



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Kristin Aiken  
President/CEO  
Office: 863-683-6504

### **Seventh Annual Top Chef of Polk County Event Held to Benefit Achievement Academy**

**LAKELAND, FL (May 20, 2021)** - Achievement Academy held its seventh annual Top Chef of Polk County event on Monday, May 17, 2021, at each of the ten participating chefs' restaurants. Guests enjoyed a three-course meal that included their chef's signature dish accompanied by a wine or libation that complemented the dish's flavors. Each restaurant had 25 guests. Thank you to each Chef, Community Leader, Sponsor, and Attendee for making this year's Top Chef of Polk County one of our best – raising more than \$190,000 for children with special needs.

This year's participating chefs and their community leaders included:

Chef Brandon Bailey, The Back Nine and Crystal Goffe, Swan City Title

Chef Jason Boniface, Cob & Pen and Karli Hughes, 4-D Engineering

Chef Tina Calhoon, Frescos Southern Kitchen & Bar and Cory Neupauer, Lakeland Automall

Chef Lucy Cortes-Castaneda, Red Door Lakeland and Alice Koehler, Iron Horse Family Foundation

Chef Gene Gelb, Publix Aprons Catering & Cooking School and Patrick Spinosa, AgAmerica Lending

Chef Scott Greenlee, Patio850 and Mac Miller, AgAmerica Lending

Chef Richard Hoert, Terrie Lobb Catering, Inc. and Adam Riley, Ewing, Blackwelder & Duce Insurance

Chef Josh Lawley, Craft + Kitchen and Devindra Ramdehal, MYBOX

Chef Casey Ryan, 1916 Irish Pub and Chris McGarvey, Wall Titus, LLC

Chef Abigale Weech-Starkey, The Chop Shop and Kelsey O'Neal, Artistic General Contracting

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The Chefs and Community Leaders raised a total of \$107,003.92, with Chef Gene Gelb, Publix Aprons Catering & Cooking School and Community Leader Patrick Spinosa, AgAmerica Lending winning the Top Philanthropic Award. The professional judges, Chef Dennis Garcia, Chef Chris Trimborn, and Chef Adam Walkover tasted each chef's signature dish. The 2021 Top Chef of Polk County Award went to Chef Tina Calhoon with Frescos Southern Kitchen & Bar!

Chef Calhoon's winning dish was adobo marinated Angus filet with foie gras on top of a poblano bacon potato cake, crowned with shrimp and garnished with black raspberry BBQ sauce. Regarding this year's event, Chef Calhoon stated, "I am honored to win this year's Top Chef of Polk County award. Over the years, Frescos has held the Top Philanthropic award five times, Top Chef Peoples' Choice award, Best Dessert award, and now the 2021 Top Chef of Polk County. As the first female chef to win this award, it is a great honor to represent the Achievement Academy in all that they do to better the lives of these beautiful children. When it came to our menu, I chose to stay true to Frescos' southern roots."

Publix Super Markets Charities is the Exclusive Presenting Sponsor. Participating Chef Sponsor is Horne Construction, Inc. Master Chef sponsor is Artistic General Contracting. Head Chef Sponsors are Citizens Bank & Trust, Hillcrest Partners Limited Partnership, and Pallet Recycle. Sous Chef Sponsors are Allen & Company, Cannon Automotive Group, Lakeland Surgical & Diagnostic Center, LLC, MIDFLORIDA Credit Union, Senator Kelli Stargel, and The Heritage Group at Morgan Stanley. Dessert Sponsor is John and Deborah Weber. Sauté Chef Sponsors are Alexander and Chandra Frederick, Interstate Batteries of Lakeland, Lakeland Electric, Luke Markham & the law firm of Johnson Pope, Mulling Insurance Agency, Norse Metals, Rodda Construction, Inc., Saddle Creek Logistics Services, Summit, and Wall Titus.

*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.*

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Chef Tina Calhoon with Frescos Southern Kitchen & Bar accepts the 2021 Top Chef of Polk County Award!  
Pictured left to right are Tim Calhoon, Chef Chris Trimborn, Chef Tina Calhoon, and Chef Adam Walkover.



Community Leader Patrick Spinoso with AgAmerica Lending, and Chef Gene Gelb with Publix Aprons Catering & Cooking School, accepts the 2021 Top Philanthropic Award!



Chef Tina Calhoon's winning signature dish.