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Houston's Top Chefs Join Forces to Celebrate 10 Years of Recipe for Success Foundation

10 Chefs + 10 Courses + 75 Guests + The Dunlavy = Houston's Best Ever Dinner Party!

Delicious
ALCHEMY

CELEBRATING TEN YEARS OF RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

MAY 23, 2016. HOUSTON, Texas. Guests are still raving about the 10th Anniversary party that Gracie and Bob Cavnar threw to benefit Recipe for Success Foundation, Thursday night May 19 at The Dunlavy. "The chicest most elegant dinner we've been to in years," gushed global philanthropist Becca Thrash. "The entire evening was a feast for every sense—truly a beautiful, engaging, and delicious few hours in the most perfect Houston setting," insisted Houston supporter Jane Wagner.

A culinary reunion with the air of a parallel party had the kitchen humming all afternoon as ten iconic food artists—all founding members of the Recipe For Success Chef's Advisory Board—prepared their courses. Bryan Caswell, Charles Clark, Robert Del Grande, Randy Evans, Lance Fegen, Peter Garcia, Elouise Jones, Monica Pope, Randy Rucker, and John Sheely pulled out all the stops to create their over-the-top dishes with the help of ingredients donated by Sysco Foods, D'Artagnan, DR Delicacy, Marble Ranch and Indian Creek Mushrooms.

Afternoon thunderstorms cleared and a breeze kicked up just in time for seventy guests to arrive at The Dunlavy where the parade of food started during cocktails on the screen porch, which is cantilevered over Buffalo Bayou. Lance Fegen's Pupukea-style tuna poke with ginger, macadamia, mango and chilies on a wasabi-sesame spoon; Monica Pope's signature Date with a Pig and John Sheely's snapper ceviche were passed as guests posed for photos with Neal Hamil Agency models who were draped only in artful dinner napkins. The models displayed examples of *Dinner at Eight*, sets of ten napkins featuring original works created for the occasion by artists Andrea Bianconi, Elaine Bradford, Joey Fauerso, Michael Golden, David McGee, Neva Mikulicz, Kermit Oliver, Susan Plum, Beth Secor and Randy Twaddle. Guests snapped up the packaged sets on sale for \$250. A signature cocktail of Belvedere Peach Vodka with fresh Texas peaches from Jolie Vue Ranch made the rounds along with Chandon Sparkling Wine, Anna de Codorniu Cava Brut, En Route Chardonnay, Long Meadow Ranch Sauvignon Blanc, Septima Malbec, DeLoach Pinot Noir—all curated by Glazers Distributing, plus Stella Artois and 8th Wonder beer—gifts from Silver Eagle.

With her grandmother's sterling silver dinner bell, Gracie Cavnar signaled a move to the dining room where two long tables dressed in natural linen shimmered with silver and gold flatware, golden rimmed plates, and accented with white votives, pillar candles, peonies, tulips and hydrangeas were set under a sparkling collection of 40 antique chandeliers. Bent dinner forks displayed place cards, which matched the two-sided menus printed on natural craft paper. Once the cozy party was seated Cavnar recognized chefs Fegen, Pope and Sheely who shared their stories from the classroom and their enthusiasm for the Foundation's programming along with the description of their hors d'oeuvres. All three—along with the rest of the chefs being featured during the evening, had helped Cavnar create the

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Foundation's signature program now known nationally as Seed-to-Plate Nutrition Education™. "It helped me be a better parent myself," insisted Fegen, while Pope shared a favorite story of 4th graders finding purple cauliflower in their garden, then insisting on adding it to the whole wheat pizza they were making and Sheely described the joy of seeing the light go on when a child understands the magic of food.

"Get ready for the meal of your life," warned Cavnar before the next course went down—Charles Clark's skate wing in Meyer lemon brodetto with Taylor Bay scallops, was followed by Pedro Garcia's lentil soup with shaved black truffle and truffle oil. Then out came Bryan Caswell's duck leg with Jordan almonds, brik and brown butter and Randy Rucker's lightly smoked short rib of beef with mushroom and chickweed. Each dish bought a gush of oohs and lots of cell phone photos, while each chef shared his story of working with Recipe for Success Foundation. Pedro Garcia, who like Pope, Sheely and Evans has spent time in the Foundation's classrooms every single month for a decade, had just hosted this year's class of 30 fourth graders to his restaurant, El Meson earlier in the day. "I gave them the nickel tour and got to teach them a little something new today—the meaning of abstract, which is the opposite of what we are doing with Recipe for Success, because we are delivering real change in the way these kids think about, understand and eat their food. It's going to stick with them forever and even impact their families." One after the other, each chef shared how their volunteer work with Recipe for Success had not only impacted the 35,000 kids the program has worked with to date, but changed their own lives.

