



**NEWS RELEASE For Immediate Release, February 5, 2019**

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## **Nominations Are Being Accepted for the 2019 Produce Excellence in Foodservice Awards Program**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (February 5, 2019) – United Fresh has opened the nomination period for the 2019 Produce Excellence in Foodservice Awards Program. Developed to honor the foodservice industry’s most innovative produce performers, the **United Fresh Produce Excellence in Foodservice Awards Program** pays special tribute to chefs and foodservice operators for excellence in the use of fresh produce in the culinary arts.

Since 2008, the program has recognized more than 70 foodservice leaders for their exceptional work to incorporate a variety of fresh produce on their menu. The award also recognizes culinarians for their creativity in using fresh produce in concept development and menu design, their knowledge of fresh produce handling procedures, participation in produce-related special events and community service, and overall recognition by the foodservice community.

“With this year’s program, we once again look forward to honoring chefs and foodservice leaders who are highlighting fresh produce on their menus, introducing diners to new flavors and creative ways to enjoy fresh produce,” said Tom Stenzel, United Fresh President & CEO. “We are proud to recognize those chefs who are committed to making produce the centerpiece of the meal, as well as inspiring colleagues, and home chefs alike, to incorporate more fresh produce on their plates.”

Winning chefs and foodservice professionals will be recognized in eight categories – Business in Industry, Casual & Family Dining Restaurants, Colleges & Universities, Fine Dining Restaurants, Hospitals & Healthcare, Hotels & Resorts, K-12 School Foodservice and Quick Service Restaurants.

Winners will be selected by United Fresh Produce Association and will be recognized at United Fresh 2019 Convention & Expo, June 10-12, 2019 in Chicago, at the event’s Retail-Foodservice Celebration. The eight winning chefs, along with a corporate executive, also receive complimentary airfare, hotel accommodations and registrations to United Fresh 2019.

The 2018 winners in each category were:

- **Business in Industry:** Chef Julie Pearson, Food Service Director – Anthem Richmond, Compass Food Group-Eurest Services, Richmond, VA
- **Casual & Family Dining Restaurants:** Chef Michael Rypka, Executive Chef/Vice President of Culinary Marketing-Company Founder, United States Success Foods Management Group, LLC DBA Torchy’s Tacos, Austin, TX

- **Colleges & Universities:** Chef Mark Bedzik, Culinary Art Faculty & University Chef/Greenhouse Manager, Culinary Institute of Virginia, College of Culinary Arts at ECPI University, Norfolk, VA
- **Fine Dining Restaurants:** Chef Daniel Asher, Executive Chef/Partner, River & Woods, Boulder, CO
- **Hospitals & Healthcare:** Chef Damon Mangano, Executive Chef/District Chef, ARAMARK, Hillcrest Hospital Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, OH
- **Hotels & Resorts:** Chef Graham Lockwood, Executive Chef, Fairmont Copley Plaza, Boston, MA
- **K-12 School Foodservice:** Eric Goldstein, Chief Executive, School Support Services, New York City Department of Education, New York, NY
- **Quick Service Restaurants:** Ryan Krebs, Director of Foodservice, Rutter's, York, PA

Nominations can be submitted at [www.unitedfresh.org/fsa](http://www.unitedfresh.org/fsa). For more information about the award program, contact Andrew Marshall, United Fresh Director of Foodservice & Foundation Partnerships, at [amarshall@unitedfresh.org](mailto:amarshall@unitedfresh.org) or 202-303-3407.

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#### **About United Fresh Produce Association**

Founded in 1904, the United Fresh Produce Association brings together companies across every segment of the fresh produce supply chain, including growers, shippers, fresh cut processors, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, foodservice operators, industry suppliers and allied associations. We empower industry leaders to shape sound government policy. We deliver the resources and expertise companies need to succeed in managing complex business and technical issues. We provide the training and development individuals need to advance their careers in produce. Through these endeavors, we unite our industry with a common purpose – to build long-term value for our members and grow produce consumption. For more information, visit [www.unitedfresh.org](http://www.unitedfresh.org)