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Media Contact: Alyssa Harasim
Michigan Restaurant Association
(517) 377-3928
aharasim@mramail.org



MICHIGAN RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION PROSTART CHAMPIONS WIN NATIONAL PROSTART COMPETITION IN CHARLESTON, S.C.

Restaurant Management Team Saginaw Career Complex Wins 1st Place

LANSING, Mich., May 1, 2017 – The Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) is pleased to announce that the Saginaw Career Center, which won the Restaurant Management category at the Michigan ProStart Competition in March, took first place at the National ProStart Invitational in Charleston, South Carolina this past weekend. The team, consisting of Isabella Dean, Shanttel Gonsalves, KaTonya Jenkins and Noemi Perez won over \$10,000 in scholarships from the National Restaurant Association (NRA) and Coca-Cola. In addition, the young ladies have hundreds of thousands of dollars in college and university-specific scholarships available to them, should they choose to attend any of the sponsoring schools.

In March, the Saginaw Career Complex competed against hundreds of students at the 16th Annual Michigan ProStart Competition at the Bavarian Inn Lodge in Frankenmuth, winning first place overall. The Saginaw Career Complex developed a comprehensive plan for “Bowl of Hope,” a casual dining, non-profit restaurant that pays it forward to charities. The energetic atmosphere of the restaurant was to serve healthy delicious meals while giving 10% back to four charitable organizations: Make a Wish Foundation, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal (ASPCA), Underground Railroad, and the local ProStart Program. Organizations, that each student on the team have worked with personally.

“This is a tremendous victory for these young ladies and for their program director, Julie Ivan, whose otherworldly dedication set them on a course for greatness,” proclaimed Justin Winslow, President and CEO of the MRA. “I am personally inspired by their achievement, overcoming significant challenges and tremendous odds. They have earned the right to be called the best of the best and I couldn’t be any prouder,” he added.

The National ProStart Invitational is the country’s premier competition for high school students who are studying culinary arts and restaurant management. Annually, the top 400 ProStart students represent the best from across the globe, over 110,000 students have competed, putting their knowledge and skills to the test in front of industry leaders, National Restaurant Association Education Foundation (NRAEF) Trustees, state restaurant association executives, and top post-secondary schools.

“Persistence pays off as the Saginaw Career Complex -while always fielding stellar competitors to the Michigan ProStart Competition –won first place at Nationals”, stated Ken Wasco, MRA ESF Chairman. “The Educational Support Foundation of Michigan is especially proud of the faculty and students, the extra hours this effort required, and their goal teaching attitude.”

About ProStart

ProStart is a nationwide, two-year high school program that unites the classroom and industry to develop the best and brightest talent into tomorrow’s restaurant and foodservice leaders. In Michigan, 68 high schools and career centers use the ProStart curriculum with 5,000 students participating.

About Michigan Restaurant Association

Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) is the recognized leader of Michigan's hospitality industry, providing essential services to the foodservice community. Founded in 1921, the MRA represents

nearly 4,500 Michigan foodservice establishments. The industry plays an integral role in Michigan's economy, employing more than 435,000 people and creating \$15.9 billion in annual sales.

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