

Applebee's® Presents Top Honors at 2016 Global Franchise Conference

Annual Awards Gala Brings Applebee's Global Leadership Together to Celebrate the Best Franchisees and Vendor

GLENDALE, Calif., Oct. 10, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar honored franchisees and vendor partners for operational excellence, financial leadership and community engagement at the **2016 Applebee's Global Franchise Conference** in Beverly Hills, Calif., on Thursday, Sept. 29, 2016. These annual awards recognize a selection of top organizations that have made a significant contribution to building the Applebee's brand as America's first choice neighborhood grill and bar, resulting in a positive impact on local neighborhoods around the world during the previous year.

"The group of award winners this year is truly inspiring; they take Applebee's to new heights of excellence, motivating us all to consistently find new ways to build the Applebee's brand and make a positive impact in our neighborhood communities," said Julia Stewart, president of Applebee's and chairman and CEO of Applebee's parent company DineEquity, Inc. [NYSE: DIN].



The Abe Gustin Franchisee of the Year Award: Harry Rose of The Rose Group

For the second year in a row, this year's Abe Gustin Franchisee of the Year Award recipient is **Harry Rose, Chairman of The Rose Group**. This annual award, named for the man who helped build Applebee's into the nation's iconic, casual dining brand, is given to franchisees who have achieved the highest standards possible for the Applebee's brand, restaurants and guests. The Rose Group demonstrates unparalleled commitment and passion for the brand and contributes to brand growth through: internal committee participation; collaborative philanthropic initiatives including raising more than \$270,000 for Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation this year; consistent dedication to training and development; participation in product tests; and a constant dedication to ensuring all Applebee's guests have a consistently great dining experience in each of their restaurants. The Rose Group achieved the highest scores in all measurable areas of guest satisfaction and retention this past year.

The International Franchisee of the Year Award: Eduardo Orozco of Internacional 999

This award is given to the international franchise partner who has achieved notable success in building their business and representing the very best of Applebee's to their guests. For the second consecutive year, the honor was awarded to **Internacional 999** in recognition of their combined dedication to people development, menu testing, community support and overall business excellence. **Eduardo Orozco, Executive Director** of Internacional 999 accepted the award on behalf of his franchise.

The Heart of Applebee's Award: 10 Franchisees in Support of Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation

The Heart of Applebee's Award is traditionally awarded annually to a single Applebee's franchise that has shown the greatest commitment to an individual cause or organization. For 2016, the honor was awarded to an impressive 10 franchisees for their collaboration and work with Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation (ALSF) – a partnership that has grown from only two franchisees in 2004. With a combined 1,050 restaurants, these 10 franchises raised \$1.2 million through a variety of fundraising initiatives, bringing the

program's 11-year fundraising total to \$7 million. The 10 groups recognized for this incredible achievement with the 2016 Heart of Applebee's Award were: **Apple American, Apple by the Bay, Apple Gold, Bloomin' Apple, Doherty Enterprises, Miller Apple, Potomac Family Dining Group, RMH, TL Cannon and The Rose Group.**

The Neighbor of the Year Award: Doherty Enterprises

This award recognizes the Applebee's franchise that has demonstrated an uncommon commitment to serving its neighborhoods and communities through a variety of causes, activities and initiatives. This year's honoree was **Doherty Enterprises** with the award being accepted by **Chairman and CEO, Ed Doherty**. Doherty Enterprises is a continuously generous member of the many communities it serves. This year alone, it has raised more than \$3.3 million through more than 4,000 fundraising initiatives throughout the year, taking the responsibility of being a good neighbor to a new level.

Additionally, Applebee's awarded an honorable mention to the **Potomac Family Dining Group**, a franchisee that exemplifies the neighborhood spirit of Applebee's, always aiming to do bigger and better things in its communities. In 2016, this group doubled its franchising events to raise more than \$540,000 for organizations including Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation and the Wounded Warrior Project, just to name a few.

The Vendor of the Year Award: Stampede Meat

Every year this honor is awarded to the vendor partner that made the greatest contribution to the Applebee's system. This year, **Stampede Meat** was recognized as Applebee's Vendor of the Year, with the award being accepted by Stampede Meat **President and CEO, Brock Furlong**. Stampede Meats showed flexibility and transparency during a complex logistical transition to new certified USDA Choice steaks, maintaining constant communication, increasing production and balancing inventory to enable Applebee's to launch these new steaks successfully in 2016.

The Operator of the Year Award: Bonnie Lippincott of The Rose Group

This award recognizes an operator who is passionate about what they do at Applebee's, and goes above and beyond every day to ensure their restaurants and management teams exceed guest expectations. For a second year in a row, the award went to **Bonnie Lippincott, Chief Operating Officer of The Rose Group** for her leadership in building a high-performing team. Each day, Bonnie's restaurants provide Applebee's guests with a real and personal neighborhood experience, maintaining the highest internal standards of service.

About Applebee's®

Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar offers a lively bar and grill experience combining hand-crafted drinks and simple, craveable American fare with flair. All Applebee's restaurants are owned and operated by entrepreneurs dedicated to serving their communities and offering the best in food and drinks with genuine, neighborly service. With more than 2,000 locations now in all 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico and 15 countries, Applebee's is one of the world's largest casual dining brands. Applebee's is franchised by subsidiaries of DineEquity, Inc. [NYSE: DIN], which is among the world's largest full-service restaurant companies.

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