



NEWS

Tara Roberts Nominated by Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association Education Foundation as ProStart Educator of the Year

[Richmond, VA] – [April 1, 2020] – Today, the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association named Tara Roberts its 2020 ProStart State Educator of Excellence (SEEA) for outstanding achievement in high school culinary and restaurant management education in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

ProStart®, a nationwide high school program that unites classroom and industry to develop the talent of tomorrow's workforce, reaches nearly 150,000 students in more than 1,500 high schools across 50 states, the Territory of Guam, and at Department of Defense Education Activity schools in Europe and the Pacific.

During the 2018-2019 school year Chef Roberts partnered with the other classrooms at the Massanutten Technical Center for the Food Truck Battle. Students had to research their market, develop a concept and a menu that fit that market. Then they created recipes for each of their menu offerings. Students then designed and painted their "food truck", a 4X8 sheet of plywood cut into the shape of a truck by carpentry students. Describing the Food Truck Battle, Chef Roberts commented, "It was a huge success! The winner was determined by popularity vote and by the most profit." Already looking forward Chef Roberts mentioned "This year we will be involving two other programs as well. Collision repair will be painting the trucks and 3D animation will be designing logos for each of the trucks."

Chef Roberts was selected for the award from over 60 ProStart educators across the commonwealth and will be recognized at a ProStart Educator event in Las Vegas, NV scheduled to be held July 19 – 21.

"Chef Roberts is the model example of how a teacher can truly make a difference in their students' lives," said Jim Wilson, Director of Education and Workforce Development for the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association. "She takes every possible opportunity she can to collaborate and further her students' interests in the culinary field."

Upon being nominated, Chef Roberts is now a finalist for the National Educator of Excellence Awards (NEEA) sponsored by Golden Corral. NEEA winners are recognized one of the following ways, by category (Classroom Expertise, Best Practice/Knowledge Sharing and Industry Connection), where each category winner will receive \$3,500, or as a finalist for the James H. Maynard Teacher of the Year Award, where one winner will receive \$10,000.

The complete list of State Winners will be announced at the Educators of Excellence Awards program in Washington, DC on May 10th.

About the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association Education Foundation (VRLTAEF)

As the educational arm of the Virginia, Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association, the VRLTA exists to enhance the restaurant and hospitality industries' through education and encouraging youth to pursue post-secondary education in the culinary and hospitality fields. This is primarily done through the

coordination of the Virginia ProStart program and the administration of a scholarship program. For more information on the VRLTAEF, visit VRLTA.org/VRLTAEF.

About the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association (VRLTA)

The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association is the only unified voice for the restaurant, lodging, travel and hospitality suppliers associations. VRLTA creates value for members by promoting the legislative interests of the industry, networking, educational opportunities, and protecting free enterprise. Inquiries about membership and VRLTA services should be directed to VRLTA at (804) 288-3065 or VRLTA.org.

About the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF)

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. For more information on the NRAEF, visit NRAEF.org. CONTACT: Contact Jim Wilson Director, Education & Workforce Development Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association jim@vrlta.org | 804.288.3065