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**Celebrity Chef Steven Meese to Teach at The RIDGE Project  
Culinary Arts Academy students to benefit from unique experience**



Steven Meese with The RIDGE Project Co-Executive Directors Ron & Catherine Tijerina

Steven Meese, chef and host of PBS' "A Chef's Journey" will begin teaching classes at The RIDGE Project's Farm-to-Plate Culinary Arts Academy starting September 20<sup>th</sup>. Chef Meese will instruct students in the culinary techniques and disciplines that will serve as the foundation for successful careers in fine dining food preparation.

Chef Meese plans to integrate lectures on "going back to the basics" of cooking with interactive sessions that will allow students to prepare meals for themselves. In many cases, students will be preparing food that they themselves have grown at The RIDGE Project's farm, RIDGE Gardens.

The RIDGE Project Co-Executive Director Ron Tijerina said, "We are so thankful to be able to have (Steven Meese) on our team. We are confident that the gifts and talents that he brings will elevate the quality of our Culinary Arts Academy and make a real difference in the lives of people with whom we work."

At the Culinary Arts Academy, located at The RIDGE Project's headquarters in McClure, Ohio, students learn everything that they need to take a seed, grow it into a

plant, and turn it into a gourmet meal. This one-of-a-kind training gives students opportunities for employment in a variety of high demand fields from food service to sustainable agriculture.

Since the students involved in this program are either low income or formerly incarcerated parents, this represents another chance for Chef Meese to give back to the community. He is currently a chef ambassador for Share Our Strength No Kid Hungry, which is an initiative active in raising funds and awareness to end child hunger in America.

Chef Meese recognized the value in helping program participants look towards a potential career in fine dining. "To cook at the highest level, you have to have an edge" he said, "that's what I'm passing on to these (students). I want to help them to be their best so they will be able to work in this industry."

Chef Steven Meese's sophisticated approach to food art and his colorful personality as an entertainer have captured wide media attention. Meese has gained national acclaim for his stunning visual presentation, modernistic style, and technique.

Steven has appeared on ABC, CBS and Fox and has been featured in many regional publications, including the Cleveland Plain Dealer and the Toledo Blade, which has led to "Downtime Cooking" on Time Warner. Currently, Steven is the host of "A Chef's Journey" airing on PBS.

Steven is also making appearances on the prestigious Celebrity Chef Tour with the likes of Michael Symon, Tyler Florence, and Emmy Award winning Tom Colichio of Top Chef, benefiting the James Beard Foundation.

The RIDGE Project is a Christian, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, founded in 2000 that provides services through partnerships with churches, schools, and state and national agencies to serve the youth and families of Ohio. Additionally, the organization strives to inform individuals, communities, the media and local and national policy makers of the importance of strong families. The organization has been recognized as a federal Department of Health and Human Services "Best Practice" program, and has been identified nationally as a leader in family and youth services.

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