



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:** Tamara Ledwith  
203.462.4866  
tledwith@firstcountybank.com

**TALENTED TEEN CHEFS BATTLE WITH MAPLE SYRUP**  
*-- Public to Choose Winner at Stamford Museum & Nature Center --*

**STAMFORD, Conn., Feb. 23, 2015** – Four talented teenage chefs will compete in First County Bank’s Teen Chefs Challenge event at the Stamford Museum & Nature Center during this year’s Maple Sugar Festival Weekend. On Saturday, March 7, the teen chefs will compete in an exciting competition to create the best tasting recipe, as judged by the public, using maple syrup as an ingredient.

This year marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary First County Bank has sponsored this family festival highlighting the New England tradition of maple sugaring.

From 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on March 7, Aaron Gruen of Weston, 12, Talia Raich of Stamford, 10, Adaiah Stevens of Danbury, 13, and Sheariah Stevens of Danbury, 15, are scheduled to battle it out in the kitchen. They will present their culinary creations for the public to sample and the public will vote for their favorite creation. The winning recipe and chef will be announced at 2 p.m.

“The First County Bank Chefs Challenge has become a highlight of the Maple Sugar Festival Weekend since it’s inclusion into the festivities in 2010,” said Karen Kelly, senior vice president and chief marketing officer at First County Bank. “Last year’s teen chefs challenge was such a huge success, we are excited to again welcome other talented young chefs to the competition. Maple syrup, of course, is the key ingredient that each chef needs to incorporate into their dishes for the public to taste and judge. The Maple Sugar Festival provides an excellent opportunity to showcase local kids’ culinary talents and help them further develop their talent. We appreciate each teen chef’s contributions to the entertainment and look forward to a weekend full of great food, fun, learning and old fashioned New England traditions.”

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***About the Chefs***

**Aaron Gruen, Weston, 12**

Aaron is a 6th grader at Unquowa School in Fairfield. He has been cooking and baking with his family from the time he could stand at the kitchen counter, and now often makes dinner on his own. Aaron bakes with his mom and older sisters, grills with his dad, and loves to experiment with all sorts of flavor combinations and techniques. His specialties are homemade pasta and challah. When he isn't cooking, Aaron loves to ski, play tennis, and read about the science of cooking. He hopes to someday be a doctor, but a chef on the side!

**Talia Raich, Stamford, 10**

Talia is a fifth grade student at Bi-Cultural Day School. She has been cooking with her parents from a young age. Talia enjoys making desserts and cooking other tasty treats. She also likes working on the creative presentation of the food. Talia's family has fun in the kitchen together and has made various cooking challenges at home from soup-offs to versions of Chopped. Talia also enjoys reading, playing sports, acting, skiing, and writing.

**Adaiah Stevens, Danbury, 13**

Adaiah is a 13 year old with creative skills beyond her years. She started cooking and baking at the age of 4, shadowing her mother and grandmother in the kitchen. By the age of 7, she was developing her own recipes. Her creativity in the kitchen is coupled with her gift of music. Adaiah has been writing, arranging and performing music since she was 5 years old. Adaiah recently appeared on the popular reality competition show, MasterChef Jr. on FOX with Chef Gordon Ramsey. Her confidence with flavors and the ability to quickly learn a technique led her all the way to the Semi-Finals.

**Sheariah Stevens, Danbury, 15**

Sheariah is an all-around artist. At 15 years old, she has demonstrated her artistic gifts on large stage such as the Legendary Apollo Theater, where she was featured as a "Star of Tomorrow." Whether she is playing her guitar and singing or cooking, her artistic flair is reflected in all she does. She is also a culinary artist. Sheariah enjoys taking elements of international cuisine to bring unique qualities to her dishes. She frequently prepares multi-course meals for family and friends

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***About First County Bank Maple Sugar Festival Weekend***

The First County Bank Maple Sugar Festival takes place Saturday and Sunday, March 7-8, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. rain or shine. The maple sugar season usually peaks around the first week in March. At this family festival, visitors will see maple tapping demonstrations, taste sweet maple syrup treats, make a maple-themed craft, go on a scavenger hunt and enjoy the popular Sunday pancake brunch.

Other activities include face painting, storytelling, music and much more. A daily admission fee of \$5 per person will be charged to museum members and non-members \$10 per person. All children 3 and under, Family Plus and above members are allowed in free.

***About Stamford Museum & Nature Center***

Stamford Museum & Nature Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of art, natural and agricultural sciences, and history. The museum is a vital cultural and educational resource for the community, and a focal point for family activity and interaction, seeking to inspire creativity, foster self-discovery, and nurture an appreciation for lifelong learning through exhibitions, educational programs and special events that enhance the visitor's experience. Stamford Museum & Nature Center is located off High Ridge Road at 39 Scofieldtown Rd. in Stamford (three-quarters of a mile north of Merritt Parkway Exit 35). For more information, visit [www.stamfordmuseum.org](http://www.stamfordmuseum.org).

***About First County Bank***

First County Bank, headquartered in Stamford, Conn. for more than 160 years, is an independent mutual community bank with 15 branches in Stamford, Greenwich, Darien, New Canaan, Norwalk and Westport offering deposit products, mortgages, trust and investment services, business banking services and online banking. First County Bank has more than 220 employees and assets in excess of \$1.4 billion. For additional information, please visit [www.firstcountybank.com](http://www.firstcountybank.com). Become a fan by clicking “Like” on the bank’s Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/firstcountybank>. Follow it on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/firstcountybank> or look for First County Bank on LinkedIn at <http://www.linkedin.com/company/920207>. # # # #