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Talented Teen Chefs Battle with Maple Syrup

-- Public and Celebrity Judges to Choose Winner at Stamford Museum & Nature Center --

STAMFORD, Conn., Feb. 29, 2016 – Eight talented teen 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 5, the teen chefs will compete in an exciting competition to create the best tasting recipe, using maple syrup as an ingredient. This year marks the 16th 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 Saturday, March 5, Tatiana Ciccirella of Somers, NY, Shira Cohen of Stamford, Adrian Corelli of Stamford, Maureen Edith Ferrer of Stamford, Sunilka Jimenez of Stamford, Elizabeth Kot, of Torrington, Tristan Saldanha of Fairfield, and Rylie Emma Walker of Stamford, are scheduled to battle it out in the kitchen at the Main House, Bendel Mansion.

The teen chefs will present their culinary creations for the public and celebrity judges to sample. Judging will be conducted both by public vote and by a panel of celebrity judges: Reyno Giallongo, chairman and CEO of First County Bank, Robert Granata, president and COO of First County Bank, William Kies, director of education & Heckscher Farm of Stamford Museum & Nature Center and Francois Kwaku-Dongo, executive chef of David’s Soundview Catering. The winning chef and recipe 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 in 2010,” said Karen Kelly, senior vice president and chief marketing officer at First County Bank. “We are excited to welcome eight teen chefs to the competition this year. Maple syrup, of course, is the key ingredient that each teen chef needs to incorporate into their dishes for the public and celebrity judges to taste and judge. The Maple Sugar Festival provides an excellent opportunity to showcase their culinary abilities and 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."

About the Chefs

Rylie Emma Walker, 11

Scotfield Magnet Middle School, 6th grade

Stamford, CT

Rylie is a 6th grader at Scotfield Magnet Middle School in Stamford. She has been cooking and baking with her mom since she could pull up a chair to the kitchen countertop. She loves to bake sweet treats. Rylie wants to participate in this competition because she wants other people to taste her food, not just her family. When she isn't cooking, she is socializing with her friends or playing with her chocolate lab, Wonka. Rylie hopes to become a chef or a baker.

Shira Cohen, 13

Bi-Cultural Day School, 8th grade

Stamford, CT

Shira is an 8th grader at Bi-Cultural Day School. She enjoys cooking and baking with and for family and friends. Her biggest inspiration in the kitchen was her grandmother who taught her how to bake many delicious treats. Shira enjoys dance, being with friends and family, spending summers at sleep away camp, and of course, cooking and baking. Shira is thrilled to participate in this contest and can't wait to get the competition started.

Adrian Corelli, 10

Hart Magnet School, 4th grade

Stamford, CT

Adrian is a fourth grader at the Hart Magnet School in Stamford. He was born into the culinary world with his father, an accomplished chef and pastry chef, and his grandfather, an accomplished baker. Adrian's early exposure to fine dining and cuisine ignited his passion for the culinary arts as a hobby. He specializes in marinades and flavorful sauces and favorite specialty dishes include rack of lamb, French cut center pork chops, and steak chimichurri as well as several vegetable dishes. When Adrian is not cooking, he enjoys martial arts and reading. Adrian aspires to be a medical scientist one day to help create cures for diseases.

Tatiana Cicciarella, 13
Somers Middle School, 8th grade
Somers, NY

Tatiana is an 8th grader at Somers Middle School and was recently on the Food Network's famous show, *Chopped Junior*. She has been cooking ever since she can remember with her Nana, and now specializes in cooking healthy, organic meals for dinner. Tatiana is competitive and knows if she works hard enough that one day, she could achieve master chef status. Her specialties include using many veggies and fruits, (especially kale and avocado) and citrusy seafood. When she isn't in the kitchen making a mess, Tatiana loves to act, perform science experiments, spend time with her siblings and friends, and even twirl a baton. Tatiana is ready to take the heat of any competition and restaurant.

Elizabeth Kot, 13
Torrington Middle School, 8th grade
Torrington, CT

Elizabeth "Lizzie" is an eighth grader at Torrington Middle School. She developed a love for food when she was in Kindergarten and always chose the Food Network over The Disney Channel. Lizzie learned to cook and enjoy food from being her mom's sous chef. She is an avid baker and has taken over her family's baking. As a foodie and blogger of "Flipping over Food", Lizzie writes about cooking and baking. Her signature dishes are cheesecake and pasta with summer fresh herbs, sweet sausage and caramelized onions. Lizzie is a Jr. National Honor Society student, competitive gymnast and enjoys playing soccer, doing DIY's and trying new restaurants. Lizzie hopes to either attend culinary school or college to study neurology.

Maureen Edith Ferrer, 14
J.M. Wright Technical High School, 9th grade
Stamford, CT

Maureen is a 9th grader at J.M Wright Technical High School in Stamford CT. She has been cooking for as long as she can remember. Her brother loves when she cooks breakfast crepes and the family favorites, Chicken Parmesan and Korean Fried Chicken. Maureen enjoys studying food science and experimenting with different chemicals. In 8th grade, she did a project on "Molecular Gastronomy" which is a food science which studies the physical and chemical reactions which can occur with cooking ingredients. When she isn't cooking, Maureen loves to draw and paint, sing, volunteer with kindergarteners, perform community service, read mysteries and hang out spend time with her friends. After college, Maureen hopes to become an executive chef with a "Surf & Turf" themed restaurant.

Sunilka Jimenez, 16**J.M. Wright Technical High School, 10th grade****Stamford, CT**

Sunilka is a sophomore at JM Wright High School. She has been cooking since she was 7 years old and loves to make different types of dishes, especially cooking Dominican ethnic dishes. Her specialty is cooking spaghettis and lomo saltado. When she isn't in the kitchen, you will find her at the baseball field, or at the mall shopping. One day, she hopes to have her own restaurant (named after her great grandmother).

Tristan Saldanha, 14**Fairfield Warde High School, 9th grade****Fairfield, CT**

Tristan is a freshman at Fairfield Warde High School. His interest in cooking and baking started when he was eight years old. He loves to experiment and make cuisines and desserts on his own, using his own recipes. Tristan's younger brother is the designated taster. In the summer, he loves to grill steak, fish, vegetables and even flat bread pizza. Tristan takes culinary and pastry classes as school electives. He loves looking up recipes in many cookbooks and watches the Food Channel. When not in the kitchen, Tristan is engaged in sports playing basketball, football, hockey, ski, tennis and ping pong. He also manages the school hockey team.

About First County Bank Maple Sugar Festival Weekend

The First County Bank Maple Sugar Festival takes place Saturday and Sunday, March 5-6, 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 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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.

About First County Bank

First County Bank, headquartered in Stamford, Conn. for more than 165 years, is an independent mutual community bank with 15 branches in Stamford, Greenwich, Darien, New Canaan, Norwalk and Westport offering deposit products, mortgages, wealth management, business banking services, mobile and online banking. First County Bank has more than 220 employees, assets in excess of \$1.4 billion and is a 2016 Women's Choice Award winner. For additional information, please visit www.firstcountybank.com. Become a fan by clicking "Like" on the bank's Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/firstcountybank>. Follow us on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/firstcountybank>, view our boards on Pinterest at <http://www.pinterest.com/firstcountybank> or look for First County Bank on LinkedIn at <http://www.linkedin.com/company/920207>

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