For Immediate Release:
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ACF Culinary Team USA Places Fourth in the World at International “Culinary Olympics”
ACF Culinary Teams win gold, silver and bronze medals

ST. AUGUSTINE, FLA., November 1, 2016—American Culinary Federation (ACF) Culinary National Team USA ranked fourth in the world overall and won three gold medals in the 24th Internationale Kochkunst Ausstellung (IKA) International Culinary Exhibition, commonly known as the “culinary Olympics,” Oct. 22-25, in Erfurt, Germany. Two of the ACF Culinary USA teams – national and youth – finished in the top 10, while the military team won four gold medals and two bronze medals, proving American cuisine is among the best in the world.

“The teams did a phenomenal job,” said American Culinary Federation Education Foundation Chairman Michael Ty, CEC, AAC. “I’ve been to several ‘culinary Olympics’ and this one topped them all from the starters to the desserts. These teams put their hearts and souls into it, and they represented the best of American cuisine.”

ACF National President Thomas Macrina, CEC, CCA, AAC, who was the business manager for the 2012 ACF Culinary National Team USA, knows firsthand the challenges of competing internationally. “The national team displayed impeccable calm and courage under intense pressure,” he said. “They competed against the best chefs in the world and their coaching, discipline, teamwork and dedication to the craft is what earned the national team gold medals. The youth and military teams showed exceptional skill, and I couldn’t be more proud.”

ACF Culinary National Team USA earned three gold medals for its interpretation of current American cuisine trends using American products. The team earned a gold medal in the hot-food kitchen, a gold medal in the cold-food competition, as well as a gold medal overall in culinary art for earning the top score in the world in the cold-food competition. Overall, the team placed fourth in the world among 30 national teams that competed. Singapore, Finland and Switzerland placed first, second and third, respectively.

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ACF Culinary National Team USA members are:
- Ben Grupe, team captain, executive chef, Elaia and Olio, St. Louis, Missouri
- George Castaneda, CEC, executive chef, Sodexo Corporate Services’ Healthways World Headquarters, Franklin, Tennessee
- Andy Chlebana, CEPC, culinary arts/pastry professor, Joliet Junior College, Joliet, Illinois
- Jason Hall, CMC, executive chef, Myers Park Country Club, Charlotte, North Carolina
- Susan Notter, CEPC, pastry arts program director, The Pennsylvania School of Culinary Arts, Lancaster, Pennsylvania
- Matthew Seasock, CEC, executive chef, Northwood Club, Dallas, Texas
- Corey Siegel, CEC, corporate executive chef, Electrolux Professional, Charlotte, North Carolina
- Daniel Hugelier, CMC, team advisor, owner, WildSeason, Livonia, Michigan
- Steve Jilleba, CMC, CCE, AAC, team business manager, senior corporate executive chef, Unilever Food Solutions, Lisle, Illinois
- Joseph Leonardi, CEC, team manager, director of culinary operations, The Country Club, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts
- Timothy Prefontaine, CEC, team coach, executive chef, The Fort Worth Club, Fort Worth, Texas

“The team did a great job in overcoming the obstacles that come with competing internationally and the end result proved that,” said National Team USA Manager Joseph Leonardi, CEC. “We chose to prepare food that represents who we are as a country, food that we are proud of and is bountiful in America. It has been an honor to serve with this team.”

ACF Culinary Youth Team USA, all 25 years or younger, showed exceptional teamwork, vision and professionalism. The team was awarded silver medals for its edible buffet and hot-food kitchen. Overall, the youth team placed seventh out of 19 competing countries. Sweden, Switzerland and Norway placed first, second and third, respectively.

ACF Culinary Youth Team USA members are:
- Jesus Olmedo, youth team captain, chef de tournant, The Country Club, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts
- Megan Bamford, pastry cook, Farmington Country Club, Charlottesville, Virginia
- Anica Hosticka, apprentice, ACF South Bend Chefs and Cooks Apprenticeship Program, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana
- Tracy Morris, assistant pastry chef, Chevy Chase Club, Chevy Chase, Maryland
- Marco Olivares, executive chef, El Paso Country Club, El Paso, Texas
- Lydia Ross, CSC, demi chef, Chevy Chase Club, Chevy Chase, Maryland
- Shawn Culp, CEC, MBA, youth team coach, culinary arts department chair, The Art Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Stafford DeCambra, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC, youth team manager, Atmore, Alabama

“This team has been training hard for years and when they got into that kitchen they proved they were ready to cook and never lost focus,” said Stafford DeCambra, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC, youth team manager. “In both the hot-food kitchen and the edible buffet, we showcased a fall seasonal menu that represented the best of American regional cuisine.”

