

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Internal communications strengthen organizational culture, align teams, and drive employee engagement. This section showcases intranet content, announcements, and strategic messaging that foster transparency, build trust, and unite stakeholders around shared goals and values. Scroll around to learn more about my work in internal communications!



2025 LCS Chef of the Year Celebrity Judges



Sarah Schmidt • Multiple Teams • Jul 23, 2025 12:00 PM CDT



Meet the Celebrity Judges: 2025 LCS Chef of the Year Competition

We're excited to announce the celebrity chefs that will serve as judges for the upcoming 2025 LCS Chef of the Year competition!

The competition will feature five chef finalists who will compete in a three-round, "chopped-style" cook-off competition in front of a live audience on July 31, 2025, at the [Sysco](#) Test Kitchens in Houston, Texas. The winning LCS chef will take home a \$10,000 grand prize.

2025



CELEBRITY JUDGES

Chef Christian Gill

Chef Neil Doherty

Chef Tse Richmond

Andrew Christman



This year's event will feature the following celebrity chefs:

- **Chef Christian Gill** who rose to culinary fame for his numerous executive chef roles and culinary competitions including a victory on *Beat Bobby Flay*, will return for a third time to judge this year's competition.
- **Chef Neil Doherty**, Corporate Executive Chef and Sr. Director of Culinary Development at Sysco, has been instrumental in leading the enterprise's culinary strategy and is also responsible for providing product and culinary training to Sysco's international entities.
- **Chef Tse Richmond** is an accomplished cuisine and pastry chef trained at Le Cordon Bleu Paris. After working in Michelin star restaurants, she returned to Portland to teach at Le Cordon Bleu Portland and the Art Institute of Portland's International Culinary Program. She is currently teaching culinary classes at the Oregon Culinary Institute.
- **Andrew Christman** is a journalist for Senior Housing News and an award-winning photographer. A passionate reader and writer, he is dedicated to telling stories and educating others about the senior living industry.

For more information about the 2025 LCS Chef of the Year competition, click [here!](#)

To watch the LIVE final round of the competition on July 31 at 1:30 p.m. (CST), click [here!](#)



2025 LCS Chef of the Year Finalists



Sarah Schmidt • Multiple Teams • May 22, 2025 4:40 PM CDT



2025 FINALISTS

Meet the Finalists: 2025 LCS Chef of the Year Competition

We're thrilled to announce the five incredible finalists who will compete for the title of 2025 LCS Chef of the Year this summer in Houston, Texas, at the SYSCO headquarters!

After showcasing exceptional culinary talent in their communities, these chefs have earned a spot to go head-to-head in a high-stakes culinary battle featuring mystery basket ingredients and intense elimination rounds. Creativity, speed, and skill will be put to the test — and only one will emerge as the Chef of the Year!

Congratulations to our finalists:

- **Eduardo Franco – The Forum at Rancho San Antonio**
- **Brandon Martinez – Amavida at Lakes Park**
- **Steven Pont – Essex Meadows**
- **Jaime Simoes Jr. – Freedom Plaza Sun City Center**
- **Michael Wagner – Mercy Ridge**

Get ready for an exciting journey!

Last year's Chef of the Year, Aron Spector, recently shared an inspiring update on life after earning the title and taking home the \$10,000 grand prize. In a heartfelt message to his team, residents, and the broader LCS community, Aron reflects on what the Chef of the Year journey has meant to him. Click below to hear his story.

[Aron Spector Chef of the Year Story](#)

Stay tuned as we follow their journey to Houston, where the heat is on and the knives are sharp. You'll have the opportunity to tune in live and cheer them on as they represent culinary excellence across LCS communities!



2025 LCS Chef of the Year Winner: Jaime Simoes Jr.



Sarah Schmidt • Multiple Teams • Aug 01, 2025 7:50 AM CDT



2025 WINNER

Freedom Plaza Executive Chef Wins 2025 Chef of the Year

Freedom Plaza's executive chef, Jaime Simoes Jr., has received the coveted LCS "Chef of the Year 2025" award after rising to the occasion and conquering the three-round, "chopped-style" cook off on July 31 at the Sysco Test Kitchens in Houston, Texas! Simoes will receive a \$10,000 grand prize for his win. Congratulations, Chef Jaime!



