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WEST DALLAS CHAMBER ANNOUNCES ITS 2013 VISIONARY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Master Chef Sharon Van Meter, SPCA of Texas and Architectural Pathway program to receive honor at chamber's 'Focus on the Future' luncheon, Sept. 6

(August 9, 2013) -- The West Dallas Chamber is bestowing its 2013 Visionary Award to a master chef, a renowned animal welfare organization and an innovative program designed to nurture the next generation of architects and homebuilders.

The 2013 Visionary Award recipients are:

- **Chef Sharon Van Meter, president of SVM Productions**
- **SPCA of Texas**
- **Architectural Pathway program at L.G. Pinkston High School**

All three 2013 Visionary Award recipients will receive their honor on Friday, Sept. 6 at the West Dallas Chamber's Focus on the Future luncheon, sponsored by Texas Capital Bank. Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings will deliver the luncheon's keynote speech.

BACKGROUND ON 2013 VISIONARY AWARD WINNERS

Chef Sharon Van Meter, president of SVM Productions -- A graduate of Le Cordon Bleu (Paris, France), Chef Sharon Van Meter is being honored for bringing to West Dallas her premier culinary training and corporate event center, 3015 at Trinity Groves. The award also is going to her for promoting the many new restaurants set to debut in Trinity Groves and enticing hundreds of foodies to experience West Dallas for the first time.

Ms. Van Meter brings more than 30 years of culinary experiences to the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. She has served as executive chef at the Ritz Carlton International; professor of American cuisine at Le Cordon Bleu (Paris, France); executive chef at Neiman Marcus (Dallas, Texas); and director of new projects development for FOOD Network TV.

Her humanitarian efforts range from the fight against hunger with Share Our Strength's "Taste of the Nation" project, to the fight against AIDS through the National Aids Foundation's "Touring Chefs" program. In addition, she has been a part of Habitat for Humanity's "House Party" and is a spokesperson for First Lady, Michelle Obama's "Chefs Move to the Schools" campaign, designed to eliminate childhood obesity.

SPCA of Texas-- The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals of Texas is the leading animal welfare agency in North Texas. The chamber is honoring the SPCA for having the vision to establish its new Jan Rees-Jones Animal Care Center in West Dallas, which has won awards for its dynamic architecture. It also is receiving its award bringing hundreds of volunteers and supporters to the area. The SPCA of Texas serves as an active resource center providing an array of programs and services that bring people and animals together to enrich each others' lives. Dedicated to providing every animal exceptional care and a loving home, the organization serves all demographics of the metro DFW area.

It oversees animal rescues and investigations in eight North Texas counties. In 2012 it rescued more than 760 animals and helped more than 8,800 find new homes through adoption.

The Architectural Pathway program at L.G. Pinkston High School-- Developed over the past year, the Architectural Pathway program is introducing seniors at Pinkston High School to the individuals and careers that create the built environment around us, giving them a better understanding of the real world of design.

The chamber is honoring the program for having the vision to connect students in West Dallas to homebuilding professionals throughout the city and help them better envision a future as a contractor, landscape designer, engineer or architect.

Under the guidance of industry professionals and former Dallas Arts District Executive Director Veletta Lill, 25 seniors in the program will compete this fall in teams to create designs that a panel of professionals will judge. Those students with the winning design will then construct their vision under the guidance of general contractors. In addition, the program is challenging the students to take a neglected interior courtyard at Pinkston High School and redesign it into a space that will make it more appealing to the student body.

BACKGROUND ON THE WEST DALLAS CHAMBER VISIONARY AWARD

This is the third year the West Dallas Chamber has honored individuals, organizations and programs that have possessed the vision to somehow participate in and help shape the economic future of West Dallas. Each year, members of the chamber nominate award recipients and the chamber's executive committee votes for those nominees they deem most deserving of the accolade.

Past recipients of the West Dallas Chamber Visionary Award include: those associated with the opening of the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge connecting West Dallas to downtown Dallas; the Sylvan/Thirty development and Cox Farms Market, under construction at Sylvan Avenue and Fort Worth Avenue;

and the Dallas CityDesign Studio and its implementation of the Urban Structure and Guidelines for West Dallas.

Others receiving the award have included West Dallas Investments and its Trinity Groves development along Singleton Boulevard; and The School Zone, a partnership between 20 non-profits and 10 public schools in West Dallas.

BACKGROUND ON FOCUS ON THE FUTURE LUNCHEON AND WEST DALLAS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

“Focus on the Future” is the West Dallas Chamber’s annual luncheon designed to spotlight the new and intriguing ways West Dallas is evolving as a community. This year’s luncheon is sponsored by Texas Capital Bank and takes place from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Friday, Sept. 6, at 3015 at Trinity Groves.

Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings will deliver the luncheon’s keynote address. Individual tickets are \$35 (members) and \$50 (nonmembers) and available online at westdallaschamber.com. Proceeds from the event help fund business education programs at El Centro West Campus.

The West Dallas Chamber of Commerce is the current embodiment of an organization that incorporated in 1994 as the West Dallas Business Association. One of the few all-volunteer chambers of commerce in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, the chamber has as its mission advancing and promoting the economic environment for business in West Dallas. That section of the city is bounded by Interstate 30 on the south, the Trinity River on the north and east and by the city limits on the west.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

About Chef Sharon Van Meter and 3015 at Trinity Groves:

<http://www.3015dallas.com>

About SPCA of Texas:

<http://www.sPCA.org>

About Architectural Pathway program:

http://www.dallasisd.org/cms/lib/TX01001475/Centricity/Domain/84/CP%20Brochure_2012.pdf

About West Dallas Chamber of Commerce:

<http://www.westdallaschamber.com>

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