



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chefs Donald Link & Stephen Stryjewski to host YEP Educates 2018 Graduation Recognition Ceremony & Brunch at Calcasieu Private Dining

New Orleans, LA – Friday, June 15, 2018 – The Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) along with the Link Restaurant Group will celebrate the success of YEP's most recent graduating class of students at Calcasieu Private Dining in the Central Business District. New Orleans City Councilmembers who have confirmed attendance include Joseph Giarrusso, Kristin Gisleson Palmer, Cyndi Nguyen and Jason Williams along with State Rep. Royce Duplessis.

This year, 45 individuals completed the necessary courses and testing to earn their High School Equivalency (HiSET) diploma - formerly known as the GED. YEP Educates is comprised of two programs targeting different age groups of students: New Orleans Providing Literacy To All Youth (NOPLAY) & The Village. YEP Educates is the largest adult education provider in New Orleans that specializes in providing high school equivalency and adult literacy services to out-of-school youth and young adults.

WHAT: YEP Educates 2018 Graduate Recognition Ceremony & Brunch
WHEN: Friday, June 15, 2018
WHERE: Calcasieu Private Dining , 930 Tchoupitoulas St New Orleans, LA (2nd Floor)
WHEN: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

The brunch is being sponsored by YEP employment partner the Link Restaurant Group which trains YEP Works graduates at its award-winning restaurants including Cochon, Cochon Butcher and Calcasieu Private Dining. Chefs Donald Link and Stephen Stryjewski have been long-time supporters of YEP's critical work in the community through their Link Stryjewski Foundation.

YEP students come from diverse backgrounds and are willing to share their personal stories of success: Here are two profiles:

- **Morris (18 years old):** Morris experienced health issues and had to take time off from his traditional high school in New Orleans. When he returned, Morris quickly realized the school was no longer a good fit until a family member heard about YEP Educates. He worked hard and successfully earned his high school equivalency diploma. Now at the age of 18, Morris is working with YEP's Transition Services team and has applied to Dillard University and Texas Southern University where he would like to study physical therapy.
- **Linda (38 years old)** - Linda recently passed her high school equivalency diploma just in time for graduation. Linda decided to enroll in YEP Educates four years ago. Her son has previously attended YEP's Camp Mariposa – a free-of-charge camp for children impacted by substance abuse in their families. Linda was referred to the Youth Empowerment Project by drug court. She will soon be completing another milestone as she is in phase three of four at drug court.

ABOUT YEP: Founded in 2004, the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) is a community-based nonprofit organization engaging underserved young people through community-based education, mentoring, employment readiness & enrichment services. In 2017, YEP served 1252 young people through a total of 11 programs at six sites. To learn more visit: youthempowermentproject.org or follow: @YEPNOLA.