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CONTACT: Nancy Painter, 973-763-6691, nancy@ediblejersey.com

EDIBLE JERSEY ANNOUNCES 2013 LOCAL HEROES
Six Food and Farming Leaders Across the Garden State Recognized

(Thursday, March 7, 2013) Edible Jersey is proud to present its 2013 Local Hero Awards. Selected last fall by Edible Jersey readers in an online readers’ choice poll, the winners were chosen for their exemplary work and dedication in serving their local community and the local food/beverage movement.

The 2013 winners include a revitalized, neighbor-friendly brewing company; the state's only coastal (non-estuary) oyster farmer; a couple who sells ketchup made from local tomatoes; a restauranteur who cares as much about her community as she does about her cuisine; an Earth- and family-focused heath food store; and an organization dedicated to land preservation.

“The beauty of each of these individuals and organizations is that, in addition to providing products and services of exceptional quality, they have a real mission at their heart. They go above and beyond the parameters of “business as usual” in an effort to improve their local community and ensure a better Garden State for future generations,” said Nancy Brannigan Painter, Edible Jersey’s publisher, upon announcing the awards.

The list of winners, along with their individual stories, appears in the Spring 2013 issue of Edible Jersey magazine, arriving today, and will be available online at ediblejersey.com later this month.

2013 LOCAL HEROES

Beverage Artisan: River Horse Brewing Company
80 Lambert Ln., Lambertville; 609.397.7776 riverhorse.com

In 2007, Chris Walsh and Glenn Bernabeo, a pair of beer enthusiasts with a background in finance, bought the struggling River Horse Brewing Company in the hopes of turning it around. Setting their focus on quality above all else, they introduced a successful Brewer’s Reserve series. Then, taking an interest in the community and hoping to encourage more of a local craft-beer culture, they partnered with neighboring businesses, such as The Chocolate Box in Lambertville, pairing beers in their variety pack with handmade chocolates. With brews now sold statewide and a popular on-site tasting room, River Horse has become a leader of NJ’s craft beer movement. This spring they’ll expand their operation with a move to Ewing.

Farm/Farmer: Forty North Oyster Farms/Matthew Gregg
Mantoloking; 732.903.8551 facebook.com/FortyNorth

Think “farmer” and it's unlikely that Matt Gregg will come to mind, but this New Jerseyan is a farmer of a different stripe.
Years ago oysters flourished around Manhattan; 40 degrees north of the equator was considered, says Gregg, “the perfect climate [in which] to grow oysters.” The Jersey Shore is roughly the same latitude. “We wanted to grow oysters, revitalizing the way it was once,” while using ethically sound farming techniques, says Gregg.

Established in 2009, with its first harvest last October, the farm took a hit after Superstorm Sandy. But Gregg and his staff rallied to help neighbors, collecting donations, organizing a debris cleanup and more. He also plans to donate 3% of the profits from each oyster sold this year to those hardest hit by Sandy.

**Food Artisan: First Field**  
Princeton; 609.759.1555 first-field.com

“We didn’t set out to make ketchup; we were just growing tomatoes for our own use, putting them up for the winter,” says Theresa Viggiano. She and husband Patrick Leger had been tinkering with his mom’s ketchup recipe. In 2008, the ketchup won over Whole Earth Center in Princeton, and First Field Jersey Ketchup was born.

With a new farm in Kingston, the couple also grows fruit for Elijah’s Promise in New Brunswick (a nonprofit soup kitchen/culinary school that supplied their first commercial kitchen space). Their products, which now also include limited edition relish, apple butter and cranberry sauce, are prepared and bottled at the Rutgers Food Innovation Center in Bridgeton.

And while it would be easier to buy tomatoes elsewhere, Viggiano and Leger partner with several other New Jersey growers. “It is all about trust, sustainability and building relationships.”

**Chef/Restaurant: Marilyn Schlossbach/Langosta Lounge**  
1000 Ocean Ave. (on the boardwalk), Asbury Park; 732.455.3275 langostalounge.com  
also:kitschens.com; marilynschlossbach.com; kulacafe.org.

Most people know Schlossbach as the owner of fan favorites Langosta Lounge of Asbury Park and Labrador Lounge in Normandy Beach.

But Schlossbach also founded the Carousel Farmers’ Market and Food for Thought by the Sea, and hosts the free holiday dinners at Langosta Lounge (see Edible Jersey, Winter 2012). Even this past Thanksgiving, with the restaurant closed due to Superstorm Sandy damage, Schlossbach held the feast at a nearby church. Her most recent endeavor is working with Interfaith Neighbors to open Kula Cafè, a hospitality-training program for Asbury Park youth.

Despite lingering Sandy-related problems she continues to think of others. “It’s hard right now; there’s a lot going on. I’m not satisfied; there’s still so much to do.”

Editor’s Note: As of press time, Langosta Lounge is slated to re-open in April.
Food Shop: Basil Bandwagon Natural Market
276 US Hwy 202/31, Suite 1, Flemington and 27-45 Old Hwy 22, Clinton Township; 908.788.5737
basilbandwagon.com

Ralph Celebre started Basil Bandwagon in 1993, inspired by a love of nature and a desire to share it. “The things that mattered then, and still matter to me, were Earth centered.”

A longtime customer agrees. “They have fresh vegetables directly from local farmers. It’s a great resource, and besides, they are very, very nice people.”

The store moved to a larger space in 2003 and includes a café. In 2013, Celebre and business partner Susan Haase opened a second shop in Clinton.

"The goal has always been to feed families,” says Celebre, which extends to nourishing the community via the store's Earth Day celebration and donations to local food banks and other organizations.

Nonprofit: Hunterdon Land Trust
111 Mine St, Flemington; 908.237.4582 hunterdonlandtrust.org

Hunterdon County's proximity to major metropolitan markets makes it prime for suburban sprawl. Fortunately, the area has a hero. With a mission “to preserve and protect the rural character and natural resources of Hunterdon County,” the Hunterdon Land Trust has helped protect thousands of acres of farmland and open spaces.

One example is Dvoor Farm in Flemington. Situated on land that was farmed for over 300 years, it was at risk of being turned over to development in the late ‘90s. Instead, thanks to the efforts of the Trust, the land is now preserved and serves as a site for a popular weekly farmers’s market.

In addition to preserving farmland, the organization also takes an active role in maintaining nature properties.

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About Edible Jersey: Edible Jersey celebrates the local, seasonal food of the Garden State. Launched in 2007 and published five times per year, the magazine tells the story of the local farmers, fishermen, chefs, home cooks, food artisans, brewers, vintners and others who energize New Jersey’s culinary community. The magazine’s mission is further extended through its popular website, e-newsletter and other digital venues.

Edible Jersey is a proud member of Edible Communities, a network of over 70 titles throughout the U.S. and Canada devoted to local and regional food. In 2011, Edible Jersey along with the entire Edible Communities organization was named Publication of the Year by the James Beard Foundation. ediblejersey.com

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