As one of five finalists, Simoes secured the champion title with a winning dish featuring trout filet with olive tapenade, citrus zest, and crusted kale. The dish also included Chef Simoes' take on roasted red pepper romesco sauce and was finished with pomegranate molasses. Simoes graduated from The Restaurant School at Walnut Hill College in Philadelphia, PA.

This year's event featured four celebrity judges, including Chef Christian Gill, Chef Neil Doherty, Chef Tse Richmond, and Andrew Christman.

The event runner-up, Steven Pont, is the executive chef at Essex Meadows in Essex, CT. The other 2025 Chef of the Year finalists included:

- Eddie Franco – The Forum at Rancho San Antonio (Cupertino, CA)
- Michael Wagner – Mercy Ridge (Timonium, MD)
- Brandon Martinez – Amavida at Lakes Park (Fort Myers, FL)



2025



CELEBRITY JUDGES

Chef Christian Gill

Chef Neil Doherty

Chef Tse Richmond

Andrew Christman



This year's event will feature the following celebrity chefs:

- **Chef Christian Gill** who rose to culinary fame for his numerous executive chef roles and culinary competitions including a victory on *Beat Bobby Flay*, will return for a third time to judge this year's competition.
- **Chef Neil Doherty**, Corporate Executive Chef and Sr. Director of Culinary Development at Sysco, has been instrumental in leading the enterprise's culinary strategy and is also responsible for providing product and culinary training to Sysco's international entities.
- **Chef Tse Richmond** is an accomplished cuisine and pastry chef trained at Le Cordon Bleu Paris. After working in Michelin star restaurants, she returned to Portland to teach at Le Cordon Bleu Portland and the Art Institute of Portland's International Culinary Program. She is currently teaching culinary classes at the Oregon Culinary Institute.
- **Andrew Christman** is a journalist for Senior Housing News and an award-winning photographer. A passionate reader and writer, he is dedicated to telling stories and educating others about the senior living industry.

For more information about the 2025 LCS Chef of the Year competition, click [here!](#)

To watch the LIVE final round of the competition on July 31 at 1:30 p.m. (CST), click [here!](#)

2025 LCS Chef of the Year Finalists



Sarah Schmidt • Multiple Teams • May 22, 2025 4:40 PM CDT



2025 FINALISTS

Meet the Finalists: 2025 LCS Chef of the Year Competition

We're thrilled to announce the five incredible finalists who will compete for the title of 2025 LCS Chef of the Year this summer in Houston, Texas, at the SYSCO headquarters!

After showcasing exceptional culinary talent in their communities, these chefs have earned a spot to go head-to-head in a high-stakes culinary battle featuring mystery basket ingredients and intense elimination rounds. Creativity, speed, and skill will be put to the test — and only one will emerge as the Chef of the Year!

Congratulations to our finalists:

- **Eduardo Franco – The Forum at Rancho San Antonio**
- **Brandon Martinez – Amavida at Lakes Park**
- **Steven Pont – Essex Meadows**
- **Jaime Simoes Jr. – Freedom Plaza Sun City Center**
- **Michael Wagner – Mercy Ridge**

Get ready for an exciting journey!

Last year's Chef of the Year, Aron Spector, recently shared an inspiring update on life after earning the title and taking home the \$10,000 grand prize. In a heartfelt message to his team, residents, and the broader LCS community, Aron reflects on what the Chef of the Year journey has meant to him. Click below to hear his story.

[Aron Spector Chef of the Year Story](#)

Stay tuned as we follow their journey to Houston, where the heat is on and the knives are sharp. You'll have the opportunity to tune in live and cheer them on as they represent culinary excellence across LCS communities!



2025 LCS Chef of the Year Winner: Jaime Simoes Jr.



Sarah Schmidt • Multiple Teams • Aug 01, 2025 7:50 AM CDT



2025 WINNER

Freedom Plaza Executive Chef Wins 2025 Chef of the Year

Freedom Plaza's executive chef, Jaime Simoes Jr., has received the coveted LCS "Chef of the Year 2025" award after rising to the occasion and conquering the three-round, "chopped-style" cook off on July 31 at the Sysco Test Kitchens in Houston, Texas! Simoes will receive a \$10,000 grand prize for his win. Congratulations, Chef Jaime!

