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## PHOTO/STORY ADVISORY

### **One Walnut Restaurant and Emerson Middle School Team Up to Teach Children About Healthy Food Choices**

**CLEVELAND, Ohio (May 5, 2003)** -- One Walnut Restaurant in Cleveland will welcome 20 new chefs Monday, May 19 for a culinary experience that brings families together in celebration of healthy, home-cooked meals. Chef Marlin Kaplan, house manager Melissa Cole and the One Walnut culinary team will work side-by-side with seventh graders from Emerson Middle School in Lakewood, Ohio to prepare a four-course meal for their families as part of the nationally acclaimed Spoons Across America program, the Dinner Party Project.

Organized by the James Beard Foundation, in conjunction with the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Wine & Food (AIWF) and the California Table Grape Commission, The Dinner Party Project offers a dynamic, family-focused food education curriculum designed to inspire children and families to value the experience of cooking and dining together and creating and enjoying healthy, home-cooked meals.

“We’re thrilled to be a part of this project,” said Chef Kaplan. “We hope to offer the kids a sensory experience they’ll remember when planning their menus in the future and bring an awareness of using fresh, seasonal foods to create healthy, delicious meals.”

Under the direction of the One Walnut culinary staff, the students will prepare the meal, which will feature marinated tomato canapé and cucumbers with strawberry cream cheese as appetizers, spinach salad with mustard vinaigrette, Romano crusted chicken breast with marinara and an assortment of desserts. The students will experience what is involved in preparing the meals and will also serve appetizers and beverages, welcome guests, prepare the dining room, serve the food, clear tables, breakdown the dining room and clean the kitchen.

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“I think this project offers us a chance not only to share what’s involved in hosting guests and preparing meals, but it also gives the kids an opportunity to experience how good it feels to do something for others,” added Cole.

The Dinner Party Project is a five-part series of in-class and homework activities that involve children in the process of planning, preparing and presenting a celebratory meal in their school for their teachers and families. The children learn about nutrition, food safety, meal planning, table setting, etiquette and cooking. As a benefit, children experience the value of community, family, teamwork and sharing, while building self-esteem and having fun.

“This is a tremendous opportunity for the students to not only learn about nutrition, but to also improve their social skills,” said Linda Kurz, family and consumer science teacher. “They’ll participate in the full experience of giving a dinner party, from sending the invitations, learning proper etiquette to preparing and serving the food themselves.”

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**Note to the media:**

Preparation for the project actually begins in the classroom on Monday afternoons at Emerson Middle School. The students will review the recipes in advance and learn the preparation techniques involved in cooking the meal, in addition to nutrition facts, such as the food pyramid. For more information on specifics of the classroom experience, contact Linda Kurz at (216) 529-4241, ext. 8741.

On May 19, the children will arrive at the restaurant at 3 p.m. to begin preparations. They will begin with a 15-minute presentation by chef Kaplan and sous chefs Chris Ita and Josh Hartranft on kitchen etiquette, proper knife handling, sanitation and safety. Michelle Hrisiko and Beth Harney will also give a 15-minute presentation on front-of-the--house procedures, including table settings. Aprons will be handed out to the students, who will rotate to four different preparation stations. Appetizers will be served at 5:30 p.m., with dinner to follow.

One Walnut is located on the north side of the Ohio Savings Building on Walnut Avenue in downtown Cleveland. For information about specifics of the event, contact Melissa Cole at (216) 575-1111.

Recipes of the dishes can be made available.