



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Special guest Executive Chef Paula Navarrete of Momofuku Kōjin dishes out expert tips and a sweet-sticky recipe at Taste of Home program

TORONTO, ON—On October 25, 2018, as part of Child Development Institute (CDI)'s Taste of Home program, a group of young women gathered in a bright and warm kitchen brimming with fresh, colourful ingredients and cooking utensils to make a delicious home-cooked meal. With excitement filling the air, the young women quickly transformed into sous-chefs under the encouraging and expert guidance of Taste of Home special guest Paula Navarrete, Executive Chef at Momofuku Toronto's Kōjin restaurant.

Taste of Home is a program that supports children and youth in learning how to cook healthy, budget-friendly meals while developing stress management strategies they can use to face everyday challenges.

On the evening of Chef Navarrete's special culinary demonstration, the group of young cordon bleus worked together at designated stations to create a low-cost, mouth-watering menu of chicken and veggie potstickers with sweet chili sauce, crunchy Asian slaw, and a side dish of fun and laughter. "There is something very rewarding about teaching someone how to cook," said Navarrete. "It's great to be able to use my skills to have a fun night and to learn from young women and, overall, create a tasty meal," added Navarrete, who was born and raised in Colombia before moving to Toronto in her early teens.

Taste of Home teaches participants valuable life skills such as safety in the kitchen, learning how to cook and bake while making healthy food choices, identifying and listening to your body when you need to take a break, and providing them with coping skills they can use in different environments within their lives.

"This is a special program because it gives the young people we work with an opportunity to learn about and make delicious healthy food mixed with learning some strategies to manage stress," said Damian Maldaver, Taste of Home Lead Facilitator. "Taste of Home has had a positive impact on the youth we work with as they have shared with us that they cook some of the recipes we teach them at home and sometimes use the stress management techniques outside of sessions as well," added Maldaver.

Each year Taste of Home serves approximately 100-150 children and youth, and mothers through a quality after-school program model where participants build critical knowledge and skills in food preparation, cooking, nutrition, wellness and stress reduction while cooking familiar, healthy and budget-friendly recipes in an environment that fosters a feeling of home.

In June 2016, Chef Navarrete—a self-professed admirer of acclaimed chef Thomas Keller and her grandmother's cooking—participated in CDI's fundraising event, *A Taste of Home Evening: Recipes My*

Mother Taught Me, in support of the agency's family violence programming. She has been a supporter of the Taste of Home program ever since.

"I believe strongly in supporting community initiatives, especially programs that work with children and youth," Navarrete said. "It has been a real pleasure spending time with such an enthusiastic group of young chefs."

ABOUT CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Child Development Institute (CDI) is an accredited children's mental health organization mandated with the mission to support the healthy development of children, youth and their families. A leader in the field, CDI develops and delivers world-class, evidence-informed mental health programs and services across four streams (Early Intervention Services, Family Violence Services, the Integra Program, and Healthy Child Development). Recognized for its innovation and excellence in child development, CDI is committed to transforming the landscape of children's mental health through continuous process improvement, research and training. For more information about CDI, please visit: childdevelop.ca.

ABOUT CHEF PAULA NAVARRETE

Paula was born and raised in Colombia and moved to Toronto in her early teens. Paula has been with Momofuku Toronto since opening in 2012, starting as a Sous Chef at Noodle Bar before moving to Daishō where she rose to Chef de Cuisine. Before Momofuku, Paula worked at North 44, Colborne Lane, and learned butchery at Sanagan's Meat Locker. The menu at Kōjin is inspired by Paula's childhood around the grill in Colombia, her love of Ontario's meat and produce, and what she has learned at Momofuku over the past six years. momofuku.com/toronto

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