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Contact: Denise Benoit, Benoit Marketing LLC

[Event Photos.](#)

Denise@benoitmarketing.com

703 919-1589

The National Conference Center Hosts 15th Annual Virginia ProStart Student Invitational

LEESBURG, VA — March 20, 2018 [Virginia ProStart](#), the national career-building program for high school students interested in the culinary arts and restaurant management, hosted its 15th Annual Virginia ProStart Student Invitational (VPSI) on March 9, 2018 at [The National Conference Center](#) in Leesburg, Virginia. ProStart in Virginia is sponsored by [Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association](#) (VRLTA); this was the first year the program was hosted in Northern Virginia since its inception in 2005.

The full-day cooking competition and business plan presentation included 65 students representing 13 teams from all areas of Virginia. The students competed to be named the top Culinary and Management school in Virginia and for over \$600,000 in cumulative scholarships offered by culinary programs from across the U.S. The winners of both the Culinary and Management competition will participate in the 2018 National ProStart Student Invitational in Providence, Rhode Island from April 27-29, 2018. ProStart is in all 50 states with more than 1,900 schools and over 95,000 students participating.

U.S. Representative Barbara Comstock (R-10) was the guest of honor and key note speaker. Other dignitaries attending the event were Jennifer Fox, Manager Political Policy and Engagement, National Restaurant Association and Urooj Mughal, Northwestern Regional Director for U.S. Senator Timothy Kaine's office. The event was sponsored by Visit Loudoun and Visit Fairfax. Thirty-five culinary judges volunteered from many local restaurants –(the owner of Fords Fish Shack, Glory Days, Silver Diner, Goodstone Inn), as well as the Culinary Institute of Virginia and Stratford University. Twenty management judges also were involved including Johnson & Wales, George Mason University, Central Virginia Community College, Clyde's Restaurant Group, Great American Restaurants, Art Institute of Virginia and Virginia Corporation for Tourism.

As a learning and development facility, The National worked very closely with VRLTA staff to create a 'true to life' work environment for the students. Executive Chef Todd Goldian said, "This is the kind of program we love at The National; it directly supports our mission as an educational facility. I'm delighted to be able to work directly with these students." Each year in Virginia, the ProStart program

reaches nearly 3,900 high school juniors and seniors, and 75 culinary educators at 55 Virginia high schools.

In Loudoun County, one of the fastest growing counties in the United States, [C.S. Monroe Technical School](#), one of 13 public high schools in the county, registered three teams (two in the culinary competition and one in the management competition). Monroe Tech is a nine time winner of this competition under the direction of Joy Anderson, Monroe's long time culinary teacher. Anderson, who is retiring this year after 28 years at Monroe, received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the event.

Working with students and creating job opportunities is one off Geoff Lawson's goals as Vice President and General Manager at The National, who also supports Riverside High School's culinary program and Project Search, a transition program for young adults with disabilities. ([See previous release here.](#))

[Photos of the competition, dignitaries and award presentation can be found here.](#)

Captions for photos: Monroe Tech's Culinary Team won 3rd place:

1. Photo named **Monroe Tech Winners ProStart**

(from left to right) students Josh Hineman, Corinna Young, Sydney Ong, Abby Santelli, Dennis Bajao and teacher Joy Anderson.

2. Photo named **Monroe Tech Business Plan Presentation ProStart**

(from left to right) students Sydney Ong, Abby Santelli, Corinna Young teacher Joy Anderson, students Josh Hineman, and Dennis Bajao

3. Photo named **Joy Anderson award ProStart**

(from left to right) Jim Wilson, Director of Education & Workforce Development, VRLTA; Joy Anderson, Monroe Tech teacher and award winner; Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-10); Eric Terry, President, Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Assoc.

For more information about the program, please contact [Jim Wilson](#) at VRLTA at 804-288-3065.

About The National Conference Center

Located on its own 65-acre campus in Northern Virginia, 12 miles from Dulles International Airport and 35 miles from Washington D.C., [The National Conference Center](#) is one of the largest and most comprehensive learning and training facilities in the nation. Referred to as "the cathedral of learning," the 1 million square foot complex offers 917 guest rooms and 265,000 square feet of meeting and group function space. The National is on the U.S. Government GSA schedule and recently received the coveted "Hotel of the Year of the Year" award from the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging and Travel Association. [@TheNationalNoVa](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#). The National Conference Center complex includes the [West Belmont Place](#) Event Center, a catering complex that includes Northern Virginia's largest ballroom (16,552 square feet). The hub for Loudoun County and surrounding area social and special events, West Belmont Place was named "Best Venue" by the International Special Events Society. [@WestBelmont](#) [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#)

The National Conference Center is owned by NCC PS Enterprises LLC, a venture between PCCP LLC and Stoneleigh Capital LLC, which retained [LaKota Hotels & Resorts](#) to oversee all aspects of the day-to-day operations.