

A celebrity chef in the Port City for a good cause

Celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse spent less than 48 hours in Wilmington. However, he made the most of this short period by hosting three distinct culinary experiences including, a private dinner on the evening of January 28th followed by breakfast and lunch on Friday, Jan. 29. The legendary chef's visit was about one thing, raising money for the non-profit foundation behind the Girls Leadership Academy of Wilmington (GLOW), scheduled to open in August, 2016. It is the first all-girl charter school in North Carolina.

Lagasse – first gained fame as executive chef of Commander's Palace in New Orleans before opening his own restaurant – is known for his emphasis on creole and Cajun dishes and his signature seasoning, Emeril's Essence. You may also know his signature phrases “kick it up a notch” and “BAM”.

GLOW is modeled after the successful schools in the national Young Women's Leadership Network, which is dedicated to a rigorous, hands-on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) approach to education for at-risk female middle and high school students. The goal, according to a release from the school's foundation, is to create future leaders and break the “destructive cycle of poverty.”

Plans for the new school got underway in 2013 through the efforts of Judy Girard—a Wrightsville Beach resident who presided over the Food Network from 1998-2004 and later headed up HGTV—and a team of volunteers.

It was Girard who was able to bring Lagasse, a longtime colleague and friend, to the area for this unique fundraiser. The cause also appealed to Lagasse, who runs the Emeril Lagasse Foundation, a non-profit committed to educational initiatives for children, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances.

So, how is OmniStar involved? Our CEO has been a strong supporter of local charities, particularly those focused on children. According to Phil Clark, it was an easy decision to get involved. “When Todd Godbey, President of Glow, approached me to chair this once in a lifetime event, it was an honor to accept the position”. Godbey and Clark quickly assembled their committee with only 90 days to make the event a reality with Clark commenting, “our committee is just as world class as Chef Lagasse and they have worked tirelessly to make this event an incredible success”.

For more information, please contact OmniStar Financial Group or visit the Girls Leadership Academy website.