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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FASWVA graduates first culinary arts training class at Community Solutions Center in Roanoke

October 17, 2018 (SALEM, Va.) – The inaugural cohort of four students has graduated from Feeding America Southwest Virginia’s Culinary Arts Training program.

Mona Ardoun, Althea J. Jenkins, Charles Parker and Shaqueena Snyder were recognized on Monday with certificates of completion and high praise from their instructor, FASWVA Director of Culinary Arts, Marti Burbridge.

Burbridge lauded the students for their efforts and noted how far they’d come from the start of the course. The students’ hard work and persistence was also recognized by ceremony speakers Rick Morrison, FASWVA Chief Impact Officer, Pamela Irvine, FASWVA CEO, and Rob Ward, Food Lion Operations Director for the Roanoke Region.

The students had the opportunity to offer reflections of their own, each speaking emotionally to an audience of family and friends about their personal growth and how much they’d enjoyed working with their classmates. Following the graduation ceremony, guests were treated to a reception featuring hors d’oeuvres prepared by the graduates.

The 12-week culinary training course included topics such as knife skills, food safety, nutrition and recipe creation. They students also gained the skills necessary to obtain the ServSafe Manager certification, a nationally recognized credential in food safety. The course also included soft skills and tips for future employment.

As part of their hands-on training, the students prepared fresh meals for FASWVA’s summer and after-school feeding program. The current cohort helped prepare more than 19,000 meals that went out to the food bank’s 2018 summer feeding programs.

The inaugural culinary training cohort has been supported by the Johnson

Foundation.

FASWVA's next culinary training cohort begins on October 22. More information may be obtained by contacting Feeding America Southwest Virginia at 540.342.3011 or information@faswva.org.



Follow this link to download hi-res photos from the graduation ceremony. View the "details" on each photo for additional info: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=117LkFTLYQqNkORVkcEzjBfMmMKyOvr7m>

About Feeding America Southwest Virginia

Feeding America Southwest Virginia was founded locally in 1981 and proudly commemorates 37 years of fighting hunger and changing lives through community partnerships. For the last three and a half decades, the Food Bank's ultimate mission has remained the same: eliminate hunger in the region. The primary function of the Food Bank is to secure and distribute large quantities of food for Southwest Virginia's hungry. Approximately \$26.5 million worth of food and grocery related products are channeled annually through a network of more than 330 partner feeding programs in our 26-county, 9-city region that provide food or meals to those in need. The local Food Bank is an affiliate member of Feeding America. Visit www.faswva.org for more information or like us on [Facebook](#).