



**Specialty Food Association's 2018 Leadership Awards:  
Industry Aids Children in Haiti, Fire Victims in California, Others in Need**

**NEW YORK, NY (November 16, 2017)** The Specialty Food Association (SFA) is proud to announce the six winners of the 2018 Leadership Awards. The awards honor food industry frontrunners who go above and beyond by creating positive social, economic, and/or environmental impact through their innovation and vision.

Awards are given in three categories: Business Leadership, Citizenship, and Vision. The sixth annual SFA Leadership Award winners are:

**BUSINESS LEADERSHIP**

- Meg Barnhart, The Zen of Slow Cooking, Lake Forest, IL: Every packet of the company's spice is packed by an adult with a developmental disability
- Christopher J. Patton, River Hills Harvest Market, LLC, Minneapolis, MN: Developed native midwestern elderberries into a viable specialty crop

**CITIZENSHIP**

- Ryan Emmons, Waiakea Hawaiian Volcanic Water, Culver, CA: For every liter of water bought, Waiakea donates 325 liters of clean water to people in need in Africa
- Sam Mogannam, Bi-Rite Market, San Francisco: Brought together Bay Area chefs to feed victims of the California wildfires

**VISION**

- Mohammed Ashour, Aspire Food Group, Austin, TX: Food tech group that address global sustainability and food security with advanced insect farming
- Thierry Ollivier, Natierra By Brandstorm, Inc., Van Nuys, CA: Feed a Soul program gives a meal to a Haitian child for every purchase

To read more about the winners, click [here](#).

"These six specialty food entrepreneurs reflect the great power and impact of our growing industry on society at large," said Phil Kafarakis, president of the Specialty Food Association. "It's an honor to recognize their positive social, economic, and environmental achievements – all undertaken while also meeting the daily challenges of managing successful businesses."

The awards will be presented during the SFA's Winter Fancy Food Show in San Francisco at a special ceremony on Sunday, January 21 from 5:00-6:30 pm. A reception sponsored by the Association's Natural & Organic Council will follow the awards ceremony.

Nominations were made by members of the Specialty Food Association and others in the specialty food industry. A panel of judges composed of industry experts and influencers selected the honorees from more than 50 nominees. The judges included: Polly Adema, University of the Pacific, San Francisco; Cathy Cochran-Lewis, Whole Foods Market, Austin, TX; Lou Cooperhouse, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ; Maren Keeley, *Conscious Company Magazine*, Seattle; Bruce Nierenberg, Greyston Bakery, Yonkers, NY; John Raiche, UNFI, Providence, RI; and Lisa Sposato, City Harvest, New York City.

### **Press Registration**

The Winter Fancy Food Show is a trade-only event. The Specialty Food Association provides complimentary press badges to qualified media. [Learn more and register.](#)

### **About the Specialty Food Association**

The Specialty Food Association is a thriving community of food artisans, importers and entrepreneurs. Established in 1952 in New York, the not-for-profit trade association provides its 3,500 members in the U.S. and abroad with resources, knowledge and connections to champion and nurture their companies in an always-evolving marketplace. The Association owns and produces the Winter and Summer **Fancy Food Shows**, and presents the **sofi™ Awards** honoring excellence in specialty food. Learn more at [specialtyfood.com](http://specialtyfood.com).

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