The military team, U.S. Army Culinary Arts Team (USACAT), earned four gold medals and one bronze in the regional cold-food competition ranking 18th out of 52 countries. Stockholm Culinary Team, Skåne Kulinar and Amber Alliance placed first, second and third, respectively. In addition, the team received a bronze medal in catering, earning 12th place out of 19 countries. Finland earned the top catering spot, followed by Sweden and Denmark, respectively.

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United States Army Culinary Arts Team members are:
- Master Chief Derrick Davenport, CEC, CEPC, CCE, MBA, team captain, U.S. Navy, Alexandria, Virginia
- Chief Warrant Officer 3 J.D. Ward, CEC, U.S. Army, Richmond, Virginia
- Staff Sgt. Kevin Arwood, CEC, U.S. Army, Aiea, Hawaii
- Staff Sgt. Lagena Boggs, CC, CWPC, U.S. Army, Prince George, Virginia
- Staff Sgt. John Densham, U.S. Army, Ft. Belvoir, Virginia
- Staff Sgt. Sarah Deckert, CEC, U.S. Army, Beaverton, Oregon
- Staff Sgt. Justin Gonzalez, CC, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C.
- Spc. Symone Harden, U.S. Army, Ft. Stewart, Georgia
- Sgt. Erica Larsen, U.S. Army, Fayetteville, North Carolina
- Spc. Sandra Quinones, U.S. Army, Tacoma, Washington
- Staff Sgt. Marc Susa, U.S. Army, Oxon Hill, Maryland
- Chief Petty Officer Matthew Susienka, CEC, U.S. Navy, Bristol, Wisconsin
- Michael Matarazzo, CEC, team adviser, Charlottesville, Virginia

“The team prepared food at a high quality and successfully pushed through every hurdle,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 J.D. Ward, CEC, USACAT manager. “The team outpaced their practice times and worked together to serve a seasonal menu that received a lot of positive feedback.”

More than 2,000 chefs representing 59 nations participated in the IKA team and individual competitions. To learn more about the competition and how to support the U.S. teams, please visit the ACF Culinary Team USA website.

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About the American Culinary Federation
The American Culinary Federation, Inc. (ACF), established in 1929, is the standard of excellence for chefs in North America. With more than 17,500 members spanning more than 150 chapters nationwide, ACF is the leading culinary association offering educational resources, training, apprenticeship and programmatic accreditation. In addition, ACF operates the most comprehensive certification program for chefs in the United States, with the Certified Executive Chef®, Certified Sous Chef®, Certified Executive Pastry Chef® and Certified Culinary Educator® designations accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies. The American Culinary Federation Education Foundation is home to ACF Culinary Team USA, the official representative for the United States in major international culinary competitions, and to Chef & Child, founded in 1989 to promote proper nutrition in children and to combat childhood obesity. For more information, visit www.acfchefs.org. Find ACF on Facebook and on Twitter.

About Internationale Kochkunst Ausstellung
Founded in 1896, the Internationale Kochkunst Ausstellung (IKA) International Culinary Art Competition, also known as the “culinary Olympics,” serves as a world-class venue for talented chefs from around the globe to showcase culinary skill and innovation. Similar to the traditional athletic Olympics, which brings together the best athletes from around the world, the IKA is the single most elite competitive culinary event. Every four years, professional teams from around the globe come together in Erfurt, Germany, to compete for gold, silver and bronze medals in several categories. The United States has participated in the Culinary Olympics since 1956. For more information, visit their website: http://www.olympiade-der-koeche.com/en.html

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Captions for photos:

File name: ACF Culinary National Team USA.jpg

Caption: The American Culinary Federation Culinary National Team USA earned three gold medals to place fourth in the world overall among 30 competing nations at the international “culinary Olympics.”

File name: ACF Culinary Youth Team USA.jpg

Caption: The American Culinary Federation Culinary Youth Team USA earned two silver medals to place seventh in the world overall out of 19 competing nations at the international “culinary Olympics.”

File name: United States Army Culinary Arts Team.jpg

Caption: The United States Army Culinary Arts Team earned four gold medals and one bronze medal in the cold-food competition, and a bronze medal in the community catering competition at the international “culinary Olympics.”

Editor's Note: For additional high-resolution photos, menus or to schedule an interview with a team member, please contact Stacy Gammill at (904) 484-0213 or sgammill@acfchefs.net.