



America's Chefs Applaud the Obamas For Their Commitment to Local, Sustainable Food

Chefs Collaborative Letter of Support to President and Mrs. Obama, To Be Sent on Earth Day, Has Garnered 300 Signatures (and Counting)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- February 27, 2009 (Boston, MA) -- **Chefs Collaborative** (www.chefscollaborative.org), the nation's leading network of chefs and food professionals committed to sourcing and cooking with local, sustainable ingredients, is proud to announce that its **letter to President and Mrs. Obama has thus far garnered signatures from 300 chefs and other food professionals across the U.S.** The letter, which was first drafted in December 2008 as the keystone for the organization's new "Yes We Can" membership initiative, encourages the Obamas to continue to promote their dedication to sustainable food issues; to use the White House kitchen as an example for the rest of the nation; and to consider Chefs Collaborative and its members as resources.

To read the full text of the letter, [click here](#) or see below.

The inaugural signatories of the letter include renowned chefs and advocates for local food such as **Dan Barber** (Blue Hill), **Rick Bayless** (Frontera Grill), **Suzanne Goin** (Lucques), **Peter Hoffman** (Savoy), and **Bruce Sherman** (North Pond). In the two months since the letter's inception, food professionals across the country--from Santa Rosa, CA to New Haven, CT, from New Orleans, LA to Greenville, ME--have added their names and their support. All 300 signers are members of Chefs Collaborative. To view the list of signatories thus far, [click here](#).

"We have watched with pride in the weeks since the Inauguration as the Obamas have begun to publicize their interest in sustainable food issues," said Melissa Kogut, Executive Director of Chefs Collaborative. "And we are thrilled by the response we've had among the nation's chefs to our letter of support. We encourage other members of the greater culinary community to sign the letter, too." Food professionals interested in becoming Chefs Collaborative members and signing the letter can do so at www.chefscollaborative.org.

Bruce Sherman, chef-owner of North Pond Restaurant in Chicago and Chair of Chefs Collaborative's board, said, "The purpose of the letter is to applaud what the Obamas have begun to do, encourage them to keep going, and offer our help, expertise, and full support. We have written this letter not as critics from the sideline, but as active teammates on the field."

The letter, which Chefs Collaborative hopes will include over 500 signatures by April, will officially be sent to the President and First Lady on Earth Day (April 22, 2009).

About Chefs Collaborative

Founded in 1993, Chefs Collaborative is a non-profit culinary organization that advocates for sustainability in the greater food community; provides chefs with the information and tools

(through workshops, publications, and events) necessary to make sustainable purchasing decisions; and connects chefs and sustainable food producers. Chefs Collaborative has more than 3,000 active and passionate food community professionals as members, 70% of whom are chefs.

Full Text of Chefs Collaborative Letter to the Obamas:

Dear President and Mrs. Obama,

We, the undersigned chefs and food professionals of Chefs Collaborative, thank you for beginning the critical work of steering our country onto a more sustainable course. We have read with great pleasure and pride that you are giving much-needed attention to sustainable food issues; we write now with a renewed sense of hope that together we can change the way we think about food in this country.

Indeed, through the example set by the White House kitchen, you have the ability to continue to show the country that your staff prepares and serves food that reflects the important connection between our food choices and the long-term health of the nation. It is an opportunity to serve food that celebrates our rich cultural heritage, our diverse culinary traditions, and the historic agricultural backbone of our nation.

In our kitchens, we find that making sustainable food choices consistently results in more delicious food on our plates. Such choices also invigorate local communities and economies, preserve landscapes and watersheds, and reduce fossil fuel consumption.

For more than a decade, Chefs Collaborative and its members have balanced the demands of running profitable businesses while respecting our organization's core principles. We have taught ourselves and others-- through workshops, publications, food demonstrations, and conferences-- how to procure, cook, and think about the foods we serve. By continuing to promote the practice of cooking with local, sustainable foods in the White House kitchen, you will inspire more chefs and home cooks to focus their attention on making better choices in their own kitchens.

We are proud to share with you the following beliefs, which have been essential to helping stimulate public discussion about our mutual values:

- Food is fundamental to life, nourishing us in body and soul. The preparation of food strengthens our connection to nature. The sharing of food immeasurably enriches our sense of community.*
- Good food begins with unpolluted air, land, and water, environmentally sustainable farming and fishing, and humane animal husbandry.*
- Food choices that emphasize delicious, locally grown, seasonally fresh, and whole or minimally processed ingredients are good for us, for local farming communities, and for the planet.*
- Cultural and biological diversity are essential for the health of the earth and its inhabitants. Preserving and revitalizing sustainable food, fishing, and agricultural traditions strengthen that diversity.*
- By continually educating themselves about sustainable choices, chefs can serve as models to the culinary community and the general public through their purchases of seasonal, sustainable ingredients and their transformation of these ingredients into delicious food.*

- *The greater culinary community can be a catalyst for positive change by creating a market for good food and helping preserve local farming and fishing communities.*

We encourage you and your new administration to let every meal from the White House kitchen -- whether for your family, guests, or visiting dignitaries -- herald these fundamental principles, the greatness of our nation, and your bold vision for change. We applaud and admire the work you have already begun in championing local and sustainable foods. Collectively, we offer you our assistance, experience, and support in this vital endeavor.

Signed,

[[click here](#) to see the list of signers]

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