"Never lose your childlike sense of wonder," advised Robert Del Grande as he presented his desert of pistachio cake, beet crème and lime glass that he coined the Mad Hatter. The colorful pink and green confection provided a delicious backdrop to a live auction of two pieces of original art. Shawn and Genevieve Patterson won a lively bidding war that drove the final price to \$1,000 for *Couture Cognac*, a triptych of 6"x6" pieces done in graphite, paint and thread on linen by René Garza, of Houston and New York. *There's No Such Thing as Leftovers!*, a three dimensional piece of a found object, needle and thread on hemmed cotton napkin, created by Joseph H. Havel, who Catherine Ansporn declared "a pillar of the Texas art scene," was snapped up for \$2,000 by Becca and John Thrash.

After the auction, Cavnar brought forth Randy Evans who has recently moved to San Antonio and made the trip back especially for the party. "Not only did Randy help me create this program, and spent a decade in our classrooms, we have gone on the road together to New York and the White House to promote it. We miss you Randy!" Evans hugged Cavnar as he shared how teaching with the Foundation had inspired him to build his own garden at his now shuttered Haven and keep bee hives, and introduce his kids to cooking. "After teaching with Recipe, I was comfortable starting my own girls early at the stove. They have been cooking with me since they were three."

To give party guests the chance to stretch their legs, Evans' dessert course of vanilla bean pound cake with bourbon macerated strawberries and lemon kurd was being served on the screen porch along with Elousie Jones' iconic Chocolat Pots de Crème. But before the diners disbursed, they insisted that all ten chefs reappear and rose to give them a standing ovation. The dinner raised \$150,000 for Recipe for Success Foundations programming in Houston.

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About Delicious Alchemy: To celebrate the Foundation's 10th Anniversary Year, three events are being held. The Banquet, The Community Supper, a public outdoor event held on May 22 in conjunction with Sunday Streets, and The Art of Food—a final event planned for September 27 in conjunction with the Texas Art Fair.

The Art of Food includes tasting stations from 18 chefs and 12 vintners along with live music, on-demand poetry from the Inprint Poetry Buskers and original works on auction from artists participating in *Art on a Napkin* curated by Catherine Ansporn and Eleanor Williams, including Bennie Flores Ansell Andrea Bianconi, Michael Bise, Elaine Bradford, Desire Obtain Cherish, Kent Dorn, Amy Evans, Joey Fauerso, Michael Gordon, David McGee, Matt Messinger, Neva Mikulicz, Katie Oliver, Kermit Oliver, Kinglsey Onyeiwu, Susan Plum, Jay Rusovich, Beth Secor, Randy Twaddle and Geoff Winningham. Original work is donated by the artists and their galleries: Art Palace, Rudolph Blume/Artscan, Hiram Butler, Deborah Colton, Barbara Davis, Hooks-Epstein, Inman, Koelsch, McClain, Moody, David Shelton, Anya Tish and Unix.

Silkscreened sets of ten *Dinner at Eight* napkins printed from the original art are available for \$250 each by calling the Foundation at 713-520-0443.

About Recipe For Success

Celebrating its tenth anniversary year, Recipe for Success Foundation is a non-profit 501C3 that focuses on combating childhood obesity by changing the way our children understand, appreciate and eat their food and by educating and mobilizing the community to provide healthier diets for children, with programs that have empowered more than 30,000 children in Houston and beyond with the knowledge and skills they need to lead healthier lives. The Foundation works to create a culture where nutritious food is shared, appreciated, and celebrated. Through its award-winning efforts like the nationally-offered Seed-to-Plate Nutrition Education™ in schools, Eat It! Food Adventures children's cookbooks, farmers marKIDS DAYS and the VegOut! 30-Day Challenge, and the Hope Farms urban agriculture project in Houston, the Foundation works to make healthy food appealing and available to everyone. For more information call 713-520-0443 or see www.recipe4success.org