

# GETTING BACK TO YOUR ROOTS SYMPOSIUM

For Immediate Release

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## **K-12 School Food Leaders Learn, Discuss and Create at the “Getting Back to Your Roots Symposium,” held at The Culinary Institute of America**

Minneapolis, Minn. – (January 29, 2014) – Sixteen leaders in K-12 school foodservice, representing nine districts from across the country, are meeting at The Culinary Institute of America's (CIA) San Antonio campus this week, Jan. 27, 28 and 29, for the annual “Getting Back to Your Roots Symposium.” The accredited program was developed by Chef Mark Ainsworth, PCIII, CEC and Professor of Culinary at the CIA, to provide K-12 leaders a new forum for culinary-focused dialogue and training in a small-group format. Adam Brumberg, deputy director of The Cornell University Food & Brand Lab, is a contributing partner in the program, which is sponsored by Schwan's Food Service, Inc.

“We know that school foodservice leaders continue to manage significant evolutions in their food and nutrition programs, whether related to sourcing, menu building, budgets, nutrition guidelines or feedback from students and parents,” said Ainsworth. “Their work is critical to the successful performance of our students, and this program allows them a chance to learn from each other, hear some new information and then put on their culinary hats and go to work creating new concepts in our kitchens.”

The intensive curriculum for the three-day program reflects Ainsworth's expertise of global flavors and new practices of healthy cooking with whole grains, proteins and vegetables, as well as his understanding of how children taste food differently than adults. His knowledge of K-12 school food is based on more than 12 years of working with schools.

Brumberg will partner with Ainsworth, presenting research and sharing applicable tools in the area of behavioral economics with attendees. His review of food psychology and his branding and merchandising discussion will initiate a lively discussion on best practices to assist students in making healthy choices in the lunch line.

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Those attending will spend six or more hours cooking in the CIA's kitchen, preparing recipe-based items and then developing new concept ideas as part of their final project. "We expect that for several of our guests, it's unusual to have the opportunity to ideate new concepts, support them with branding and merchandising concepts and then go into the kitchen to prepare them from a flavor and culinary perspective," said Ainsworth.

Amidst the daily group classroom lectures and culinary demonstrations, attendees will be placed in teams of four. Each culinary team will begin its creative ideation on day one, building toward a final day that includes a formal presentation on their branded concepts followed by kitchen time to produce and plate their menu items, concluding with critiques from Ainsworth and Brumberg. "I guarantee we'll all be good friends by day three – and so we'll have the opportunity to learn from each other, be inspired by each other, and return home with an enriched passion for food," said Ainsworth.

"These foodservice leaders are incredibly dedicated professionals that really want to feed kids great food to help them succeed," said Mary O'Broin, vice president of marketing for Schwan's Food Service. "With this program, they have the opportunity to focus on how kids taste foods and the techniques of cooking grains, layering flavors and producing new, realistic concepts."

Attendees of the program will receive continuing education credit for their work. Districts represented include Palm Beach County Schools, Fla.; Elk Grove Unified School District, Alum Rock Unified School District and Vallejo City Unified School District, Calif.; Shelby County Schools, Tenn.; Katy Independent School District and Fort Worth Independent School District, Texas; and Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools, Ga.

#### The Culinary Institute of America

Founded in 1946, The Culinary Institute of America is an independent, not-for-profit college offering associate and bachelor's degrees with majors in culinary arts, baking and pastry arts, and culinary science. As the world's premier culinary college, the CIA provides thought leadership in the areas of health & wellness, sustainability, and world cuisines & cultures through research and conferences. The CIA has a network of 45,000 alumni that includes industry leaders such as Grant Achatz, Anthony Bourdain, Roy Choi, Cat Cora, Dan Coudreaut, Steve Eells, Johnny Iuzzini, Charlie Palmer, and Roy Yamaguchi. The CIA also offers courses for professionals and enthusiasts, as well as consulting services in support of innovation for the foodservice and hospitality industry. The college has campuses in Hyde Park, NY; St. Helena, Calif.; San Antonio, Texas; and Singapore.

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Schwan's Food Service, Inc.

Schwan's Food Service, Inc., a subsidiary of Minnesota-based The Schwan Food Company ([www.theschwanfoodcompany](http://www.theschwanfoodcompany)), offers value-added frozen foods to foodservice operators through more than 1,800 active distributors. Customers include public and private schools, colleges and universities, chain restaurants, healthcare facilities and convenience stores. The company offers items from leading brands such as **Tony's®**, **Freschetta®**, **Red Baron®** and **Big Daddy's®** pizza and **Minh®** Asian-style products. More than 85 different selections have been created for K-12 schools that meet the new USDA school meal rules, including a variety of 51 percent whole grain pizzas with reduced sodium and fats, and a line of Asian-style sauces with 25 percent less sodium than leading competitors and cleaner labels.

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