

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **RSYP Celebrates Spring with Two Culinary Arts Dinners**

Railroad Street Youth Project will host community dinners on March 30<sup>th</sup> and April 8<sup>th</sup>.

Great Barrington, MA – On March 30, at John Andrews Restaurant and on April 8, at The Red Lion Inn, Railroad Street Youth Project will celebrate the conclusion of its spring 2011 Culinary Arts classes.

The Berkshire Culinary Arts Program began five years ago at Pearl's in Great Barrington. The Red Lion Inn's Executive Chef, Brian J. Alberg, joined the program in Fall 2006, and now teaches the Level 2 course on Mondays at The Inn. Chef Dan Smith of John Andrews Restaurant joined the program as a guest chef in 2008, and now leads the Level 1 classes on Tuesdays.

The program offers local youth an introduction to the culinary field in a practical, hands-on way. Students learn by working in professional kitchens, through the generosity of the Berkshires' community-minded chefs. The class gives the participants an advantage in the restaurant industry, and many graduates of the program become employed by local restaurants or go on to study at culinary schools.

The Berkshire area boasts a distinctive culinary movement, led by a group of sophisticated chefs and the farmers and artisans from whom they source their menu ingredients. The chefs' culinary styles are informed by the ever-changing bounty of New England's seasons and the spirit of collaboration that pervades this close-knit group of farmers, producers and their peers. Small-town living, and its insular nature, along with a longstanding concern for the environment typical of people who work closely in it, has fostered a culture of sustainability that permeates life in the Berkshires. The region's fertile valleys nurture over eighty independently owned farms that provide produce, meat, poultry, charcuterie, artisan cheeses and more. The chefs offer their expertise and donate their time as well as space and ingredients in order to present varied cooking styles to the students, who work alongside them in the kitchen.

The graduates of RSYP's introductory and advanced classes gain first-hand experience in menu design, cutting techniques and food preparation, under the guidance of The Red Lion Inn's Executive Chef Brian Alberg. Alberg, who graduated from The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, has overseen a number of high profile kitchens in the northeast, and has made eight appearances at the James Beard House. He is joined by Chef Dan Smith, who teaches the introductory class at John Andrews Restaurant in South Egremont.

Railroad Street Youth Project is a Berkshire County non-profit organization that empowers young people through support of youth-inspired projects, advocacy and mentoring. The overarching goal of RSYP is to support the creation and expansion of innovative youth

development programs that meet the clear, stated, unmet needs of youth ages 14-25 residing in South Berkshire County.

Railroad Street Youth Project is RSYP serves critical needs in the South Berkshire community which family and school cannot meet, addressing the concerns and supporting the inspirations of young people, and offering guidance and resources in order for them to take action in their lives.

The Culinary Arts Program is one of many RSYP workplace mentoring programs, developed in consultation with local high schools and students to meet the need for more out of school vocational education and workplace readiness training opportunities.

The special menus of the final spring dinners were designed by the students and chefs who maintain a commitment to local growers. The menus can be found on [rsyp.org](http://rsyp.org) and tickets to the dinners may be purchased there or by calling RSYP at 413-528-2475.

This program has been featured on *Good Morning America*, *Chronicle* and Bobby Flay's *Grill It*. The class is offered twice a year, in courses of 8 classes each; it is open to people ages 14-25 at no charge.

Railroad Street Youth Project is a youth empowerment organization based in Great Barrington. For more information, please contact Brenda Barlow at [Brenda@rsyp.org](mailto:Brenda@rsyp.org).

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