

Darden Restaurants, Inc. Foundation Partners with Hispanic College Fund to Prepare Future Hispanic Professionals

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Washington, DC – The Darden Restaurants, Inc. Foundation has awarded a grant of \$125,000 to the Hispanic College Fund (HCF) in support of the national Hispanic Youth Institute and the HCF Scholarship Program. The Hispanic Youth Institute and the scholarship program are the first two steps in the Hispanic College Fund’s development pipeline, which is dedicated to preparing the next generation of Hispanic professionals.

Julio Suárez, director of Diversity Outreach at Darden Restaurants said, “We are proud to support the Hispanic College Fund because its programs align well with Darden’s Recipe for Success platform. Through Recipe for Success, Darden aims to enable and empower youth to pave their own path to success by providing access to the tools and information necessary to pursue postsecondary education.”

The Hispanic Youth Institute was launched in Fairfax, Virginia in 2004 and has expanded to serve eight communities in 2010. The program commences in each region with a summer college residency program – called the Hispanic Youth Symposium – which serves 100-200 students. Over four days and three nights, the students attend college and career workshops, meet with college admissions officers, develop relationships with adult and near-peer mentors and learn about the importance of community service. The Symposium is followed by year-round Institute programming that encourages alumni to develop a college-going culture in their high schools.

The Symposium will be hosted in the following communities this summer:

Albuquerque, NM	June 15-18, 2010
Dallas, TX	June 16-19, 2010
Baltimore, MD	June 29 – July 3, 2010
Phoenix, AZ	July 7-10, 2010
Petersburg, VA	July 14-17, 2010
Fresno, CA	July 20-23, 2010
Santa Clara, CA	July 28-31, 2010
Los Angeles, CA	August 10-13, 2010

In order to attend the program, students must be sophomores or juniors in high school and have at least a 2.5 GPA. Additional geographical restrictions may apply. Students must submit an application at www.hispanicyouth.org by March 31, 2010 in order to be considered for the program.

“It is an honor to have the Darden Restaurants, Inc. Foundation supporting the Hispanic Youth Institute and this summer’s Symposia,” said Joseph A. Petrone, CEO of the Hispanic College Fund. “With their support, we have been able to expand to two critical markets – Phoenix and the Silicon Valley – where Hispanic students need our program’s support. We look forward to their support of our scholarship program as well, and recognize Darden’s commitment to the education and professional development of our Hispanic youth.” \$25,000 of the Darden Restaurants, Inc. Foundation’s total contribution will go to support HCF’s scholarship program, which has been supporting students since 1993. Since it was founded, the program has awarded more than \$15 million to 5,200 deserving students.

For more information about the Hispanic College Fund and its programs, please visit: www.hispanicfund.org

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About the Hispanic College Fund

Founded in 1993, the Hispanic College Fund is a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C., with a mission to develop the next generation of Hispanic professionals. For 15 years, the Hispanic College Fund has provided educational, scholarship, and mentoring programs to students throughout the United States and Puerto Rico, establishing a career pipeline of talented and career-driven Hispanics who are trained in the fields of business, science, technology, engineering, and math.

The Hispanic College Fund has an annual budget of \$5.5 million with 20 full-time employees. In 2006, the

Hispanic College Fund received the Brillante award for “Nonprofit of the Year” from the National Society of Hispanic MBAs, and in 2007 was recognized by USA Today as one of the nation’s top 25 charities. The organization has twice received Charity Navigator’s top four-star rating for fiscal responsibility in non-profit management.

About Darden Restaurants

The Darden Restaurants, Inc. Foundation (“Foundation”) is a private nonprofit corporation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and was organized to administer charitable funds for the benefit of communities. The Foundation’s sponsor is Darden Restaurants, Inc. (“Darden”). Darden (NYSE:DRI) is the world’s largest company-owned and operated full-service restaurant company with over \$7.2 billion in annual sales and approximately 180,000 employees. Its brands – Red Lobster, Olive Garden, LongHorn Steakhouse, The Capital Grille, Bahama Breeze and Seasons 52 – reflect the rich diversity of those who dine in its restaurants. Darden is recognized for a culture that rewards caring for and responding to people. That defines service for Darden. The Darden Restaurants, Inc. Foundation works to bring to life this spirit of service through its philanthropic support of charitable organizations across the country as well as the volunteer involvement of its employees. With 1,800 restaurants, Darden strives to have an enduring and positive influence on the communities it serves.

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