Co-Chair Roberta Duyff. Photo: CiCi Williamson. The new GCI Handbook on display at conference. Photos: Susan Slack.