



### **Giant BBQ Battle Contact**

Paige Johnson

248.408.9295

pjohnson@emersonstreetmedia.com

### **DC ProStart Students Dish Out Culinary Creativity to Win Big in the Inaugural Pepsi Future Chef Recipe Contest**

**WASHINGTON, DC (May 14, 2024)** – Students from Washington, DC’s Roosevelt High School and Ballou High School participating in the DC ProStart Culinary Program are preparing to showcase their culinary skills in the highly anticipated Pepsi Future Chef Recipe Contest. Eleventh and twelfth grade students will present dishes based on a historical family recipe or a new and unique creation for the chance to win a variety of prizes. The event, happening on Thursday, May 23rd at Ballou High School, will focus on BBQ-themed recipes and is associated with the 32nd Annual Giant National Capital BBQ Battle on June 22-23 in Downtown DC.

The top-three finishers will earn scholarships from Pepsi and The Ben's Chili Bowl Foundation. The first-place winner will receive \$10,000, second place will receive \$5,000, and third place will receive \$2,500. The scholarships will be administered by the Virginia Ali Scholarship Fund for the students to pursue their passion in the culinary arts. The fourth, fifth, and sixth place winners will each earn a laptop computer from Comcast and all competitors will receive a chef’s apron and complimentary tickets to the Giant BBQ Battle.

"Pepsi is the perfect complement to any meal and proud to support the next generation of culinary talent through the inaugural Pepsi Future Chef Recipe Contest," said Noel Rodriguez, VP Retail sales, PepsiCo Beverages North America, South Division. "We value creativity and innovation in the kitchen and are excited to partner with The Ben’s Chili Bowl Foundation to empower young chefs to share their personal flavors and family memories with their local community."

"It is such an honor to have Pepsi offer this Scholarship Fund in my name," said Virginia Ali, Co-Founder and Owner of Ben’s Chili Bowl. "It has truly been a privilege to serve our community for over 65 years, so I absolutely love being a part of this since it supports our children! And as I often say, one recipe can change lives!"

"The ProStart program is a great opportunity for high school students to embark on developing their skill and passion in all aspects of the hospitality industry, to become an essential part of a thriving restaurant community. RAMW is invested in DC's workforce pipeline and understands the necessity to train and develop industry professionals. We are excited about the opportunity to highlight our young adults," said Linda Hunter, DC ProStart Coordinator and RAMW's Director of Events and Education.

The competition consists of three rounds. In round one, students will submit their recipes and a completed submission form. Those who satisfy all qualifications will move on to round two, where judges will select three finalist's recipes from each school. On May 23, 2024, the contestant's will put their recipes to the test with a live cook-off at Ballou High School.

During the live cook-off, judges will sample the entries and evaluate them on cleanliness, food presentation, flavor, creativity, and overall impression. Then, on June 22, 2024 during the Giant BBQ Battle, the winners will be announced live on-stage and awards will be presented.

"As a culinary instructor, my goal is to establish in each student a sense of creativity and joy for cooking," said Chef Shanel Howard of Ballou High School. "The Pepsi Future Chef Recipe Contest encourages young chefs to explore their family culinary history and create new recipes that are tasty yet inspire a lifetime of passion for the culinary arts."

\*\*\*

#### **About the Giant National Capital Barbecue Battle:**

The Giant National Capital Barbecue Battle, now in its 32nd year, is America's premier Food and Music Festival. The Giant BBQ Battle has celebrated food, music, and community in our nation's capital each summer since 1993, raising millions of dollars for DC community organizations and charities.

#### **About PepsiCo:**

PepsiCo products are enjoyed by consumers more than one billion times a day in more than 200 countries and territories around the world. PepsiCo (NASDAQ: PEP) generated more than \$91 billion in net revenue in 2023, driven by a complementary beverage and convenient foods portfolio that includes Lay's, Doritos, Cheetos, Gatorade, Pepsi-Cola, Mountain Dew, Quaker, and SodaStream. PepsiCo's product portfolio includes a wide range of enjoyable foods and beverages, including many iconic brands that generate more than \$1 billion each in estimated annual retail sales.

Guiding PepsiCo is our vision to Be the Global Leader in Beverages and Convenient Foods by Winning with pep+ (PepsiCo Positive). pep+ is our strategic end-to-end transformation that puts sustainability and human capital at the center of how we will create value and growth by operating within planetary boundaries and inspiring positive change for planet and people. For more information, visit [www.pepsico.com](http://www.pepsico.com), and follow on X (Twitter), Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn @PepsiCo.

#### **About ProStart:**

ProStart® – a National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF) two-year program that prepares high school students for careers in the foodservice industry that reaches nearly 150,000 students in more than 1,900 high schools across 50 states, returned to Washington, DC, after more than a decade. RAMW, in collaboration with Educated Eats, began working toward the relaunch of this program in 2016, having recognized and acted upon the

need to develop the talents of highly skilled workers in both the front and back of the house. ProStart trains students academically in the classroom and experientially on the job. From culinary techniques to management skills, ProStart®'s industry-driven curriculum provides real-life experience opportunities and builds practical skills and a foundation that will last a lifetime. ProStart® students are also provided with the chance to compete at the National ProStart Invitational, the country's premier secondary school competition focused on restaurant management and culinary arts.