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The James Beard Foundation Announces Recipients of Inaugural Leadership Awards

*Recognizing 10 Visionaries – including First Lady Michelle Obama – Who Are Creating a
More Healthful, Sustainable, and Safe Food World*

New York, NY (August 10, 2011) – Recognizing visionaries in the business, government and education sectors responsible for creating a healthier, safer, and more sustainable food world, the [James Beard Foundation](#) has named the recipients of the inaugural [James Beard Foundation Leadership Awards](#). The honorees — who range from urban agriculture heroes to tireless healthy school food pioneers — are **Will Allen, Fedele Bauccio, Debra Eschmeyer, Sheri Flies, Jan Kees Vis, Fred Kirschenmann, First Lady Michelle Obama, Janet Poppendieck, Alice Waters, and Craig Watson.**

The Leadership Awards represent a new focal point for the Foundation as the culinary arts organization enters its 25th anniversary year. “Our Foundation is widely known for recognizing the best chefs and restaurateurs in America through our annual James Beard Awards,” said Susan Ungaro, President of the James Beard Foundation. “Our new Leadership Awards shine the spotlight on game-changing pioneers who have inspired positive action to improve our country’s food system.”

Honorees were chosen by an advisory board comprised of a dozen experts from diverse areas of expertise. The Leadership Awards recognize specific outstanding initiatives as well as bodies of work and lifetime achievement. Among the criteria used to select final honorees are excellence of work, innovation in approach and scale of impact within a community or the nation. The advisory board members are: Dan Barber, Rick Bayless, Scott Cullen, Hal Hamilton, Jessica Harris, Bob Lawrence, Marion Nestle, Eric Rimm, Gus Schumacher, Debbie Shore, Naomi Starkman and Arlin Wasserman. James Beard Foundation Leadership Award honorees themselves will have a role in nominating future recipients. The program is partially underwritten by a grant from the GRACE Communications Foundation.

The inaugural cohort of recipients of the Leadership Awards will be honored on October 12 at a ceremony and dinner prepared by James Beard Award-winning chefs Michel Nischan and Anne Quatrano during the second annual **James Beard Foundation Food Conference**. The invitation-only conference, cohosted by *Good Housekeeping*, will take place on October 12 and 13 at the Hearst Tower in New York City.

Food is the world’s biggest industry, with restaurants alone contributing more than \$550 billion to our national economy. Media messages about food saturate our culture at every turn. The 2011 James Beard Foundation Food Conference, **Sustainability on the Table: How Money and Media Influence the Way America Eats**, will explore these two themes. Founding support for the JBF Food Conference was provided by GRACE Communications, Edens & Avant, and Sodexo. The Conference is also made possible with support from American Humane Association, Karp Resources, and UBS. For more information, visit www.jbfoodconference.org.

2011 James Beard Foundation Leadership Award Recipients

Will Allen, Founder and President, Rainbow Farmer's Cooperative and Founder and CEO of Growing Power:
For his lifelong work as a farmer and community activist dedicated to supporting low-income and small family farmers who bring healthy, affordable food to urban areas.

Fedele Bauccio, CEO, Bon Appétit Management Company:
For his commitment to quality food and socially responsible food sourcing.

Debra Eschmeyer, Co-Founder and Program Director, FoodCorps:
For addressing the issues of childhood obesity and diet-related disease through school lunch programs with the National Farm to School Network and her leadership of FoodCorps' innovative programming.

Sheri L. Flies, Assistant General Merchandise Manager, Corporate Foods, Costco Wholesale Corporation:
For her work on the Juan Francisco Project, which assessed the sustainability of the existing supply chain for French beans in Guatemala and determined how it affects the lives of farmers and their families, and for playing a key role in Costco's efforts to integrate sustainable practices in its buying decisions.

Jan Kees Vis, Global Director, Sustainable Sourcing Development, Unilever:
For his work in creating the Sustainable Living Plan at Unilever with clear goals of reducing waste, water use, and GHG emissions by 50% and achieving 100% sustainable sourcing by 2020, and for his industry-wide leadership in the Palm Oil Roundtable.

Fred Kirschenmann, Distinguished Fellow, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa State University and President of the Board of Directors, Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture:
For his lifelong work on sustainable food and farming systems.

First Lady Michelle Obama:
For launching Let's Move!, a comprehensive initiative dedicated to solving the challenge of childhood obesity within a generation.

Janet Poppendieck, Author and Professor of Sociology at Hunter College, City University of New York, and at the CUNY Graduate Center:
For bringing issues of poverty, hunger, and food assistance to the forefront through her teachings and books, such as Sweet Charity? Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement and Free For All: Fixing School Food in America.

Alice Waters, Chef, Author, and the Proprietor of Chez Panisse:
For her pioneering use of sustainable and local ingredients in food service and for the Chez Panisse Foundation's work in creating the Edible Schoolyard program.

Craig Watson, Vice President of Sustainable Agriculture, Sysco Corporation:
For his work to improve sustainable agriculture and integrated pest management (IPM) practices for Sysco's food products; programs that have impacted over 921,000 acres of agriculture land.

Tickets to the inaugural Leadership Awards Dinner are available for \$1,000, and tables of ten are available for \$10,000. A portion of each ticket or table purchase is tax-deductible as allowed by law. For event information or to purchase tickets, please contact Bowen & Company at 212.925.0054 or visit www.jbfladershipawards.org.

About the James Beard Foundation

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation is dedicated to celebrating, nurturing, and preserving America's diverse culinary heritage and future. A cookbook author and teacher with an encyclopedic knowledge about food, James Beard, who died in 1985, was a champion of American cuisine. He helped educate and mentor generations of professional chefs and food enthusiasts. Today, the Beard Foundation continues in the same spirit by administering a number of diverse programs that include educational initiatives, food industry awards, scholarships to culinary schools, and publications, and by maintaining the historic James Beard House in New York City's Greenwich Village as a "performance space" for visiting chefs. For more information, please visit www.jamesbeard.org. Find insights on food at the James Beard Foundation's blog [Delights & Prejudices](#). Join the James Beard Foundation on [Facebook](#). Follow the James Beard Foundation on [Twitter](#).