

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



VIENNA BEEF HOT DOG STAND CHALLENGE AWARDS “TOP DOG” TITLE AND IMPRESSIVE PRIZE PACKAGE TO STEPHANIE ESPOSITO

Vienna Beef donates \$10,000 to IRAEF Restaurant Employee Relief Fund to provide aid to hospitality workers

CHICAGO (Oct. 21, 2021) – [Vienna Beef](#), the iconic Chicago brand and Hot Dog purveyor, today announced Stephanie Esposito of Garfield Ridge in Chicago, claimed the Top Dog title by visiting all 367 participating locations in just five and a half weeks of the [Vienna Beef Hot Dog Stand Challenge](#). Hot Dog Royalty was also crowned for second through third place— Karen Buralli and Rose Lamont, who visited all 367 locations each.

From Aug. 19 through Oct. 17, over 4,300 participants traveled across the greater Chicagoland area including Southeast Wisconsin and Northwest Indiana visiting as many Vienna Beef Hot Dog Stands as possible. The Challenge received over 29,000 check-ins, or Hot Dog Stand visits, in just 60 days.

“I am a highly competitive person so when I heard about this challenge it became a top priority. I had a very organized system to make sure I could get to each location as efficiently as possible,” said Stephanie Esposito, Vienna Beef Top Dog challenge winner. “It was an incredible experience getting to visit parts of the region and meet people that I would never have had the chance to if it wasn’t for Vienna Beef hosting this Challenge.”

“As people were just starting to again venture out, mingle and return to restaurants, Vienna Beef set out to find a way to bring back fun, and business, to independently owned Hot Dog Stands across Chicagoland,” said Tim O’Brien, president of Vienna Beef. “This led to the creation of the Vienna Beef Hot Dog Stand Challenge. We hoped, but could never have imagined, the enthusiasm that this city brought to compete for the Top Dog title. We are proud of the effort from all participants, our trusted partners and the city that we call home.”



To extend the economic impact of the challenge’s success to the greater Illinois restaurant industry, Vienna Beef also announced today a \$10,000 donation to the Illinois Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (IRAEF) Restaurant Employee Relief Fund. [IRAEF Restaurant Employee Relief Fund](#) was created in October 2020 to help support restaurant workers affected by the pandemic. Today, the fund has been expanded to also cover Illinois hospitality workers affected by natural disasters, injury and other unexpected life events.

“Vienna Beef is a valued partner of the IRAEF, and we are so grateful for this most recent contribution to our Restaurant Employee Relief Fund,” said Kristen Hodges, executive director at IRAEF. “The last nearly two years were a great reminder of the hardships individuals face in life and this fund will provide aid to support our hospitality workers across the state when the unexpected happens.”

The Vienna Beef Top Dog prize package includes four premier and exclusive tickets to Chicagoland sports and entertainment events totaling one event every month for a year. Special access events include the 1914 Club at Wrigley Field, Chicago White Sox Scout Seats, BMO Harris Club tickets for Chicago Bulls and Chicago Blackhawks, Chicago Sky box seats, Brookfield Zoo passes, a private tour of the Vienna Beef factory and more. The Top Dog will also receive a \$1,000 ViennaBeef.com gift card and a one-of-a-kind Vienna Beef Top Dog trophy and t-shirt.

Additional prizes will be awarded at a later date to 15 “Mayor of the Neighborhood” winners for most contest check-ins within defined Chicagoland regions, such as the Loop, Southside, North Suburbs, Far West Suburbs and more.

For more information, visit www.HotDogStandChallenge.com or www.ViennaBeef.com.

About Vienna Beef

Founded in 1893, Vienna Beef manufactures and distributes beef hot dogs and sausages following its time-honored original recipes, with premium domestic beef hickory-smoked for authentic flavor. Austrian-Hungarian immigrants Emil Reichel and Samuel Ladany introduced their family frankfurter recipe at the legendary Columbian Exposition/World’s Fair and the same recipe is still used 128 years later. The company also produces pickles and condiments, soups and chilis, deli meats and other premium top-quality foods, distributed throughout the United States and internationally. Vienna Beef products are available at Hot Dog Stands and restaurants, retail stores, online, and at the company’s factory store in Chicago. Learn more at ViennaBeef.com.

About the Illinois Restaurant Association Educational Foundation

The Illinois Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (IRAEF) is a 501 (c)(3) dedicated to building the Illinois hospitality workforce through career exploration, workforce development programs and scholarships. Since its inception, the IRAEF has awarded more than \$3 million in scholarships to deserving students. ProStart® is a national school-to-careers program that prepares high school students for careers in foodservice and hospitality management. ProStart® in Illinois is administered by the Illinois Restaurant Association Educational Foundation to over 4,000 students at 62 schools in the Chicagoland area. Students have the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials and articulated credits for college while in high school. The Foundation provides work readiness training and connects students with industry professionals through job shadowing and internships to help hone their skills in the foodservice industry. The ProStart® program is also offered in all 50 states encompassing more than 140,000 high school students in more than 1,800 high schools. For more information, visit www.nraef.org.

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