



News Release

High School Students From 39 States to Compete for National Honors at the Eighth Annual National ProStart Invitational™

Competition Spotlights Future Leaders of the Restaurant Industry

March 25, 2009

Contact: [Megan Meyer](#) (312) 715-6741, [Jessica Wion](#) (312) 715-5397

(Chicago, IL) The National Restaurant Association announced today that 39 states, territories and districts will be sending ProStart® high school students to compete at the eighth annual National ProStart Invitational from April 24-26th, 2009 at the Town and Country Resort & Convention Center in San Diego, Calif. At this fast-paced competition, teams of students that won first place in their state culinary and/or management competitions compete for the national title, as well as scholarships to continue their education at colleges and universities across the country. In 2008, \$1.3 million in scholarships were awarded to winning students.

"This preeminent high school competition brings together the future leaders of our industry with current industry and academic leaders. The ProStart students who earn their way to the national competition strive to impress these potential future employers who act as judges and spectators, in addition to competing for top honors and scholarships," said Dawn Sweeney, President and CEO, National Restaurant Association. "The competition highlights the culinary and management skills the students have mastered – skills that are critical to success in the restaurant and foodservice industry."

The National ProStart Invitational consists of two competitions: culinary and management. Teams participating in the culinary competition will demonstrate their creative abilities through the preparation of a meal consisting of a starter, entrée and dessert in 60 minutes. The management competition will highlight a team's knowledge of the restaurant and foodservice industry by competing in a case study, where students are tested on their communication skills and ability to apply their industry knowledge to practical situations, as well as a question-and-answer "game show"-style event. The National ProStart Invitational is also a learning opportunity for the students, as they meet with the judges for valuable feedback on the culinary and case study events. More than 800 student competitors, educators, mentors, industry and academic leaders, state restaurant association representatives, family & friends, and Association/NRAEF board members will come to San Diego to support these top ProStart students as they pursue their dream of a career in the restaurant and foodservice industry.

More than 4,000 students across the globe will compete at the state level to earn the chance to advance to the national competition, with only 275 students moving on to the National ProStart Invitational. This year, a culinary and a management team from a Department of Defense school in Puerto Rico will be participating in the National ProStart Invitational for the first time. The complete roster of states, territories and districts sending teams of students to participate in the culinary and/or management competitions includes: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Guam, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Washington D.C., West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

The Coca-Cola Company is the premier sponsor of the National ProStart Invitational, awarding scholarships to pursue a college education to the first- through fifth-place teams in both the culinary and management competitions. The top five winning teams from each competition will also be awarded medals or patches, and gifts from sponsoring companies. Additional sponsors include Culinary Arts Academy, Darden Restaurants, QSR Magazine, The Culinary Institute of America, Le Cordon Bleu Schools North America, Chef Works, Golden Corral, The International Culinary Schools at The Art Institutes, The J.M. Smucker Company, Mercer Cutlery, Professional Culinary Institute, Cambro Manufacturing Company and Whole Foods Market.

Nationwide, 78,000 students in 47 states, territories and districts are served by ProStart, a two-year curriculum that blends classroom learning with mentored work experience to teach high school students the management and culinary skills needed for a career in the restaurant and foodservice industry. When students meet academic

standards, complete a checklist of competencies, and work at least 400 hours in the industry, they are awarded the ProStart National Certificate of Achievement that signifies they are well qualified to enter the industry workforce. The career-building program is managed nationally by National Restaurant Association Solutions, a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Restaurant Association, in conjunction with state restaurant associations. For more information on the ProStart program and National ProStart Invitational, please visit www.prostart.restaurant.org.

To view the social media version of this release (including news highlights, quotes, downloadable photos, a video and more), visit www.restaurant.org/pressroom/social_media_prostart.cfm.

###

Founded in 1919, the National Restaurant Association is the leading business association for the restaurant industry, which is comprised of 945,000 restaurant and foodservice outlets and a work force of 13 million employees. Together with the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, the Association works to lead America's restaurant industry into a new era of prosperity, prominence, and participation, enhancing the quality of life for all we serve. For more information, visit our Web site at www.restaurant.org.

[Printable version](#)



©Copyright 2009 National Restaurant Association. 1200 17th St., NW :: Washington, DC 20036
ph 202-331-5900