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Second annual Top Chef of Polk County event To benefit Achievement Academy

LAKELAND, FL (March 14, 2016) Achievement Academy's second annual Top Chef of Polk County event will take place on Monday, April 18, at the Lakeland Center. Last year's inaugural event was a huge success, raising much needed funds for the children of Achievement Academy.

Top Chef of Polk County is a multi-course fine-dining experience that places the spotlight on the area's leading chefs while raising funds for programs and therapies for the children of Achievement Academy. The Master Chef Sponsor for the event is Publix Super Markets Charities and the Executive Chef Sponsors are the Ledger Media Group and Hall Communications.

As many as 15 chefs will create and prepare, tableside, their own menu with accompanying wine or libation that complement the flavors of each course. An expert panel of culinary-trained chefs will judge each chef on their creations based on presentation, choice and taste of food to award the title of "Top Chef of Polk County 2016." This panel includes Chef Rene J. Marquis, who appeared on Food Network's "Cutthroat Kitchen"; Chef Ron Girard, with 23 years chef experience, who now works food sales at Sysco; and Chef Adam Walkover, who uses his years of chef experience now as a Marketing Specialist and Consulting Chef for Gordon Food Services. They will also present awards for best in Appetizer, Entrée and Dessert. A second panel of judges from local media markets will judge each chef on their creations based on presentation, choice and taste of food to award the title of "Media's Choice — Top Chef 2016." They will also present "Media's Choice" awards for best in Appetizer, Entrée and Dessert.

Dinner guests will rate each dining station to award the title of “Best Table Décor.” The chef that raises the most funds for Achievement Academy through their donated auction item/s will earn the “Top Philanthropic Chef” award.

The Achievement Academy is proud to announce the chefs who are participating in this year’s event:

Chef Steve Beltz, Grasslands Golf & Country Club

Chef Tina Calhoon, Fresco’s Bakery & Bistro

Chef Tina Calhoon, Whisky Green

Chef Marcos Fernandez, Nineteen61

Chef Terry Gracie, Publix Aprons Cooking School

Chef Wayne Haggard, Ovations Food Services

Chef Ronald Mayer, Florida Presbyterian Homes (Reigning Top Chef of Polk County)

Chef Jose Vicente, Brasa Latina

Chef Chad Ward, Whiskey Bent BBQ

The Achievement Academy has limited chef opportunities still available. For more information, visit www.achievementacademy.com/chef-information/.

Cocktail hour will be from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., and the first course will be served at 6:30 p.m. Individual tickets and sponsorships are available. Seating is limited.

To reserve your seats or obtain more information, visit the Achievement Academy website, www.achievementacademy.com/upcoming-events/top-chef/, or call (863) 683-6504.

*The Achievement Academy serves children from birth through age five with various developmental delays and disabilities. The Achievement Academy offers two programs, each provided at no cost to the child or family. The first program is a **Charter School** that offers specialized instruction by certified teachers; small class sizes; individual speech, occupational and physical therapies; and assistive technologies that enable each student to reach his or her full potential at one of the Achievement Academy’s three campus locations (Lakeland, Winter Haven and Bartow). The second is a **"Birth to Three Program"** that provides early intervention services to infants and toddlers who are "at-risk" for*

developmental delays and/or have been identified with a specific delay. Professional Early Interventionists serve these children and their families. More than half of the Birth to Three Program's budget is funded by a generous allocation from the United Way of Central Florida.

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